

Tariffs and trade

Tariffs can be damaging to trade. That is why I want us out of the EU customs union, because it imposes high tariffs on lower income countries wishing to sell us better value food. I want us to be able to negotiate a lower overall tariff package for ourselves than the EU wishes to do with the rest of the world. It is particularly foolish and unfriendly to levy high tariffs on food we cannot grow for ourselves because it comes from a non EU country.

I find it curious that the EU claims to be scandalised by Mr Trump threatening a 10% tariff on German cars which sell in large numbers into the US, when the EU itself imposes just such a 10% tariff on US cars into the EU. Germany runs a colossal trade surplus with both the UK, inside the EU tariff wall, and with the US, outside the tariff wall. Mr Trump identifies the asymmetric tariffs and some other barriers as one of the reasons the trade is so lop sided, and wishes to do something about it.

Meanwhile it is typical of the EU that they are telling the UK that we cannot exempt ourselves from the US steel tariffs, though we would probably be in a good position to do so on our own. It is reminder of why we need to get on with our exit so we do have control over these matters. I also read that the EU is still pursuing tax cases against us and argues that we owe them E2.7bn of underclaimed customs dues which the UK Treasury contests. We have lost a lot of revenue before from EU tax cases and now have to argue against making yet another additional payment to a body we are leaving. Clearly they think we should be levying higher tariffs on non EU imports than we think are owing because they wish to keep these products out, and to harm UK consumers.

This is not the wonderful free trade EU some think we must stay in at all costs.

How about some new subjects for media interviews about Brexit ?

The mainstream media seems to have got lost in repeats on their news and comment shows. Every day is Groundhog day. They do the Irish border story, the various alleged barriers to trade stories, and various sectors at possible risk stories. Most of it fans baseless fears or perpetuates misunderstandings of what the current position is and how WTO works. It usually assumes both that the EU will be out to damage their trade with us, and that they will have the power to do so even though we are no longer under their jurisdiction!

If they wish to do a Brexit story every day when there is precious little

news in these very slow moving negotiations. I have some thoughts on some new topics that many of us would be interested in. They could also provide a bit of balance.

Let's ask the various parties how they would like to spend the Brexit bonus, the £12bn we will save when we are finally out. And let's have some discussion on whether we should pay the EU additional money after 29 March 2019, and if so why and for how long.

Let's look at our options for designing a much better fishing policy for the UK once after March 2019 we have taken back control of our waters and fish stocks. How much more fish could we land in the UK and sell at home or for export, whilst doing a better job than the CFP has done on conserving stocks, owing to discards.

Let's get on with debating a modern UK farming policy, with an emphasis on how much more food we can grow for ourselves as we used to before entering the CAP.

Let's discuss which are the best prospects for new trade deals around the world, and will the government ensure we can sign these quickly once out of the EU?

The government is rarely asked about its leaving preparations, and the Opposition rarely asked about what it wants the country to do with its new freedoms once out.

[A new migration policy](#)

Many people in the UK would like to see a better balance between supply and demand for homes. Houses are dear in many parts of the country, rents are high and people struggle to get on the housing ladder as owners.

Many people would also like congestion on the roads reduced so they could get their children to school and themselves to work and back more easily each day.

Many want our air to be cleaner, and for the UK to make a bigger contribution to reducing pollution.

We all want our power and water supplies to be good enough for all conditions, at a time when our capacity in both is quite constrained.

A new migration policy in line with the governments own aims and targets would make a contribution to all of these aspirations. If we welcomed in fewer economic migrants each year, limiting the numbers eligible to take lower paid jobs and benefits, we would make the task of tackling housing

shortages, congestion, air quality from transport exhausts and power generation, and utility provision that much easier.

The government's aims and targets allow plenty of scope for people with skills, investors, those coming into senior roles in companies, academics and others to come to our country and to contribute as they do now, and they will be most welcome. It does not require any new border arrangements or controls on tourists, visitors, people wishing to support themselves here from their own savings and assets.

A new migration policy requires two things. It needs the government to extend the work permit system from the rest of the world to the whole world as we leave the EU, creating fairness between people from Europe and from anywhere else. It then can set limits to the numbers admitted for lower paid work, and can give sector and regional specific permits out where there is a clear need that cannot be fulfilled from our present population.

It also needs the government to set sensible rules over eligibility to benefits, requiring people coming here to wait before gaining eligibility until they have been taxpayers and settled residents for a reasonable period of time.

