

Net zero

Some people writing in want me to challenge the idea behind net zero policies. They believe the climate is not warming, or they believe it is but this is not brought about by manmade CO₂. They query the climate models, pointing out past times when the models have not forecast correctly. They ask why the models are based on one main variable, manmade CO₂, and do not seem to encompass solar intensity, cloud cover and water vapour, earth seismic activity, natural CO₂, and other possible influences. They wish to dispute with the scientific establishment who claim the science is settled and that only a major reduction of man made CO₂ can change things for the better.

I have no intention of doing this. Those who want to need to find other sites and other authors. I intend instead to concentrate on the areas I know best. My challenge to established governments' thinking is to the idea that the current range of policy proposals to drop world CO₂ will deliver their exacting targets any time soon. They very clearly will not, and in some cases the proposed remedies land the world with more CO₂ than without them.

The main things I will continue to question are

1. The accounting system which says if the UK cuts its CO₂ production by importing energy and energy intensive products instead of extracting and making its own, this is helpful. It clearly increases world CO₂ by at least the amount of the extra transport. If you import LNG instead of producing your own piped gas it is a big increase in CO₂.
2. The fact that whatever the UK does to its small amount of world CO₂ the targets will be met or missed by the actions of China, India, the US and the other large CO₂ emitters. China and India plan to increase emissions this decade, and India well into the next decade making it very unlikely world targets will be hit by 2030. Those most worried about this need to turn their protests to China and India.
3. Electric cars are very CO₂ intensive for their manufacture and for the extraction of the raw materials and the production of their batteries. They need to be driven many miles before there are CO₂ savings compared to keeping your old ICE vehicle. If you recharge an EV drawing power from fossil fuel power generators as many do there is clearly no gain.
4. Heat pumps are very expensive. They require a lot of disruptive and CO₂ intensive work to remodel and insulate a home before installation. They may not give a good result. They too do not help if the country has too little renewable power available to fire them.
5. The world is embarking on a wide range of different technologies – carbon capture, hydrogen, electrical drive, battery storage, pump storage, synthetic fuels other than hydrogen. There will only be a swifter transition when a few of these are scaled up and become cheaper, leading to wider adoption. The big array puts many people off early adoption, waiting to see what will attract the most subsidy to start and what will become more economic as it is grows.
6. The green issues need to be balanced with security of supply, affordability and practicality of product. Many green products for

transport and home are a work in progress which is why they are not selling in huge numbers. More work is needed to produce great value products that people want.

In summary for this revolution to take off most people need to change the way they travel, heat their homes, their diet and the products they buy. This will only happen when there are better green products on offer that people want to buy.

My Intervention on the Post Office Horizon Ministerial Statement

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

Will the Minister take UK Government Investments out of its role of controlling and supervising the Post Office? It has allowed these gross injustices to go on for too long, allowed the Post Office senior managers to rack up huge losses of £1,391 million to last March, with more to come this year, and given the executives bonuses for losing us that much money. It has left the Government with a great financial black hole. Would it not be better to change the Post Office management, to have it report directly to the Minister, and to make its No. 1 task giving justice to the sub-postmasters?

Kevin Hollinrake:

I thank my right hon. Friend for his question. He and I have had serious conversations about the future of the Post Office, which I am keen to continue to engage on. The current UKGI representative who sits on the Post Office board is Lorna Gratton, for whom I have a great deal of time and respect. Clearly it is important that the inquiry does its work to determine who did what in the past. As we look to the future, there are different opinions on how the Post Office should be governed. I am happy to keep those discussions ongoing with my right hon. Friend.

My Interventions in the Northern Ireland address – 2

Mr Baker:

If my right hon. Friend will agree, I would like to have a meeting with him,

because I am very clear that the scope of law that can apply in Northern Ireland is that which is necessary to ensure the smooth flow of goods.

I have said before at this Dispatch Box that we were always going to have special arrangements for Northern Ireland. When I resigned from the then Government in 2018, the issue that I forced among our colleagues in the European Research Group was that of Northern Ireland. We wrote a paper that said that there would need to be alternative administrative and technical arrangements so that there could be an open border with the Republic of Ireland. We understood that there would be special arrangements. There was never going to be an open border with no arrangements to deal with it, and there was never going to be a hard border; it was always going to be necessary to do something unique and special in Northern Ireland.

As I have also said at this Dispatch Box, had this country gone forward with one united voice in accepting the referendum result, and had this country enjoyed the good quality of relations with Ireland and the EU that we enjoy today, we might have done better than leaving in place some EU law in Northern Ireland. I wish we had, but after all we have been through and the eight years it has taken to do it, I think that this settlement taken overall—the Windsor framework plus the Command Paper, including the Humble Address we are debating today—represents the moment to bank what I regard as a win and move forward constructively in the best interests of all the people of the UK, but also the people of the Republic of Ireland.

John Redwood:

Let me reassure the Minister that the Secretary of State gave me a very clear assurance in this House that we can legislate for VAT for Northern Ireland—so I am not quite sure why he was querying that.

[My Interventions on the Northern Ireland address – VAT](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

When I last asked him in the House, the Secretary of State assured us that this House can now legislate for VAT in Northern Ireland, which was a very welcome assurance. Can the Minister explain how far the EU can go in legislating for Northern Ireland if we in the Unionist community are not very happy with that?

Mr Baker:

I refer my right hon. Friend to the table on page 4 of the Command Paper, which answers his question somewhat more broadly. That table compares

Northern Ireland to Ireland as an illustrative member state and Norway as a European economic area state, and goes through the ways in which the status of Northern Ireland, EU membership and EEA membership differ. Anyone looking at that table can see that Northern Ireland is in a completely different place.

When it comes to the specific issue of the extent to which Northern Ireland can be legislated for by the EU, I refer my right hon. Friend to the democratic consent mechanism for the overall arrangement—the first vote on which will take place later in the year—and also to the Stormont brake, to which we could return but which we have covered in previous debates. I have known my right hon. Friend very well for a number of years; I have followed his thoughts on this issue since some years before I was a Member, and I am reluctant to give him a very specific answer on the issue of VAT. I know he will have followed the details, and the last thing I want to do is give him an incorrect answer.

My Speech at the Cambridge Union – This House does NOT believe in a United States of Europe

Please find below the link to download my Speech at the Cambridge Union:

[CUS This House Believes In A United States of Europe – Opposition 1 – Sir John Redwood \[Do Not Publish\]](#)