

No deal is better than a bad deal

Mrs May had the right approach and the right slogan when she first embarked on negotiations over the UK's exit from the EU. "No deal is better than a bad deal." If she had stuck to that we would now either be completely out with no deal, or more likely out with a Free Trade Deal to protect EU tariff free entry to the UK market and vice versa.

Once she dropped this important statement and revealed a continuous wish to give in to most demands the EU made she left the UK unable to get any kind of decent deal. The EU perceived the UK as weak and willing to recreate many features of its membership without the votes or voice. This was all much chronicled here as elsewhere, as delay followed concession and concession followed delay.

UK voters showed their massive disapproval in the European elections which should not have been needed had we simply left as planned, and went on to confirm their clear wish to leave the EU with or without a Free Trade deal in the General election of 2019.

The new government has rightly insisted on three things . They do not wish to stay in the single market and customs union which we are still in during transition. They are not trying to recreate something like membership of the EU through a comprehensive partnership or Association Agreement. They will leave without an agreement if the EU does not want a Free Trade Agreement. As they say in vivid language, they do not want the UK to become a vassal state. The UK is not seeking any special privileges from the EU and is only suggesting similar trade arrangements to other independent countries like Canada and Japan.

It is crucial to success that the government adheres to this sensible position. It was rightly reminding the EU of it in statements by both the Prime Minister and the Chief UK negotiator this week-end. Brexit means taking back control of our laws, our borders, our fish and our money. The UK is offering a Free Trade Agreement which is of more benefit to the EU than to us, though both would benefit from it. Instead of continued posturing and refusal to discuss this issue the EU should take advantage whilst the offer is still there. The UK government this time does have to get on with No deal if the EU does not want to talk about proposals that are mutually beneficial.