

The EU has learned nothing from the negotiations so far

There is good news liberally written into practically every part of the EU's draft negotiating text for a future partnership. In most cases their plans for future conduct revolve around both parties observing international agreements that both are signed up to. So these matters do not need negotiating or even embedding in a new agreement.

We are told relatively friction free borders for goods will rely on the Facilitation of Trade Agreement from the WTO. Exporters and Importers will use the global system of Authorised Economic operators to speed their way across frontiers. The measures on technical barriers and Phytosanitary issues will be founded on the WTO model. The sanitary and phytosanitary requirements themselves will come from global agreements including Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Convention, and the World Organisation for Animal Health standards.

Access to each other's government contracts will stem from both belonging to the WTO Government Procurement Agreement. Nuclear matters will be under global rules and controls. Law enforcement will be under the Council of Europe Conventions. Anti Money Laundering will be under FATF. In some cases the EU says it would like to go further than these world standards that we use today, but without saying how and why.

All this makes the excessive demands and threats more silly. The document is an attempt to recreate all the rules and regulations of the current Treaties and apply them to the UK after we have left, whilst of course the UK would have no vote or voice on any of them as they evolve. The UK government has already made clear it does not accept this "level playing field" view that we become rule takers.

The crudest threat is over the fish. We are told the fishing issues have to be settled by 1 July, before the rest of any Agreement is decided. The Union wishes to avoid loss of fish for its fishermen (sic) though one of the wins for the UK is to get control of our fishing stocks and to land more of the fish in the UK. They suggest we will be blocked on a Free Trade Agreement if we do not sacrifice the fish again.

There is also a continuing refrain that we must play by their rules on everything from the environment and state aids to tax and climate change to qualify for whatever access they think appropriate to their market. They do not ask for any access to our market, where they sell us a lot of food which can attract high tariffs under global rules. They forget that of course we will have plenty of access to their market under WTO rules anyway for the things we sell them.

They confirm that the UK will not be under their control in foreign and defence policy. They state that they will "enable the UK to participate on a

case by case basis and upon invitation of the Union in CSDP mission and operations open to third countries". In other words it up to us and to them if we wish to join in on any particular mission.

The final insult is in the provisions over dispute resolution. Whilst they propose a joint body with every effort to resolve disagreements, they cannot resist inserting the European Court of Justice into any reference to "independent" arbitration. This is a silly provocation.

My contribution to the Statement on Global Britain, 3 February 2020

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Would the Government confirm that the European Union has misjudged the mettle of this Government and country in thinking we are going to give away our fish again and accept all their laws in return for a free trade agreement they need more than us. I congratulate him on his statement and say no more concessions.

Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs (Mr Dominic Raab): Can I thank my Right Honourable Friend. I think I agree with all of those points. Of course, we were asked by the EU to make a choice. We've chosen a Canada style agreement. It seems to many of us that the EU would like to cherry pick by giving us the level of access of a Canada style agreement but wanting a level of alignment of a Norwegian style agreement and that is not on the table.

5 Live and Brexit

On Brexit night I spent 10pm to 11.30pm on 5 Live

Their idea of balance was to have reporters in Parliament Square (pro Brexit) balanced by the Scottish SNP Remain demonstration in Glasgow (anti Brexit) and a protest on the Irish border (anti Brexit) where no-one was around at the protest for the programme! So it was designed to be two against one as if Remain had won. It is also questionable whether you need to balance Remain and Leave now as if there were still a referendum under way, when the public have endorsed Leave again in a General election and it is now government policy. The official Labour Opposition was not out and about complaining on exit night about Brexit so there was no official party source to voice opposition to this national event.

They took pro and anti Brexit calls in turn. They failed to understand the pro Brexit callers who largely took the view that they had voted to belong to an independent democratic country and who instead were treated to detailed points about trade issues on various questionable forecasts and told they would be worse off. Although I gave them positives for Brexit and suggested they put those to the Remain callers they did not do so. I asked them to join me in discussing the advantages of Brexit which they promised to do but did not do. They seemed unhappy when I started to reel off a few of the potential wins we have once we are free.

It is most difficult to hold a sensible public debate when leading broadcast organisations cannot understand either what Leave means or understand why people wish to live in a free democratic and independent country. As I explained we can be better off once out properly, but that will depend on how we use our freedoms. I expect this government to help us be better off, but if any future UK government fails then the joy of democracy is they can be removed and replaced by a government that does know how to make us better off. This is something we were never able to do to the makers of EU policies like the ERM which did so much damage to our prosperity.

When as a young man I was on the losing side of the EEC referendum I accepted the democratic verdict. I did not object to the issue of a celebratory coin nor to the entirely pro EEC bias of the media after the result. Then the establishment regarded the policy and its endorsement as a matter for national rejoicing, not to provide an opportunity for the losing side to go on and on about why we were right all along. No-one suggested we might like a second go because the winning side had not stressed the truth about how this was something much more than a common market, when they assured us our sovereignty was not at risk. No-one asked us to explain how we felt about it all.