I look forward to the government publishing a paper on just how it will run these matters after March 2019.

The Brexit Vision

Following the rejection of the UK's very generous offer to the EU by the Commission and the Parliament, I am reminding people why we voted Leave by publishing the relevant section from my recent lecture.

The negotiating mandate put out by the EU falls well short of a Good Deal for us and for them, as it seeks to tie us down in far too many ways without offering a good reason to accept their terms.

The main benefits of Brexit come from once again being a self governing country

I find it extraordinary that so many who make their living out of government and politics

Are so defeatist about this greatest of countries

Why do they doubt our abilities to shape good laws

Frame a good economic policy

And trade with the five continents of the world based on what we are good at?

Why do they both say they love the EU

Yet have such a low view of it that they think its main aim will be to do us down

Why do they tell us every clause and line of the Treaties has to be enforced against the UK

Yet all those great clauses in the Treaties that require the EU to be a good neighbour and trading partner of nearby states will in their view go unenforced and unheeded

If the EU is as logical and legal as they say our future friendly relationship is assured

And if it is not and the Treaty is made for breaking, it need not concern us what it says, especially once we are out

Anyone who walks the corridors and great rooms at Westminster

Must see there the heroic story of our islands

There on the walls and in the sculptures are the establishment and the rebels

The winners and the losers, the great moments of our history

There is the signing of Magna Carta, the taming the King in the seventeenth century,

The union of the crowns,

The saving of Europe from Napoleon,

The passage of the Great Reform Bill and the triumph of the suffragettes

So many made common cause to put the people in charge through their vote

And to put Parliament in charge of carrying out their wishes

All the time we remained in the EU there were an increasing number of laws we could not change

More taxes we could not control. More money that someone else spent away from our shores

This system took away the very freedoms our ancestors fought for and established

Once back these powers will be used well and sometimes badly, but always as a result of strong argument and heated votes here at home,

We will doubtless have economic reversals out of the EU as we did in it

But the difference matters

Next time when mistakes are made they will be our mistakes
They will be mistakes the British people can punish and put right
More importantly
Taking back control gives us immediate opportunities
To legislate wisely
And to grow our prosperity
That is why I voted for Brexit
That is why many of the 17.4 million voted for Brexit
That is why many who voted Remain
Will be winners too from this course
Once we are at last out of the EU.
This great people
This once and future sovereign
Will have many contributions to make to the world
As we have in the past
Let us be a voice for freedom
A strong arm for peace
And a force for good around the globe

[The Italian election](#)

The BBC and other parts of the media seem to be very quiet about the Italian election. You would have thought this stunning result was worth a bit of comment, analysis and discussion. Just as we saw in Greece, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere in the Eurozone the traditional centre right and centre left parties have been dashed aside. 5 Star, a fairly new movement, has swept through the south of Italy, whilst the Lega has dominated in the northern Italian plain, taking much of Lombardy, the Veneto, Trentino and Piedmont. The centre left governing party was left holding on to Tuscany, whilst losing in most of the country. It slumped to just 18.9% of the vote, with the centre right party Forza that had displaced the Christian democrats some years ago only polling 13.9%.

Both 5 Star and Lega are Eurosceptic. Mr Salvini who leads Lega speaks for the centre right coalition as its largest party. The coalition has 37% of the vote. Mr Di Maio, the leader of 5 Star, speaks for 32.3% of the vote. One of them should be Prime Minister, though coalition talks could I suppose find some other combination of parties which gave the job to someone else. The Lega campaigned for Italy to leave the Euro and to remove the Maastricht, Nice, Amsterdam and Lisbon Treaties from Italy's constitution. 5 Star dropped its wish to leave the Euro, but made clear its opposition to EU budget and Euro austerity policies and proposed spending more with tax cuts.

Lega representatives have made clear their view that the EU should change its approach to the UK and try and rescue an Agreement which they think would be in the EU's interests. They had already upset the EU authorities massively, so that will not make much difference to the relationship.

The Italian result is another in a long series showing growing anger and frustration with the economic and budgetary policies of the Euro, high levels of unemployment, and the EU's migration policy. It will probably make Brussels corral the waggons of integration more and will doubtless entice them to try to influence the government formation talks which will now be fascinating. The collapse of Italy's governing party to 18.9% does at least make Mrs Merkel's 26% vote share for her CDU look good!