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The economy will rightly be centre stage as we approach the general election, so the King's Speech and the upcoming Autumn Statement need to act as a catalyst for international trade and attracting FDI, with both being the engine room of the national economy. We live in a changing world, however, where the new world will increasingly come alongside the old, presenting opportunity but challenges.

I refer the House to my declaration of interests. Digitalisation and technological advances are examples of positive advances. The enabling benefits of electronic trade documents and the provision of financial instruments, particularly for mid-sized SMEs from those emerging markets, will bring heightened competition in international exports. Increased compliance in mandatory supply-chain transparency and the increased risks associated with supply chain disruptions will further challenge us.

I preface further remarks by acknowledging that the UK brand is held in high regard globally. However, adhering to antiquated practices is not a blueprint for success. I am sorry to say that in many a quarter there is palpable unease about current governmental intervention, with some decrying unhelpful meddling. To succeed internationally we must actively engage with the priorities of others, recognising the significance of cultivating trust and giving due regard to an emphasis on local context.

I was uncomfortable, therefore, when a PM's trade envoy at a recent pan-Africa conference that I attended could muster only a narrative centred around "we in Britain", rather than adopting a more fitting approach of, "I have come to listen, to understand your continental vision and priorities and how we can contribute to your aspirations". The global messaging should be that of a new, innovative, centrist, forward-thinking United Kingdom, at ease with itself and contributing with all the experience that we have, to promote a world of equitable coexistence. That is key.

The intervention by the envoy led to a distinguished African diplomat underlining passionate concerns about the UK's historical involvement in slavery and African asset-stripping—a poignant point that should not be dismissed lightly. I note that Lloyd's of London is promoting racial equality causes after a research project determined its significant role in the transatlantic slave trade. I listened with keen interest to the noble Baroness, Lady Moyo, who is not in her place, particularly in relation to the BRICS grouping, to which can be added economic regions from the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America. However, closer to home, when EU neighbours signal with an olive branch, at least we should have the courtesy and pragmatism to listen, reflect and not be dismissive with an out-of-hand Brexiteer ideological dismissal. The Foreign Secretary should remember that continental partners deeply regret not contributing more when he went cap in hand to Brussels. In the aftermath of such reflections, I have relinquished my role as founder and co-chair of the Trade and Investment APPG.

Nothing short of a comprehensive root and branch reform of the UK's export promotion strategy and that of multipliers in promoting UK excellence is required, in a way that some will find difficult. It is that of a changed mindset, with genuine collaboration with the private sector being key and the Government's role being singular—to create conditions that empower all facets of bilateral and regional relations to thrive, then to step aside and allow seasoned professionals to navigate the intricacies.

I returned from Tashkent last night, where I had assisted in the opening of the British Management University, on a visit that coincided with the Presidents of Italy and France on separate bilateral visits. Can the Minister give some assurance that the age-old problem of access into Downing Street and ministerial diaries will be properly addressed and that we will see many more state visits to support the international trade agenda? It would be appreciated by all.

I had hoped to put forward a raft of thoughts for consideration, but I will leave it there and hope that in the not too distant future we will have the opportunity to properly scrutinise government performance and advance informed thinking, including advocating for a formal review of the role of UK-based chambers of commerce and the relationship with overseas BritChams, and how best to strategise on global SME access and co-operation in emerging markets where the real opportunities lie. These and the role of the regions within the United Kingdom are examples of where urgent review is required, fulfilling the mantra of a global rather than an insular Britain.

In conclusion, responding to the set of challenges from the noble Lord, Lord Londesborough, and to many other noble Lords who have spoken today, why do we not establish a rolling scorecard system to monitor progress by this and any future Government, to include, for example, comparison with other countries' performances?