

## Mr Redwood's contribution to the Westminster Hall Debate on Five-year Land Supply

**John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** I fully support my hon. Friend. In Wokingham we have 11,000 outstanding planning permissions and a required build rate of 900 a year. People might therefore think that we had a 12-year supply, but until recently the Government said that we had less than a five-year supply. They do not want to endorse our decision, which makes a lot of sense, to have four major sites with infrastructure and other support.

**James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con):** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. That chimes with the situation in my area and many others, as I have heard from colleagues. I will come back to that point.

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## Three Ministers resign over the Chequers statement

I was not surprised by the resignations. The Chequers statement brought to the surface arguments that had been underway for many months. David Davis felt his department and his advice was being sidelined by the Cabinet Office officials. He had argued against the EU's sequencing of the talks, and had sought to dig in more over money and the so called Withdrawal Agreement. Boris Johnson felt his advice was also being ignored when he set out an upbeat and optimistic view of Brexit. He complains about the extent of the concessions made and possibly planned.

Some people close to the PM made it worse by the silly briefings that Ministers would have to walk home if they resigned at the Chequers meeting, and by effectively challenging some Ministers to leave the government. Today in the Commons the Prime Minister robustly defended the red lines that matter to many of us. She assured us that freedom of movement will end, we will have our own migration policy, we will not pay large sums into the EU and will be able to sign our own trade deals.

However, the small print of the Chequers statement implies her officials do think we need to make concessions that rub out these important red lines. It is these apparent contradictions between the principles and the detail that has caused all the trouble. A majority of the country, Brexit voting and some Remain voting, want reassurance that the government will implement the wishes of the people. That does mean taking back control of all our laws, borders, money and trade policy. It is difficult to see how this is compatible with a

deal that ties our hands on goods and agricultural business and trade. Nor does the detailed language rule out some payments, some role for the European Court and some side deal to allow more migration.

We are told a few large companies think a failure to negotiate some customs deal will be damaging to them. It is difficult to see why. These claims are similar to the claims such businesses made to force us into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, which proved an economic disaster. They are also similar to the statements of some big businesses that they would stop investing in the UK or might withdraw if we failed to join the Euro. Instead they stayed and invested more. We have just had a devaluation against the Euro of more than 10%, so the UK has just become a lot more competitive. Our trade is not at risk if we leave and trade under WTO rules.

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## [Resignation of Brexit Secretary](#)

I repeat my advice to the PM. There are only two sensible options, a comprehensive free trade deal or exit on WTO terms. She should table a free trade deal and ask if the EU wants one or not. We need to leave on 29 March 2019.

We have sent the letter and passed the EU Withdrawal Act, so we have done all we need to do to leave legally. The remaining issue is do the EU want free trade or want to trade under WTO terms.

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## [Building bridges to the USA](#)

This week the UK welcomes the President of the USA. Let me risk criticism by saying I wish this to be a successful visit, stressing the things the USA and UK can do together to make the world a better place. As good hosts we should not be in the business of taking public political shots at the President or stressing the things some in the UK do not like about his stance. In private of course the government can make representations where it disagrees.

There are many areas where we can and should make common cause. Both the USA and the UK believe in NATO, and believe that to be a fair and strong alliance all its partner states should spend a minimum of 2% of GDP on their contribution to the mutual assurance. As one of the few members who does so we should help the President make the case with other members, and should show we are determined to increase our spending to be a decent ally and helpful partner.

President Trump thinks President Obama was wrong to tell the UK that we would be at the back of the queue for a trade deal. He is willing to get on with one. The UK should respond positively and progress the talks. It would be good to have an Agreement ready for ratification as soon as the UK leaves the EU.

The President is a big advocate of lower taxes. His dramatic tax reform is boosting the US economy. US companies are busily repatriating profits and spending more money on wages, investment and dividends. US families have more money to spend thanks to the income tax cuts. The UK should congratulate the President on his success with this, and should add income tax reductions to the corporation tax cuts we have carried out.

The President has published a study which finds that some Chinese companies steal or obtain western ideas on the cheap. He is trying to get improved conduct from China. There are UK companies who have experienced Intellectual Property difficulties with their own brands and products. The UK should share its knowledge of this with the USA and discuss what might be a good agreement with China to improve the position. The Chinese authorities have themselves said they oppose IP abuse.

The President is pushing both China and the EU for lower tariffs, better market access and "fairer trade". Where the demand is for a lower tariff or for easier market access, the UK can be sympathetic. Clearly we do not support the unilateral imposition of tariffs to try to force the pace of change, and wish to avert a trade war. This week is a chance to influence the President by offering positive ways that we can help get Chinese and EU barriers to trade down.

I suggest we keep off the topic of walls. The EU has helped finance a long border defence for Turkey, and has seen a number of border fences or walls spring up in recent years, so we are not in a strong moral position to lecture the USA on this sensitive subject. The UK herself wishes to tighten controls on migrant numbers.

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## **No deal is better than a bad deal**

I returned after a busy day to see people deliberately misrepresenting my first sentence. I will repeat what I have always said and still believe:

No deal is better than a bad deal

Any deal we accept has to be better than No deal to make it worth accepting.

No deal means no payments of any money after March 2019  
Freedom to undertake our own trade deals  
Settling our own migration policy

## Deciding our own laws

I think there are two main options open to the negotiating parties. One is the WTO so called No deal option. The other is a comprehensive free trade agreement for goods and services.

The latest UK government statement is going to be expanded in a White Paper to be published soon. I will comment on it when it is available. This will be the second such White Paper and will presumably make compromises and changes compared with the first.

It seems unlikely it will be accepted by the EU. It needs to avoid surrendering control of our money, borders and laws. I have also always said you do not have to pay to trade, so have never favoured offering the EU money by way of a withdrawal present. As nothing is agreed until all is agreed, the UK should make clear the money is not a firm promise.