

## Good to strengthen ties with Commonwealth friends

The EU and Remain MPs always thought the argument in the U.K. was all about trade. They denied in the U.K. but not elsewhere that the true quest was for ever closer Union including full monetary, economic and political union. They tried to turn crucial arguments about democracy and national accountability into profit and loss items on trade account. They tried to ignore the high cost of belonging to the EU which was more than the likely cost of tariffs to trade on WTO EU terms as a third country. They insisted on a lop sided view where a free trade arrangement with the EU was crucial but a free trade agreement with many other important trading countries was impossible as a member of the EU.

Since we left they still presume to lecture us with these views even though we rejected them many times as contradictory or untrue. They now seem to want to belittle or disrupt any trade agreement we negotiate with others, to validate their nasty view that we would not be able to do this on our own.

I remember all too many meetings or meals with leading representatives of continental members of the EU when they lectured and hectoring me for daring to oppose first the Exchange Rate mechanism and then U.K. membership of the Euro. More recently they have done everything they can to rubbish Brexit, instead of conforming with their Treaty which requires them to seek positive and friendly relations with neighbouring countries. Why didn't they respect our referendum decision and seek to keep our import market?

What a contrast with Australia and New Zealand. The U.K. left them in the lurch when we joined the EEC/EU, imposing EU tariffs against them and substituting EU food for the food they sent us. As soon as we voted to leave the EU the High Commissioners of both Countries made it clear to MPs that their countries harboured no grudges and saw this as a great opportunity to develop closer relations and free trade with each other again. Why shouldn't we switch more of our attention from the angry, legalistic and negative EU to friendly allied countries that wish us well?