

How to leave the EU

Over the last three days I have tried one more time to persuade the government that the best way to leave is to table a Free Trade Agreement based on EU/Japan and EU/Canada, and offer talks after we leave on 31 October. If the EU says Yes then we can avoid all tariffs and new trade barriers whilst the free trade issues are discussed, if necessary at length.

If they refuse this sensible offer which is much in their own interest we leave on the basis of WTO trade, cutting tariffs on our imports as we do so. This is leaving with a WTO deal, including arrangements and agreements for government procurement, haulage, aviation, customs, pipelines, transport links, energy and much else which are now ready.

I have given this consistent advice since 2016. Had Mrs May followed it we would have left a long time ago and would probably have an FTA by now. We would not have paid them large sums of money, not had a long and expensive delay in departure, and not had to face laws and regulations from the EU which we do not have a say on. If we did it now it would avoid the unhappy parts of the Withdrawal Agreement and the further 15 month delay in exit. Above all it would avoid the vexatious and difficult processes with the Withdrawal legislation that await us, offering Remain MPs more opportunities to delay or damage Brexit. It would save us a lot of money, avoid a period until December 2020 when the EU can legislate and overrule us, and deal with the issues on the Irish border.

What is happening in the Commons is a clear polarisation into Leave and Remain teams, with the Leave team getting behind the Withdrawal Agreement route. The Remain team including all Opposition parties seems united, determined to use court actions, rushed hostile legislation and any Commons opportunity to delay or prevent Brexit. The poor negotiating by Mrs May, the loss of the Conservative/DUP majority, and the relentless pressure from the Benn Act and other Remain operations has weakened the UK bargaining position and placed the new government in a very difficult position. If the government does not recognise the need to table an FTA and choose a different route out, we are all left with sub optimal choices.