

Deal/No deal – a false description

The choice before us is not leaving with or without a deal. The choice is simple. We either leave without signing the Withdrawal Agreement or we stay in for an indeterminate transition period with no agreement on what we are trying to transit to.

Were we to sign a version of the misnamed Withdrawal Agreement we stay in for 21 to 45 months more under full EU legal control and making large payments to them. This time is available to try and negotiate an exit. Who can doubt throughout such a time Remain would be urging more delay in exit? And why should the EU rush to offer us good terms for exit when they had secured everything they wanted in the deliciously misnamed Withdrawal Treaty? They would have the UK's money and compliance without facing our voice, vote and veto as they develop their centralising plans further.

What Mrs May and her officials probably had in mind for the eventual Future Partnership Treaty was a beefed up EU Turkey or EU Ukraine Association Agreement, locking us in in Perpetuity to many of the features of the EU we wanted to leave. Mr Johnson has made clear he just wants a Free Trade Agreement, which is greatly preferable. In which case the best course is to short cut these things and find out now if the EU will sit down and negotiate one or not. Either way we can then leave on 31October.