

Trade deals – again

Labour, Lib Dems and Greens continue with their mantra – EU trade deal good, US trade deal bad. It is so silly.

We trade successfully with the USA, China and others today without the benefit of a specific Free Trade deal. Were we to be able to negotiate a Free Trade Deal with countries like them we would be able to improve a bit on the current strong trade flows by cutting tariffs and removing some other barriers.

There would be no need to sign a deal with any third country that did damage to the UK. We trade perfectly well now, so we should only sign a deal which improved on current trading. It is absurd to say we would have to privatise the NHS to have a FTA with the USA. No UK government or Parliament would accept such a proposition, and the President of the USA has already said he understands that.

This silly attack has now transmuted into some convoluted argument about the terms for importing and exporting drugs. Again, no UK government would sign a deal which harmed our exports of drugs to the USA, or which forced up the prices of imports from the USA. An FTA is only worth doing if things are better afterwards. The idea is to bring prices down by scrapping tariffs where goods currently attract these and where the tariff can be removed with no countervailing negative.

Meanwhile they also say we could not trade successfully or even at all if we do not have a specific agreement with the EU. This is another lie, ignoring the Political declaration signed by the EU which states our future relationship will be based around a Free Trade Agreement. The EU and all its members are also members of the WTO as we are. Our trade will continue to be primarily regulated by WTO controls against trade friction under the Facilitation of Trade Agreement and the tariff agreement that is central to the WTO with its most favoured nation basis. The EU signed the Political declaration for an FTA because it wants one. It is not some gift to the UK that we have to pay more for.