

Time to take back control

The Commons when it votes on the EU Withdrawal Bill has a simple decision to make. Will it take back control, as the majority wish, or will it seek to perpetuate the Puppet Parliament we have lived with for many years?

Will it side with the people, or with the peers? Does it understand the democratic mandate of the Referendum and the last general election, or does it think the EU and its most fanatic supporters are right to ignore such votes, to govern on with ears closed to the views of the voters?

The attitude of the Lords majority is sad to listen to. So many of them who allowed or encouraged the surrender of so much of our power of self government to Brussels have been fighting a rearguard action against reclaiming our right to democratic self government. These people do not even have the excuse that they sold our freedoms for a good price. They paid to give our freedoms away. They sought nothing of value for us in return. We sent the EU billions, all to enjoy a huge trade deficit with them which we can keep outside the EU for no price if we wish.

The endless debates in the Lords and the Commons over the past two years have repeated the depressingly negative campaign of Remain. They have not lined up to say the UK should enthusiastically plunge into full EU membership, joining the Euro which is the central part of the project, and welcoming full control of our borders and migration policy by the EU. They have not painted a picture of a more successful and more prosperous UK within the EU, and been unwilling to accept that the journey to political union would mean the UK being an important province in an EU empire.

Instead they have concentrated on the short term, generating a set of fears about immediate prospects for exports and imports, and claiming that their beloved EU will deliberately spike their own trade with us to prove a point. What kind of people do they think we are? Why do they think we would believe such nonsense? Why do they think we should be scared by the few wild threats the EU occasionally makes to fuel Remain dreams?

It is extraordinary that so many of the people given the great honour of sitting in the Lords and helping make our laws have such a low opinion of what we can do for ourselves, and such a high opinion of the governing capacity of the EU. The logic of their view should be their own abolition, as they clearly think most of our laws should come from Brussels, and think the EU is a better judge of policy, expenditure priorities and regulation than we can ever be. It is time for the Commons to tell them this is a great country with great future potential. It is high time we are self governing again. That is what the votes on June 12th will be about. The Lords do have an important role to play in a self governing UK, but not in a region of the EU.

Heathrow expansion

The government's announcement that in principle it backs the idea of a new runway at Heathrow is likely to lead to a Parliamentary debate and vote soon.

I would be interested to hear constituents' views on this topic.

I have always accepted the general need for more airport capacity in the greater London region, but have not concluded on how this could be best achieved. Some think Gatwick could be expanded rather than Heathrow, some have argued for an entirely new airport to the east of London, some for incremental increases in capacity at a range of south eastern airports.

The government has concluded in favour of Heathrow expansion as the current hub airport with plenty of additional demand for slots and routes. The statement was brief and left many details to be sorted out a later date. Those seeking to expand the airport will need to demonstrate how they will hit demanding environmental targets. They will need full planning permission which will doubtless be a long and complex task to secure, with scope for people affected to seek changes or improvements to any individual proposal. The government and proposers of Heathrow expansion will need to strengthen and improve transport links into the airport, as these are already under pressure from present levels of air traffic.

I have lobbied extensively about the present level of aircraft noise, which increased following changes to routes made without consultation by NATs in 2014. The Statement did say that they wish to reduce aircraft noise, and propose to ban night flights for six and a half hours every night. The work I am doing on reducing aircraft noise does not require airport expansion to go ahead, as it relates to noise of aircraft, flying styles, rates of climb and descent and other matters. I will continue to press for less noise whatever the outcome of the vote about whether to build a new runway in several years time.

UK and EU growth

The most recent retail sales figures for the UK showed a welcome boost in April. The three month on three month was only up 0.1%, as March was a poor figure. In the Eurozone the latest three month on three month figure for retail sales shows no growth at all, after a disappointing April.

Retail remains very competitive, with a lot of pressure on older brands trading from too many High Street locations. On line shopping expanded by 17.3% in the UK over the last year, taking business away from more traditional outlets.

The UK's PMI figure for services came in at 54 this month. This is similar to the Composite PMI for the Eurozone of 54.1.

There has been a slowdown in both the Eurozone and UK economies so far this year, with retail growth subdued. In the UK this is the result of the tighter money policy the Bank has been pursuing. The EU figures were compiled before the latest worries in markets about the situation in Italy.

European Parliamentary Elections



John Redwood won a free place at Kent College, Canterbury, He graduated from Magdalen College Oxford, has a DPhil and is a fellow of All Souls College. A businessman by background, he has been a director of NM Rothschild merchant bank and chairman of a quoted industrial PLC.

- [Read more about John Redwood](#)
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The EU Withdrawal Bill

We were told yesterday that the government invites Parliament to consider the Lords Amendments to the Withdrawal Bill, starting on Tuesday June 12th. These need to be carefully considered by the Commons with a view to making final decisions as soon as possible. Where the Commons decides to disagree with a Lords Amendment it will be because the amendment waters down the commitment to implement the wishes of the voters in the referendum. I trust that any Commons vote to reverse a Lords amendment will be end of the process.

The role of the Lords is to ask the Commons to think again. Traditionally the Lords does not oppose matters which form part of a governing party's Manifesto commitments. You would have thought the Lords would be even more careful about a commitment that stems from a free vote of the electorate. We were all told in a government leaflet that we the people were making the decision, so Parliament should now facilitate it.

There are all too many times when the Commons does not scrutinise a Bill extensively enough, owing to a lack of interest by the current Opposition.

Then the Lords have more justification in detailed examination. No-one can deny that the EU Withdrawal Bill has been one of the most scrutinised Bills in history in both Houses. We have not lacked debate, insights, counter proposals or arguments. What we now desperately need are some decisions. That is what the Commons must now do.

It is important the Bill has passed all stages by the time the Prime Minister goes to the June 28 Council. It will show our EU partners that we are getting on with all necessary preparations and are serious in our intent. There are some on the continent who seem to think if they help Remain influences in the UK delay the process they might force us to think again. Almost two years have passed since the decision. It is high time Parliament confirmed the decision one more time. In voting for the EU Withdrawal Bill in its unamended form the Commons will be reaffirming its careful consideration of this Bill the first time round, and reinforcing its overwhelming vote to send the Article 50 letter. That letter, after all, was the effective Parliamentary decision to leave the EU. The purpose of the Withdrawal Bill is to ensure there is legal continuity when we leave. Sensible Remain supporters accept that a decision was taken on June 24 2016, and want to see the legal continuity the EU Withdrawal Bill can bring us.