I have received complaints about the BBC Brexit night coverage. I expect the government to propose decriminalising non payment of the licence fee soon.

Churchill's vision

On 02.02.2020 it is appropriate to look forward to our future.

When Churchill did so in 1958 at the end of his History of the English-speaking Peoples he looked forward to their ultimate union. He saw the military and defence alliance developing, as it has through NATO, and saw the English speaking peoples as the defenders of Peace and Freedom.

He did not write a history of the European peoples or ever recommend the UK should pool or give up its sovereignty to European institutions. He did point the way to a more united continental western Europe through a rapprochement between France and Germany.

Today we look forward to global UK, with many alliances, friends and allies. Our defence will continue to rest with NATO, our intelligence with 5 Eyes and our global trade through WTO with various other Agreements on top.

Reply to President Macron

Dear President Macron

Thank you for your letter addressed to the UK on the occasion of our departure from the EU. My country looks forward to welcoming you personally to the UK for your next visit, and wishes to have friendly relations with you as our neighbouring state as with the rest of the EU.

As an independent nation we support free trade, democracy and peace and will work to promote all three with our allies and friends. We regard the question of membership of the EU as something for the peoples and governments of each country to decide without external interference. We will work closely with fellow European countries whether non members like Norway and Switzerland or members like France and Germany on issues where we have a common interest or viewpoint.

I was disappointed to see that you have not understood why so many people in the UK voted to leave the EU in the first place and why so many voted in the two subsequent General elections for parties that wished to see Brexit through. You state that you need a "sovereign and democratic Europe whose strength will make our continent strong". You may well think the EU needs to have a stronger central government which is more efficient and effective at doing things. Your task is to explain that vision of greater EU integration and power both to the EU itself where the Germans are sometimes more reluctant than you going forward, and to your own voters who do not all share that vision. I can assure you that the pro Brexit majority in the UK was fundamentally opposed to more EU political integration, and wanted powers back from the EU for the UK which the EU decided not to offer. As a bare minimum we wanted control over our taxes, benefits and borders, areas where UK governments had previously falsely assured us we would retain a veto.

It is not now for the UK to tell the EU what level of political or economic integration is appropriate because we are no longer members with vote and voice. We wish you all well in coming to a happy outcome. I note making a success of a single currency usually requires substantially more political, budgetary and economic integration than the EU has so far achieved. It usually needs what the Germans somewhat disparagingly call a "transfer union". When I with others ran a successful campaign to persuade the UK not to join the Euro it was obvious the UK needed a different relationship with the EU, whilst the EU proceeded on the false assumption that it was only a matter of time before the UK gave in and joined the

currency.

You state that UK access to the single market will depend on the "degree to which EU rules are accepted". The UK is leaving so we can make our own laws. The government has made clear we seek a Free Trade Agreement if there is a mutually beneficial one that is better than trading with each other on best or favoured nation WTO terms. Japan and Canada have good FTAs with the EU that do not require accepting EU legislative supremacy. You should also remember that the EU seeks preferential access to the UK market, which it has enjoyed for many years. Our mutual trade account is dominated by EU exports, not by UK exports. We are happy to offer continued tariff free and relatively barrier free entry to the UK in return for similar access to the EU despite the big imbalance in trade in the EU's favour.

Brexit voters voted to leave the single market and customs union and do not share your rosy view of these devices. Many think the EU sees the UK as a Treasure island, to take our money and to sell us many goods on terms denied the rest of the world. We do not think the single market was created by UK Ministers. As the UK's single market Minister in the crucial period prior to the 1992 so called completion of the single market I remember fighting many battles at the time trying to make the single market less of an excuse for a power grab with a big build up in bureaucracy over business. Some of the large companies who now support EU rules in those days wanted me to argue against many of them or to water them down on the grounds that they made things dearer but not better and were hostile to innovation. .

I watched sadly our first ten years of membership of the EEC. As I predicted at the time, the shock of removing all tariffs on goods where Germany and to a lesser extent France and Italy had a comparative advantage over us, without removing barriers to a wide range of services where the UK had an advantage resulted in a big increase in our trade deficit with the EU which continued throughout our membership. More importantly it led to a halving of our car output, to a large reduction in our steel output, to the closure of many foundries and textile mills. No wonder I and many like me developed or confirmed a negative view of the EEC/EU. This was made far worse by the disaster of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism inflicted on us by the EU and the governing elite in the UK.

So please understand we want to be friends with the EU and with its individual member states. We are happy to trade freely with you even though it helps EU exporters more than our own. We see no need to sacrifice further or pay more for our future relationship. Your letter implies the EU has learned nothing and still does not understand why we left. We left to be an independent country. You cannot drag us back under EU control because it suits the EU.

You mention Winston Churchill. He did indeed want a more integrated Europe but never thought the UK would be part of it. He wrote his History of the English speaking peoples to set out his view that the UK needed closer ties with the USA and other Countries in his history.

With every good wish

John Redwood