

The international order

The UK decided to restore democratic powers by leaving the EU. We can now improve, amend or remove laws and spending programmes as we see fit. The government proposes, Parliament responds and public opinion is brought to bear on the process. If a government makes a mess of using its powers it will be replaced at the next election so the voters are in ultimate control.

Various contributors here believe that green policies and covid policies are somehow the work of hidden powerful advisers and forces. They are, on the contrary very public, and have been through substantial governmental processes. Whilst we have removed the overarching powers conferred by the EU Treaties and enforced by an active and powerful court, our country is still under a number of other important Treaties which governments of most political persuasions will observe and enforce. Anti pandemic policy has been heavily influenced by our membership of the World Health Organisation. The UK's green enthusiasm has been locked in by the Climate Change Act enacted by the Labour government and accepted by the incoming Conservative one, and by UK agreement to the Paris and other international conference commitments made globally. I was one of just a handful of MPs who did not support the legislation.

The structure and culture of UK government is to abide by international rules and Agreements. There is no need to look for hidden influences urging these policies when they have been signed up to in a public way so the whole might of the UK official machine is bent on enforcing and complying with them. It is true the CV 19 policies are advisory. It is true the green policies require our consent and there is no strong enforcement mechanism like the European Court to make us do them, but government wishes to apply them anyway.

This means if UK citizens do wish to change these policies it is a bit more difficult. There could be arguments about "breaking international law". When the UK ventured a different view of the Northern Ireland protocol as it needed to do some asserted this was breaking a Treaty and not allowed. I think they were wrong as a good argument can be made from the terms of the Protocol and Treaty themselves that there needs to be change to secure one of its prime objectives, the freedom of the UK single market.

In practice countries do renounce or amend Treaties by agreement, or sometimes reinterpret them. What matters is popular will and national law. Some say of course all Treaties must be obeyed, citing the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht which stated Gibraltar is a UK Crown dependency. I of course favour respecting that Treaty. The truth however is the status of Gibraltar rests with the will and views of the people who live there. It is because 99% voted to stay British that they will stay British and observe the Treaty. If they voted 99% to be Spanish of course there would be change whatever the Treaty says.

So my advice to those of you who disagree with the health or green policy,

understand you need to change the policy of the government which in turn will need to amend its promises and proposals to the international community if you succeed.