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Archie Norman



ITV chairman urges commitment to changing Britain and an unswerving focus on the end point

Chairman of ITV. The “turnround king” of Asda, he is one of Britain’s most prominent businessmen. An MP from 1997, then a shadow minister, he quit politics in 2005. Still has ties with Cameron’s frontbench such as Francis Maude and William Hague

- **Focus on the destination.** The tough economic outlook will mean choppy political waters. As we get into the hard yards of deficit reduction there will be tough times ahead politically. It is easy to be knocked off course and tempting to lead as if the opinion polls are what matters. But the electorate are looking for something bigger in your leadership: a commitment to changing Britain and an unswerving focus on the end point. Remember why you were elected and that the Conservative party is here to bring opportunity to people who do not have it today. Define how Britain will have changed by 2015, quantify it, and drive to achieve the few mission-critical programmes required to deliver.

- **Transform the 20 worst inner cities.** British society is not broken but there are broken societies in Britain. These are concentrated in about 20 inner urban areas where a cocktail of social economic and educational problems create a spiral of decline. This is the lesson of the riots. These deep pockets of failure drive most crime and most violent crime. The problems are geographically concentrated. But improve these failed communities and you will have reduced the cost of welfare and crime for a generation. They require tough love, more Heseltine and less Prescott. Intensive investment in education, crime reduction and enterprise will pay off. Scattergun solutions and diffused investment will not.

- **Make the system as good at deregulation as it is at regulation.** UK government has been very good at adding regulatory burdens and gold-plating EU regulations. We have been abysmal at removing them. It is in the system and it needs a system change. So create a House of Lords Committee with power to initiate regulatory reform and simplification. Insist that major enterprise-affected regulation is externally audited instead of the current self-fulfilling internal audits. Put whole swathes of regulation back into the machine for redrafting.

- **Scrap High Speed 2. HS2 is the most extraordinarily expensive “grand project” and could cost every taxpaying household £1,000 each for something that will deliver no great value for nearly 20 years. Even then it will be of benefit to very few. It is based on the idea that we can be like the French, but this is not France. The likelihood of cost-overruns is high and the damage to countryside and communities certain and permanent. Scrap HS2 now and announce instead £17bn of spending – half the amount – to bring about the biggest improvement in history of Britain’s existing railway.**

- **NHS.** Recognise that the problem in the NHS is not legislation or regulation. It is management. Hospitals are unbelievably complex, very human places that need top managers who are free to run them. Liberating hospitals without putting the right leadership in place is asking for trouble. It is like putting a donkey into the Derby. Research shows the best hospitals have great management teams that include clinicians. The biggest enterprise in Europe needs the best talent flow in Europe. Why not create the world’s greatest School of Healthcare Management?