

Deal or no deal?

The Withdrawal Agreement is unchanged, so I have no need to update my comments on it which set out the problems with it, especially concerning the powers of the ECJ and the money.

The Political Declaration is improved. It now makes it clearer that any joint military actions requires the consent of the UK government. More emphasis is given to basing a future trade relationship around a Free Trade Agreement.

The Declaration whilst confirming we become an independent coastal state for fishing purposes puts our fish back into play with the prospect of a new fishing quota and access based agreement with the EU.

It suggests the future agreement is based on an EU Association Agreement, designed to get countries to converge with the EU prior to joining. This is not a good model. The ECJ remains supreme over issues of EU law in any dispute.

The reworked Northern Ireland protocol raises the issue of how could Northern Ireland extricate from following EU rules and customs practices?

This is an important question, as this draft Withdrawal Treaty does not have an Article 50 allowing unilateral exit .