

Sir David King Dinner 27/11/07 – The Foundation for Science and Technology

Speaking Notes

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- Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen
- Honoured to be asked to speak tonight
- I would like to add my thanks and best wishes to David, and do this by highlighting some of his achievements from a business vantage point.
- He has led the Government's scientific agenda during a period of enormous significance:
 - Climate Change debate
 - Dilemmas about low carbon energies
 - Pandemic threats
 - BSE
 - Foot and mouth
 - GM and other ethical issues
 - Etc.
- Whoever is in the office of Chief Scientist must live with the worrying realization that his judgment is always on the line and that his advice is likely to be called upon at very short notice and often in a crisis situation.
- Scientists (like businessmen) don't always make good politicians - but the Chief Scientist has to be both. His scientific credentials, expertise and impartiality have to be demonstrable - but he must also know how the political game is played.
- David has mastered this brief in an exemplary way.
- David also has the ability to make complex scientific issues understandable and interesting to the layman (and I include politicians and business people as laymen, although we might not always want to admit it...).
- Let me add here a personal observation about one of David's key traits. He is a remarkable communicator - lucid, energetic, persuasive. Has this mattered in his role as Chief Scientific Advisor? I think it has; not only in the first crisis that he confronted over BSE, but in the evolving debate on climate change.
- It is clear that if Government is to act effectively on climate change, it must do so on the basis of public awareness and concern. David understood this from the start.
- This public mandate is also important for business and indeed the consensual triangle that we need is made up of Government, the public and business, well informed, of course, by academia.
- David has always understood the importance of this symbiotic relationship. I will come back to that in a moment.

- For BP, it is probably in the areas of energy security, low carbon energy and climate change that we have felt David's leadership most.
- He has been fearless in drawing attention to the seriousness of Climate Change and the need for action.
- He has used language which sometimes has got him into trouble but as a result has ensured that the issue was not ignored politically. Before Al Gore, there already was David King!
- Personally, I recall the powerful example of the ice cap on Kilimanjaro that he used in his Zuckerman Lecture in 2002 to demonstrate the extent of global warming. I was impressed by the figure that David quoted earlier that 94% of people in the UK are now concerned about climate change. David has been pivotal in this shift of public awareness.
- Another very good example of his leadership and drive is the newly formed ETI, which was spawned out of another of his creations - the Energy Research Partnership (ERP). BP is very proud to be associated with both:
 - We believe ETI will turn out to be a groundbreaking piece of government-industry collaboration and similar models are appearing around the world, such as in China.
 - It will create a new model for addressing one of the key issues of the day – the level of RD&D into energy technologies.
- He has also been very clear that climate change creates opportunities in developing a low carbon economy. He has emphasised the importance of energy efficiency, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), and as we all heard today, nuclear power.
- Governments need to be inclusive of many new low-carbon technologies but need to focus on those with material impact to encourage their emergence at scale. The general set of current technologies capable of impact at scale is pretty well known – and here too, David has not shied away from controversy – such as the nuclear issue.
- Energy security, energy supply and demand, and climate change are inextricably linked, and technology and energy policy/ regulation provide the linkage, and are at the heart of the solution. This is what David has been emphasizing and will turn out to be one of his greatest legacies.
- Every country that I visit is trying to solve the same basic problems: for energy competitiveness and economic efficiency on the one hand, and security and climate sustainability on the other.
- Eight key policy areas appear to be common - 4 easier to implement , 4 harder
 - Easier - encouraging competition, energy efficiency programmes, more RD&D, education and communications. Some actions have been taken on some of these.
 - Harder - enabling reliable long-term CO₂ price signals, transitional incentives, targeted regulatory action, and international trade mechanisms. Not yet established but are developing.
- Coherent energy policy and technology are right at the heart of the solution to all this.

- This early understanding has meant UK Government, scientists, academics and business people were able to help lead and shape the debate internationally.
 - The solution to energy security, economic competitiveness and climate change is becoming clearer, and yet its implementation becomes more challenging every day. Together Government, business and society we can do this, and David has played a key role.
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- I would also like to mention David's enormous championing role in the area of education, and the need to nurture the next generation of young scientists and engineers.
 - Indeed, the agenda that David described must be underpinned by a strong supply of future engineers, scientists, technologists.
 - We welcome the leadership and clear proposals in the Sainsbury review ("The Race to the Top") for moving forward with educating the next generation of young scientists and engineers.
 - It is important to have consistency in approach to education - the Sainsbury review builds strongly on the previous work around STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) education, and focuses on rationalising and organising initiatives rather than just adding new ones. It also identifies, correctly in our view, the need for clearer support to potential STEM students on employment opportunities.
 - We at BP are working with other companies, schools, universities and Government to contribute to this agenda, be it through innovative programmes in the classroom, or continual professional development for teachers.
 - There is money around. HMG is spending £5.4 billion per year, we are told, on research through the Research Councils, the Technology Strategy Board, the Higher Education Funding Councils and other budget lines - increasing over the next three years to £6.3 billion. This figure excludes direct expenditure by government departments such as the Ministry of Defence and Department of Health on departmental research programmes. But somehow it doesn't always feel like we are all working well enough together to maximize the impact of this spend.
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- Relations between Government and business are never going to be simple and only rarely will they be easy. Both have different and legitimate interests to further and defend. What is essential is that Government and business do not misunderstand each other, and certainly at BP we welcome initiatives like the establishment of the Business Council for Britain set up by the Prime Minister.
 - This body can and should help to establish the priorities for Government, including research.
 - The challenges ahead we face – be they in the area of low carbon energy or stem cell research, for example – will all require innovation and efficient investment, and crucially will rely on the right partnerships between Government, the public and industry.

- David King has made a major contribution to this; not only by energizing the Government's contribution and facilitating the dialogue with business, but by consistently and clearly explaining to a wider public why the issue matters and why actions have to be taken.
- I have seen this for myself and I believe we are all in his debt.

- How to sum up David's great contribution as Chief Scientific Adviser, and indeed his potential in whatever he chooses to do next?
- He is that unusual figure who has managed to combine scientific rigour with public debate and a clear focus on essentials with sensitivity to the ever-changing nuances of politics.
- Jean Monnet often described as the Father of Europe, and certainly the man who initiated the process that has led to the European Union, was once asked how he determined his priorities? He replied that the important thing for him was direction and he allowed events to define the priorities. Put simply, he was a principaled opportunist.
- Now, David will always have priorities, but what is truly impressive is his sense of direction. He believes that science is essential to the achievement of a better life and a more secure world. His priorities will, I suspect, always be how to persuade Government, business and public opinion of the actual steps needed to achieve this.
- I wish him, his wife Jane and family all the very best for the future.

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