

## Taming the virus

Next week I will return to issues over how we handle the virus that I have often raised before. I welcome the arrival of two vaccines which will be widely taken up by those who want protection. The UK has been first of the advanced countries to licence these products and to start vaccinating people. The scientific advisers have always seen this as the way out of lockdown, so the sooner a lot of people are vaccinated the sooner presumably they will be satisfied,

Meanwhile there are other things that could help us live with the virus, as we have to do with a number of potential killer diseases without locking down society.

- 1, Air extraction. Where have the government got to in improving air extraction at their own buildings including hospitals to ensure rapid removal of potentially contaminated air?
2. Where are the grant and advice schemes to allow private sector businesses from shops to restaurants to improve their air extraction and make their venues safer?
3. Air and surfaces purification. Where have they reached in using powerful UV cleaners (in safe spaces) to clean up recycled air and to decontaminate surfaces?
4. Other treatments. After the initial break through with a steroid we were promised test results for a range of other possible treatments. Where have they got to with those?
5. Isolation hospitals. Why are they not using the Nightingales as specialist isolation CV 19 units to cut numbers going to District General hospitals and to allow more hospitals to be CV 19 free? Cross infection is still an issue.
6. Staffing. Why do they not do 5 above to cut numbers of staff away from work because they have CV 19 or may have been in contact with it?
7. When will they cut through the barriers to the return of retired staff who are qualified to help them?

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## The EU finds it difficult to adjust

The EU website today has no record of the EU/UK Trade Agreement under trade deals. Nor does its site give any indication of how to trade with the UK, left out from a long list of nations they refer to in the Trade section. Do

they not want to keep on selling us so much, or are they just unable to update their site for the new realities? Surely they should put up the EU/UK Agreement subject to ratification, as I understand that is what they intend to do. Alternatively if they do not think they will be ratifying it they should put up the WTO terms to alert people to that.

The EU site has however been updated in one important respect. Where it seeks to show the scale and size of the EU in the world they now quote figures for the EU 27 without the UK. It shows the EU currently at a little under 15% of world GDP, with a forecast suggesting this will fall to 9% of the world by 2050. The EU cites estimates that the USA will lose less share than the EU over the next 30 years, whilst India will surge and China will do well.

I did not see any discussion of how the EU might limit its losses in share of world output, or narrow the gap with the USA. The challenge for the UK out of the EU will be shift our performance upwards to US or better levels, by varying our policy mix from the one the EU predicts will leave it declining as an economic force in the world.

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## Using the new freedoms

I am glad to see the government is starting to use the new freedoms we gain.

Now we can control our taxes the Tampon tax as promised goes. Other bad VAT impositions need to follow.

As we start to regain full control of our fishing grounds, pulse fishing is to be banned in UK waters. This will help improve our marine environment protection and help to rebuild fish stocks. More is needed as I have been setting out. Bring on the full range of policies to build a much bigger fish based industry.

I look forward to many more announcements to come to boost our recovery and give us a better deal. We should repeal the Ports Regulation and re instate the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 which was overturned by the ECJ

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## New Year's day

Happy New Year.

2021 should be a year of economic recovery and renewal, the year when we put the pandemic behind us and embrace the new opportunities for global Britain.

Welcome to our first day as an independent country after 48 years in the EEC/EU. I want the government to use our new freedoms to promote our voice for the good abroad and our prosperity at home.

Rejoining the World Trade Organisation as a full member, the UK will now be a strong and influential proponent of free trade. I look forward to us enhancing the trade deals we already have, and entering new ones. The Trans Pacific Partnership, for example, is a large fast growing bloc which offers us many opportunities to increase our trade.

Chairing the world conference on green matters, I want the UK to be a voice for a practical and popular roll out of products and services that can place clean air and water at the heart of what we do. Policy needs to go with the grain of human nature and ambition.

As a leading member of NATO I want the UK to be a force for peace in the world, building on recent advances with peace treaties in the Middle East, and acting as a strong deterrent to disruptive actions by rogue states and movements.

I look forward to the removal of VAT from items like heating controls and insulation now we can make our own tax decisions. I want to see Freeports and Enterprise Zones to attract more investment and more better paid jobs to places that need a boost. I welcome the new student exchange scheme to replace and improve on Erasmus. The Turing scheme will support more students wanting to study abroad, and will be a worldwide scheme, not just a European one, extending their choices and widening horizons.

I want to see more of our farming grant regime go to promote more UK grown and reared food, to cut the food miles and ensure high local standards. I welcome the decision to ban the live export of animals, and want the government to ban pulse fishing in our waters. We need to rebuild our fish stocks as we plan a larger UK industry, and restore our marine environment.

Today we have again an independent country. Every adult is a voter who can choose MPs to pass the laws and spend the state budget as we wish, and who can dismiss MPs at elections if they let us down. The restoration of accountable democracy is at the centre of the Brexit project. 2021 will be the year to educate the official government into responding more to the needs and wishes of the people, and less to the requirements of an EU law code.

A happy new year to you all. I look forward to working on all the challenges in conjunction with a government which now has more power to shape events for us.

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# How I feel about leaving the EU

I was asked to provide a comment, so I reproduce here for my readers:

I was told when young I was born into a country famed for her democracy, the home of the Mother of Parliaments, a place where each individual's voice was respected and each vote mattered. There was nothing the UK could not achieve. We were self governing, trading with the five continents of the world, an outward looking seafaring island people.

All this changed with our progressive incorporation into the EU project of economic, monetary and political union. For many years the UK governing classes pretended the project was not one of union, or thought we could be swept along by stealth. The public thought otherwise, demanded a referendum and voted to be an independent country.

I never doubted we would win the referendum. I argued that we were being good Europeans by stepping aside from their mighty task to create a United States of Europe. We should wish them well and be friends with them, but the fact that the UK had refused to join the Euro showed where our hearts resided – with the wider world and with national democracy. Today I feel much relief that our country has been open with our friends in Europe and stated clearly we wish to be self governing whilst good trading partners and allies of theirs. I look forward to 2021 as a year of strong economic recovery, where we can start to use the new freedoms and opportunities