

No deal is better than a bad deal

The Prime Minister was right to say that. Those who think leaving is a complex negotiation should grasp that we would not have a negotiation unless we are willing to walk away. We would have dictation by the other side.

Fortunately the PM understands the strength of the UK position, and understands that No deal would work better for us than for them. It would be a lot better than a punishment deal of the kind some in the Commission have flirted with. In reality it need not be a negotiation at all. It is a series of choices for the rest of the EU, where a friendly and positive UK offers them various advantages which they may or may not want to take up.

If they take up none of our offers when we leave we will be like most of the other 160 countries around the world that are not part of the EU. We will trade with the rest of the EU on WTO most favoured nation terms, just as we trade with China, India and the USA today. We will no longer have special sharing arrangements on defence and Intelligence, other than through our common partnership in NATO. We will impose WTO tariffs against their agricultural exports to us, with the options of growing more at home and inviting in more produce tariff free from elsewhere in the world where it suits our industry and consumers. We will reclaim our fishing grounds. We will spend our own money on our own priorities.

The UK is making a positive and generous set of offers. We are proposing that the rest of the EU keeps tariff free access to our lucrative market, with no new barriers of other kinds. They just need to agree the same for us, and they can carry on exporting so much more to us than we sell to them.

We are proposing that the UK continues to share its Intelligence with them, and to make a contribution to European defence and security initiatives and commitments.

We are proposing that the UK develops a number of friendly collaborations and partnerships in science, education, joint investments and the rest.

These need not be negotiations. They are choices for the EU to make. If they are sensible they will wish to maximise the contribution the UK makes and the access they have to our market. I remain an optimist, thinking well of our partners and expecting them to take the offers that are so manifestly in their own interest. If by any chance they do not, the UK will be just fine. Accepting the very limited tariffs on our exports allowed under WTO rules would be much cheaper than the mountainous bills some have in mind for us to pay. The tariffs we imposed on their exports to us would be much larger and could be given back to UK consumers and businesses as compensation.

If we get a decent free trade Agreement between the UK and the EU I do not expect them to ditch it at the last moment because they wish to advance Spain's claim to Gibraltar. Gibraltar's sovereignty rests with the

Gibraltarians, who have made clear their wish by overwhelming vote to remain attached to the UK.