



British Business Group
Crowne Plaza, Emirates Ballroom, Abu Dhabi
Monday, 12 February 2007
The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London
Alderman John Stuttard

Chairman, Mr Ambassador, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you so much for inviting all of us here today. You have quite a distinguished group and we are honoured to be here.

After all, the mutual prosperity of both the UAE and the UK has been fostered to a considerable degree by you here in this room. We are grateful indeed.

And we are enjoying your kind hospitality. We are very fortunate to be with you today. I am certainly luckier than the cat who was referred to recently in the *Westmoreland Gazette*, under the column "Lost & Found" - "Lost in Cartmel - One-eyed Ginger Tom - Recently Castrated - Answers to the name of Lucky".

And while on the subject of cats, we were all very sorry to learn of the recent passing of Humphrey, the Downing Street cat. A serial killer, he served under three Prime Ministers, ridding Whitehall of vermin. In a 120-page file on Humphrey released recently by the Cabinet Office, one official wrote that he caught hundreds of mice and the odd rat, whereas after he retired from public service his successors, Rentokil, haven't caught a thing. The file added; "He is a workaholic who spends nearly all his time in the office, does not socialise a great deal or go to many parties and has not been involved in any sex or drugs scandal – at least so far as we are aware". When asked about Humphrey's gender and whether he had sired any offspring, the same official responded that Humphrey had indeed been positively vetted.

As with all Lord Mayors, a central theme of my mayoralty will be maintaining UK competitiveness in financial, maritime and related business services. And so this afternoon, I

would briefly like to focus on three aspects of this topic which, I hope, will have a direct relevance to you who are doing so much for the prosperity of the UK and Abu Dhabi today.

Mayor Bloomberg of City Hall, New York, New York recently commissioned McKinsey to find out why the Big Apple is slipping behind. I could have saved him the money. It is all about cumbersome regulation, layered taxation and, frankly, the odd overzealous Immigration official. London on the other hand adds to its traditional strengths of location, language and welcome by risk-based regulation and relatively proportionate taxation which work.

The statistics bear this out:

- London has more global companies headquartered here than any other capital city.
- One-third of all foreign currency transactions take place in London.
- London is *the* centre for foreign equity and for the trading of derivative products.
- London is widely acknowledged as the world's centre of innovation for a wide variety of derivative, maritime, climate change and Shir'ia compliant products. We are working very closely with Government to ensure that London retains its crown as the seedbed and developer of Shir'ia compliant financial products.
- London is taking more international investment into its property markets as foreigners regard London as a safe place in which to invest, as well as to visit – indeed, last year, we received almost as many visitors as Paris and New York put together.
- And, in terms of our contribution to the UK economy, the financial and related services industry now contributes almost £40 billion annually to our balance of payments and over 20% to the UK's total tax take.

But, as I mentioned to a group of bankers this morning, we need to ensure we stay ahead of the game, to ensure that we are the partner of choice for emerging financial centres. So we in London have been working on finding our collective voice. The Chancellor's announcement last March creating a high level group to promote the City worldwide marked, I believe, the beginning of a new partnership between Government, the financial services industry and the City of London Corporation.

I am pleased to represent the City on this group and it is all the more important for me to be accurately informed as to what you think.

Secondly, in one of his early speeches, your new Ambassador reflected how Britain's friends here told him that we need to go a step further than simply building relationships, we need to be friends. And if I had one message for your board of directors, it is to ensure your presence in the UAE is as permanent as you can make it. Make and keep friends. I learned this lesson when I was Chairman of PwC in China and it is as true here as there.

Thirdly, is to encourage you to help young Emiratis to see and value the worth of British training and qualifications. I have a simple goal: to bring gold standard qualifications to the attention of as many young, ambitious people around the world as I can.

The payback to the UK is obvious and, unlike all too many places around the world, many young Emiratis can afford to come to the UK to work in our financial, maritime and business services industry - to learn and to gain experience. We know they regard London as an attractive place in which to live and to work. We are a pretty welcoming City and London has so much to offer. The young Emiratis you know might just need the nudge you can give. But the bottom line is that it is important to continue to attract these young people as they are an important driver of our economic success. It is also all about turning a relationship into friendship.

I am aiming to promote a sort of virtuous circle: "The more outstanding the international talent in the City, the more it increases our competitive advantage, and the greater the competitive advantage the more London will attract fresh talent from around the world".

The message is-clear: if you want a successful start to your career, come to the UK, chose a British training and a British qualification. It's like a 'Gold Standard'. Not only will you get the best training and experience, but you will have an internationally portable qualification. You can't go wrong.

Chairman, I could go on but my delegation and I would very much like to hear from your members what you think the City should be doing better to help you win and keep business coming. Abu Dhabi may be a treasure chest, but I know as well as you do that prising the lid open is not always that easy. So if you consider the City as one of your key assets, and I hope you do, what are we doing right and what can we do better.

Mr Chairman, thank you very much.