

The Remain Parliament tries again to stop Brexit

This week the same MPs who look down on Leave supporters and want to dilute or defeat the decision of UK voters to exit the EU were repeating the same tired lies of Project Fear. This was the case put to voters which lost the referendum. They seem to think that all we "stupid" Leave MPs will get it in the end and change our mind about Brexit. Apparently if you shout the same false forecasts and ignorance about how trade works for long enough the country will decide to stay in the customs union and single market, and maybe in the whole EU.

These MPs perpetuate the myth that WTO trade without a customs union cannot work. They seem to think tariffs will have to be paid at the ports with lorry drivers carrying wallets of fivers as if computers and electronic manifests had not been invented. They do not recognise that complex Just in time supply chains already accommodate non EU components and supplies coming in under WTO rules with EU tariffs. They do not seem to acknowledge the substantial friction of EU UK trade, with VAT, customs, currency change, anti terrorism and anti smuggling checks at or away from borders, and with the need to complete a complex Intrastat declaration.

The government proposed a contradiction on Thursday. The Minister said leaving without a deal remains a possibility, as the law says. Yet the government motion said they were taking no deal off the table! That is why many MPs abstained, as we saw no point in voting for such a contradictory and inaccurate motion. Many abstaining MPs agreed with the part of the motion that supported trying to get a better deal from the EU and made clear their support for that.

The Prime Minister needs to press the EU for a better deal and return with that to the Commons in due course if she wishes to reverse the big defeat the Withdrawal Agreement suffered. I agree with her long held line in the election and afterwards that No deal is better than a bad deal. The Withdrawal Agreement is a bad deal. It would need a lot of improvement to persuade me to like it, as I have set out before. It's not just a case of tweaking the backstop.

Leaving without signing it takes back control of our laws, our money, our borders and our fish. It is what we voted for. We have had 2 years eight months to prepare for leaving, and the government has said we will be ready. The government has said they are not going to block our ports or create new delays at the border, so our imports will flow as before.

I want to see them table a Free Trade Agreement so we do not have to impose tariffs and any other new barriers to trade, and to expedite a managed WTO exit in March. The sooner they do this the better. They should also publish a schedule of tariffs for March 30 so the EU can see what not agreeing to talks on a Free Trade deal looks like. I would have thought they would prefer

tariff free to continue.