

My intervention during the Statement on Preparations for Leaving the European Union, 21 October 2019

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): There is no such thing as a no-deal exit; if we leave without the withdrawal agreement, there would be all sorts of agreements and arrangements in place. So will the Government do more to tell the country about the 2017 facilitation of trade agreement between all World Trade Organisation members to ensure smooth borders, the government international procurement agreement to allow Governments to transact business, and the customs, haulage and aviation arrangements and agreements, which are all in place. People should stop scaremongering.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr Michael Gove): My right hon. Friend makes a very fair point. If we leave without the withdrawal agreement being ratified, we will leave without that deal. "No deal" is sometimes used to cover that specific outcome, and it is with respect to that widely accepted description that I use the term. He is right to say there are other agreements, and there will continue to be agreements, that we have concluded, both with individual EU member states and with the EU overall, which will govern our relationship. However, I am strongly of the view that a withdrawal agreement which has been ratified in this place will be the best possible way in which we can ensure both that we recognise the Brexit referendum vote and that we continue to have free trade and friendly co-operation.

My intervention during Business of the House, 21 October 2019

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Given that we still have not seen the Bill, may I ask what is the deadline for the tabling of amendments, and until what hour the Government would propose that we sit on these three days?

Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg): A motion has been tabled in my name to be dealt with later today, allowing for amendments to be submitted prior to the Second Reading. If that motion is approved by the House, it will be possible to submit them later today, by which time the Bill will have been approved. The programme motion will be set out tonight before the rise of the House.

[My intervention during the Urgent Question on Northern Ireland: Restoring Devolution, 21 October 2019](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): The DUP is understandably very unhappy about the customs and single market arrangements in the agreement, so will the Government table a free trade agreement and get on with it, because that would help?

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr Julian Smith): I am not responsible for the European negotiations.

[My intervention during the Urgent Question on the European Union \(Withdrawal Agreement\) Bill and Extension Letter, 21 October 2019](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): I am glad that the Government wish to base our future relationship with the EU on comprehensive free trade agreements, but will they get on with tabling one, and show urgency in trying to secure one? The sooner we can secure one, the more reassuring it will be for Northern Ireland; and the public, who are heartily sick of all this, do not want to waste another 15 months.

May I personally thank you, Mr Speaker, for avoiding groundhog day today? I heard all the arguments on Saturday, and I do not think that I need to hear them again.

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Mr Stephen Barclay):

I agree with my right hon. Friend: we need to get on to the future relationship. The House has been endlessly debating the winding-down provisions, which are contained in the withdrawal agreement Bill. The political declaration sets out a clear framework for a best-in-class free trade agreement, and we need to pass the Bill in order to get on with that.

Parliament thwarts the government again

As I thought, the government was not allowed to re run Saturday by tabling the Withdrawal Agreement for another vote today. The Speaker decided that Parliament had the chance to vote for the Agreement on Saturday and had voted instead not to support the Agreement in principle but instead to look at the draft legislation it would need first. That is what the government now wishes to do tomorrow. The votes the government lost on Thursday on procedure and on Saturday over consideration of the Agreement proved lethal to their idea that Parliament would approve the Agreement.

The task remains difficult for the government. It needs to get agreement to a tight timetable for the legislation. It needs the Bill to clear all Commons stages in just three days, so it can pass to the Lords to leave open the chance of completing it by the October 31 deadline. It also needs to secure the Bill without any amendment to the provisions of the Treaty it is seeking to replicate, as that would require the government to go back and seek change from the EU.

The Remain forces in Parliament may try to move a reasoned amendment to the second reading motion of the Bill to attach conditions to it. They may wish to move amendments during committee stage to add a second referendum or a full customs union or single market membership or one of the many other permutations they have argued for over the last long three years since the referendum decision they regret. Anyone of these if carried could be unacceptable to the government, and in some cases could require returning to Brussels for renegotiation were Parliament able and willing to proceed with the legislation despite the government.

The opposition may argue the three days are insufficient for a "long and complex constitutional Bill", and resist the government pointing out Parliament has talked about little else than this Agreement for almost a year. They could try to vote down the timetable, or seek to impose a longer timetable of their own. There is also the issue of how the Lords will behave if and when they receive the Bill, as it is more difficult to timetable the Lords.

Meanwhile the government may strengthen the Bill with a sovereignty clause to help with the problem of excessive EU powers during the so called Implementation period stretching to December 2020.