

What kind of Remain did Remain voters vote for?

Throughout the referendum campaign Remain advocates refused to discuss the current state and the future path of the EU. Many of those I debated with declined even to defend the current EU, saying it had its faults and they wished it to be reformed. I found few willing to defend the Common Fisheries Policy, the drift to common taxation through EU VAT, company tax rules and special taxes, the policy on animal husbandry, the Maastricht budget rules and austerity and much else of the current EU. Had we enjoyed a proper debate on the current and future EU I suspect more would have voted Leave. For those passionate Remainers who write in here I am offering them a chance today to write about their favourite subject, why we should stay in the EU. Here are some possible futures of the EU. Which did they have in mind when they voted to keep the UK in membership?

1 "Ever closer union". Do they accept the main aims of the EU, to create a full monetary, social, economic and political union? When do they think the UK should join in properly, by joining the Euro, the core of the current Union? Do they accept that the Euro with or without UK membership will need a bigger and better transfer union to help the poorer countries in the Euro? Do they support a bigger EU budget to bring that about? Do they welcome more EU based taxes to pay for Union policies? Do they welcome a common defence and security policy? Should UK armed forces be part of European forces and accept command from the EU?

2. If they wish to avoid some features of ever closer union, how would they secure the necessary opt outs as the Union proceeds with a fuller budgetary and political union? How realistic is it for the UK to be round the budget table for the general EU budget but not round the table for the Euro area budget? At what point does the opt out from the currency cease to be an opt out from the budgetary consequences of the Euro? What would the UK have to do if there were another financial or banking crisis in the Euro area? How far can the UK allow defence industrial integration go before it is no longer an independent nation for defence purposes?

3. Are there any limits to government expansion and legal creep which characterise the advance of the EU? Do advocates accept that the more ECJ decisions there are, the more regulations and directives there are, the more we are governed by the EU institutions and the less scope our Parliament has for independent action and lawmaking. The EU has a doctrine of the occupied field. Once it passes a directive or regulation, it then has power in that area and can override national parliaments. Recently the EU has for example taken over much of the regulation of the new social media and digital industries which are crucial for our future. Surely at some point there has to be greater recognition in the democratic system of the big transfer of power which is occurring, with strengthened democratic control over the EU Commission and the European Court of Justice, which is an activist court with a political mission.

No deal is better than a bad deal

Various people are spreading the lie that they were not told No deal is better than a bad deal before the 2017 election. Not only did Mrs May often say it but it was on p36 of the Conservative Manifesto.

Meeting over the closure of the Reading driver licensing test centre

I met with concerned driver instructors over the planned closure of the Reading test Centre. The Licensing Agency has said it is seeking an alternative site, as they seem to agree with local opinion that we do need an accessible driver testing centre in our area. Reading is a central location for Wokingham and the villages in most of my constituency. There could be an acceptable alternative, but so far the Agency has not shared with us its thoughts on where that might be. Clearly any new location should also take into account local opinion about the suitability of the chosen site.

How does the Prime Minister break free from his Parliamentary captors?

The Prime Minister has been taken hostage by Parliament. This Parliament has decided to oppose the people by denying us the result of our people's vote. The Prime Minister threatened to implement the people's view, so they decided to strip him of the power of his office to stop him. Revealing their true anti democratic nature they stopped him holding a general election to let the people reassert their will. This is surely the worst chapter in Parliament's usually democratic story. It is quite wrong of Parliament to both prevent a government governing and to refuse an election to choose a new government. It is Parliament against the people.

It is something worse than this. It is deliberately placing UK government entirely under the control of EU government. The PM is hostage to stop him taking us out of the EU. He is hostage to stop him negotiating from a position of strength with the EU. He is hostage so the EU can pass any law,

make any legal judgement, make any financial demand it wishes and a weak UK will have to obey and pay.

So what are the Prime Minister's options from here?

He should obey the law, but he should expect Parliament to pass laws according to our rules and conventions and not to abuse the legislative powers it holds.

He should not resign. Resigning would give the EU faction what they want, control of the executive as well as of Parliament. They would delay an election and seek to make it even more difficult for us to leave the EU.

He should mount the case that Parliament legislated to keep us in unreasonably. It overturned the need for a Money resolution and Queens consent. It is seeking to make a law out of a political instruction to a Prime Minister it refuses to remove from office by voting him out. If Parliament does not like the government's use of its powers, then it has to vote it out of office. It has refused to even consider a No confidence vote followed by an election if the opposition wins. The PM should not back down from his refusal to ask for another extension to our membership for no obvious helpful purpose.

The Prime Minister needs to seek an early election. He could on Monday try to amend the Fixed Term Parliament Act as that would only require a simple majority, not a two thirds majority. There could then be sufficient decent individual Opposition MPs who would support, seeing the damage delay is doing to Parliament and to their parties reputation with voters other than those wedded to the EU. There is the issue of whether that could invite worse amendments. It would need to have very narrow scope to avoid amendments that seek to change the franchise or undertake other constitutional changes, so once again lawyers and arguments over procedure would need to precede tabling anything.

He should rally the country against those MPs and parties who have created this mess. He should urge other member states to deny any move to delay the UK's exit further, making clear that the UK forced to stay in the EU against the will of the people is not in their interests any more than ours. How can the EU proceed when one of its largest members has no intention of joining the Euro, no intention of helping pay for the Euro scheme and no wish to support any of the necessary moves to greater political union?

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Government should obey the law.

Parliament should obey the rules when legislating.

The law Parliament is seeking to pass is an unusual law seeking to control the conduct of the Prime Minister in an international negotiation.

It is not a criminal law creating a new crime. There are no proposed penalties, fines or prison sentences in it should the PM not obey it. It is not a general law applying equally to all of us, nor even a law always applying to government. It is a Parliamentary instruction or political opinion on one issue at one time passed as a law.

This Bill has passed this far without a Money Resolution to approve the large extra spending entailed in delaying our exit, and without Queens Consent to Parliament taking over the power vested in government to negotiate treaties.

The law courts wisely decided not to back the government's Parliamentary critics over prorogation. Recent events have shown, as the government argued, the prorogation did not prevent Parliament returning to the issue of Brexit and making its views clear anyway. Parliament will have yet more time to debate Brexit in October after the conference break.

The attempt to control the PM's conduct of an international negotiation through the courts is also unwise. It is Parliament's job to control the PM in his international negotiations. It does this, as with Mrs May, by ratifying or refusing to ratify the results of the talks. It does it if it wishes by endless debate and pressure during the course of the negotiations, often with unhelpful effects on them. If enough MPs in Parliament strongly disapprove of the PM's negotiating stance then they need to remove him from office by voting him down in a motion of no confidence and triggering an election.