

Change at No 10

The decision of the two Vote Leave advisers to move on must not get in the way of an early end to the talks with the EU and a clear decision to leave without a bad Agreement. Only if the EU has removed its demands for our fish, to control our laws and to impose their Court as part of an Arbitration system is it worth continuing talks about a Free Trade Agreement.

I have always urged the UK to prepare for No Deal, as it was always possible the EU would fail to deliver the Free Trade Agreement that is in their interest. They promised one in the Political Declaration then failed to propose one.

No Deal has always been better than a bad deal. It seems the EU only wishes to offer a bad deal, so let's get on with leaving the single market. Weak UK negotiating under the previous government where Parliament was determined to help the EU not us made getting a good deal less likely. We now need to enforce the sovereignty clause in the Withdrawal Act.

My speech during the debate on Remembrance, UK Armed Forces and Society, 11 November 2020

Sir John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Today, we remember all those who died in war. As we peer into the gaslit world of the great war or seek to look behind the blackout curtains of 1940s Britain, we realise that we follow two generations of giants.

Many families have fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, grandfathers and great grandfathers who died in battle that we might live in peace. They died in great fear of tyranny and their immediate circumstances that we might be free. They died for our country, so we can be proud of what they did. Some may seek to use powerful new search-lights of history to change the picture they want to see or to play this down, but nothing can change who they were, what they did, nor the principles they carried to victory.

Today is a day for patriotism: that quiet, confident patriotism that characterises our country at its best; the patriotism that comes from being at peace with what those generations did and with the causes they fought. Our country does not go in for brash, aggressive nationalism, asserting ourselves by doing down others.

The unknown soldier was rightly honoured by king and country all those years

ago in recognition that the world war was an immense strain on all, at home or at the front.

It required the most enormous super-human efforts of everyone. The whole country was at war, not just the armed forces and the politicians. The best way we can be true to their memory is to enjoy the freedoms they left us. We can best pursue the path of peace with vivid memories of how, after war ends, the talking begins to reconcile the differences. We must learn from the failure of the great war to end the European conflict. We can best uphold the sacred candle of free speech, turning conflicts into exchanges of passionate words, not bombs and bullets. We can best uphold the right of everyone to a vote and a voice in a democratic society and uphold the right of small as well as large states to self-determination.

So let us vow today that, in this precious debating Chamber we enjoy, we will work to ensure that we will seek to talk and vote our way through our differences. Let us pray our country is not called again to perform the heroic and brave tasks we remember today. Now that states have so much greater power to kill and harm people than they did even a century ago, let us trust in democracy and freedom.

We have had to fight far too many wars. Today, we need a strong defence to keep us safe and to increase the chances of peace. The great war did not turn out to be the war to end all wars, though that was the promise. That was the hope of many in our nation, so let us today vow to find a way to bring us nearer to that most crucial of ambitions.

Has the EU learned anything about Brexit?

I made the mistake of agreeing to an interview from German TV yesterday in London. I assume as they are intelligent people, their pro EU bullying questions presumably came from the EU and or the German authorities.

Why were we risking a border in Ireland? I explained again the UK was not proposing any new physical barriers. They seemed to think there was no border at the moment, ignoring the obvious differences between the UK and the Republic of Ireland . There is already an Excise and Vat Border.

But surely there would need to be a border for the tariffs, they asked? The current border can handle tariffs in the same way as we handle excise and VAT today. There is a free travel area which will continue. The only threat of new physical border controls comes from the EU. How many more times do we have to explain this? Why do they never ask the EU what they are playing at using the border issue in this way? What controls will the EU place on their side of the border?

I was asked why we are breaking the Good Friday Agreement. I explained we are not. They could not explain which clause of it we were alleged to be breaking. We were not planning a new physical border, as above.

I was asked why we are breaking international law. I explained we are not. We are making new UK law to govern our trade and our own single market which was one of the main points of Brexit. Our implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement was always partial as we included in the legislated version an overriding sovereignty clause which we are going to need to use given their persistent wish to boss us about.

I was asked how we would handle Tge tariffs when they come in. I explained that we would decide what tariffs to impose on imports, not them. I pointed out that their high tariffs were reserved for foodstuffs from outside the EU, where we have a massive trade deficit with them. The issue is how will they manage our tariffs as exporters to us, if they renege on their promise to agree a tariff free trade deal.

I was posed the usual false question based on the presumption that you cannot trade without a Free Trade Agreement, and more of the same old absurdities we have faced for five years now.

It's time to end the talks. The EU is not acting in good faith. No deal is a lot better than the kind of one sided deal the EU still has in mind for us.

Levelling up

The government should move on from lockdown to levelling up.

The response to CV 19 has accelerated trends to more on line shopping, more homeworking and more remote delivery of services and entertainment.

This will require a renewal and revision to the policy of levelling up.

The great towns and cities outside London and the south east will need more help in rebuilding and transforming against the background of the damage done by lockdowns and closures.

The government needs to think about how it can assist the Councils and encourage the private sector to undertake the transformational work needed in town and city centres.

It is working on ways of making it easier for building owners to change the use of their property or to knock down and rebuild something better geared to the new circumstances.

It could propose partnerships with developers and property owners to remodel areas of towns and cities scarred by past and recent events, and to utilise

any planning gain for the betterment of the area and the success of the project.

It is also going to take a better package to encourage self employment and the growth of small business. The Treasury's instinct to tax them too much should be restrained.

It also needs more roll out of the government's training and educational offers. The UK above all needs to encourage a new generation of technology specialists and entrepreneurs, as the future is digital.

Does a vaccine offer a way out?

It is fascinating that a possible vaccine is announced as producing good test results shortly after the US election. Apparently there needs to be more time to evaluate it, with a possible appeal for Regulatory approval starting before the end of this month. The method used is new, and the team developing it will need approval to go to accelerated production and roll out as the request will be before usual testing procedures are exhausted.

The company will need to file details of side effects and the results of their safety tests, as well as latest evidence on how effective it is at preventing people catching CV 19. Apparently people need to be vaccinated twice over a 3 week period to gain reasonable immunity. No-one yet knows how long the beneficial effects will last.

I have some questions about this. How willing would you be to take such a vaccine if approved soon? Should the early doses available go to the most vulnerable and to health workers at risk, as is suggested?

At what point can governments then relax their controls and allow us to return to more normal lives? As it has been the wish of many of the scientific and medical advisers of governments to use vaccines to end this crisis they should now spell out to us how long we have to wait for them to be satisfied that enough vaccine has been administered to fulfil their wishes. They have been reluctant to offer us a Plan B, so the least they can do is to tell us what are the timings and trigger points for declaring success on the vaccine route.