

Reply to a letter from the Prime Minister

Along with the rest of the Conservative party I have received a letter from the Prime Minister about her Chequers proposal for a deal between the UK with the EU.

I agree with much of the content of her letter. In it she assured me "We will take back control of our money, our laws, and borders, and begin an exciting new chapter in our nation's history"... "We will leave the EU on 29 March next year" "I remain clear that no deal is better than a bad deal – and we are stepping up our no deal preparation" "The two options on offer from the EU (for a future partnership) at the moment are not acceptable to me, or to the UK".

So far so good. Unfortunately the letter then seeks to persuade me that those fine principles and aims as stated often by the PM are reflected in the draft Chequers proposal and in the detailed clauses of the draft EU Withdrawal Agreement that the government has said it is happy with if all else is agreed. It appears the PM has been misled by her advisers, as the Withdrawal Agreement as so far drafted, the transitional period and the Chequers ideas for the future relationship do not in any way reflect those aims and principles.

The transitional period so called means we do not leave the EU on 29 March 2019 as promised. Instead she will ask Parliament to amend the Withdrawal Act we have just passed to give many powers back to the EU.

The proposed settlement on people means we live with a new version of freedom of movement.

It delays taking back control of our fishing grounds and agriculture.

It leaves us accepting large swathes of EU law in perpetuity, in return for the privilege of being able to import their goods and food!

It enslaves us to making payments to the EU for many years distant, not just for the final two years of our departure, when there is no legal requirement for us to pay anything after March 29 next year when we leave.

The draft Agreement and the proposed future relationship does not achieve the PM's aims as stated in the second paragraph of the letter, aims I agree with wholeheartedly. She needs to press on with the WTO option so we can get all our money back from March 2019 onwards,