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Minutes

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CABINET

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at The National Glass Centre (Sunderland) on

FRIDAY 31st January 2020
At 1445 PM

P R E S E N T

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth
Affairs and First Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

The Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

The Rt Hon Stephen Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union

The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and
Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State for International Trade and
President of the Board of Trade and Minister for
Women and Equalities

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education

The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
Local Government

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport

The Rt Hon Julian Smith CBE MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon Alister Jack MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Rt Hon Simon Hart MP
Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
Leader of the House of Lords, Lord Privy Seal

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Morgan of Cotes
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and
Sport

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State for International Development

The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Minister without Portfolio and Party Chair

ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury

The Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP
Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons

The Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Whip

The Rt Hon Geoffrey Cox QC MP
Attorney General

The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP
Minister of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office

The Rt Hon Jake Berry MP
Minister of State, Cabinet Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP
Minister of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Rt Hon. the Baron Goldsmith of Richmond Park
Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for International
Development

The Rt Hon Brandon Lewis CBE MP
Minister of State, Home Office

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Secretariat

Sir Mark Sedwill

H MacNamara

J Glover

E Payne

NR

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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Coronavirus

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE said that two cases of coronavirus had been confirmed in the UK. 177 potential cases had tested negative. It was a very serious problem in China where there were 9,700 cases and where there had been 213 fatalities. The rate of spread was similar to that of SARS disease, with one person typically infecting two and a half to three people, but the mortality rate, at two per cent, was much lower. The plane evacuating British nationals from Wuhan province was due to land that afternoon. There were no signs of symptoms among those on board, though they would be taken to a hospital for a period for monitoring. He was grateful to the Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Defence and their officials for their support. If China succeeded in containing the virus, there would not

be a problem, but if China did not grip the situation it could become global. That would be very serious, including for the UK.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS said that the Government had moved quickly, and more quickly than others, in securing flights to leave China, and had brought home some Europeans as well as British nationals. There was a problem in that the Government had not yet persuaded the **I&S** **I&S** to allow dual nationals to leave, and that was causing understandable distress to families who were having to separate. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Health and Social Care were working together very well. Travel advice was under review.

In discussion, the following point was made:

- n) the Department for International Development was examining developing countries where the risk of spread of the disease was high. Spread of the disease globally would be a big problem for these countries, and could also mean further evacuation of British nationals overseas.

Summing up, THE PRIME MINISTER said that the tone of the Government should be reassurance, given the low mortality rate. People should not panic.

The Cabinet:

- took note.