

The Chequers statement

Any deal has to be better than No Deal.

We need to take back control of our laws, borders, money and trade policy. It is unlikely the EU will accept the Chequers position and will demand more. The EU has always made clear that customs union membership comes with freedom of movement and the supremacy of EU law, which is why I have three times helped vote down the idea of seeking to stay in the single market or customs union, in support of the government.

The red lines that we do not accept the jurisdiction of the ECJ, do not pay them more money, and have our own migration policy remain very important.

The international rules based system

I hear a lot these days from people who say we need to defend the international rules based system. I thought it might be a good idea to see which rules people think are really important, and to check those who believe in the rules based system believe in it regardless of the decisions reached. May I suggest some good rules for the better conduct of open democracy?

1. Where a country holds a legal referendum which attracts a substantial turnout the government accepts the need to implement the wishes of the people, whether it was in favour of the result or not. If it does not wish to do this it should give power to a government that does.
2. Where a country or region within a Union or larger country has a strong body of opinion that wants to be independent, and evidence in elections that that body of opinion is prepared to vote accordingly, there should be a referendum on whether to create an independent country or not. The result should be binding. There should not normally be a repeat of such a vote for at least a generation, with all agreeing to accept the result.
3. Where a part of a country elects a large number of nationalists to elected bodies but is not granted a referendum, those elected should not be arrested for wishing to pursue an independence agenda by peaceful means.
4. Unelected international bodies have to respect the views of elected governments. They may of course insist that the government adheres to binding Treaty commitments made in the past by that country, or agree to arrangements for the country to leave the organisation if the disagreement persists. International law should not be used to prevent a fairly elected government pursuing a chosen course of policy which meets normal standards of behaviour towards others.

Groundhog day again

So today, just for a change, the Cabinet discusses our possible future relationship with the EU. If they agree what they would like the EU will probably turn it down, as they have turned down most of the positive proposals the government has put forward so far. I have been urging the government to table a comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU and ask them to respond, as that offers a way through if the EU wants any deal.

If we just leave in March 2019 life will go on much as it did before. Planes will still fly into Heathrow from the continent. Just in time deliveries will still pass through our ports with electronic manifests and off site supervision as they do from non EU sources today. Germany will still be selling us plenty of cars, the Netherlands plenty of salads and vegetables, France plenty of cheese and wine. Most UK exports to the continent will flow tariff free under WTO tariff schedules, as there are no tariffs on services or goods like aerospace, and low ones on everything else apart from agriculture and cars. We and the EU will trade under the WTO's Facilitation of Trade Agreement, which deals with non tariff barriers. Where tariffs go on the UK will expand domestic production to meet more of the home market demand and will have the opportunity to import more cheaply from outside the EU as it wishes. As we have a large trade deficit in cars and food with the EU they will lose more from tariffs, so it is in their interest to agree tariff free as we propose.

The UK economy will get an immediate boost from spending an extra £12bn a year on public services or through tax cuts as we will save the money as soon as we leave. We can rebuild our fishing industry once we control our own waters and fish stocks. We can put in place our own migration policy, that is fair between EU and non EU migrants.

Above all the UK will be a self governing democracy again. So will the Cabinet rise to the challenge? Wouldn't it be good if they came out from their meeting with a range of plans to use the new freedoms, rights and cash leaving will bring. Brexit offers considerable scope to improve our lives and services here at home and to grow our economy faster.

Mr Redwood's intervention during the Statement on Sustainable Fisheries, 4

July 2018

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Is this not a great Brexit opportunity to restore our fishing grounds and rebuild our fishing industry? Is it not the case that we have a huge opportunity to make sure that much more of our fish is landed by our boats, so that we ensure that our traditional fish and chips once again includes fish from our fishing grounds, properly looked after by a national policy?

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Michael Gove): My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. During the referendum campaign, he made a passionate and coherent case for many of the benefits that could accrue to Britain as a result of leaving the EU. My friend outside this House, the leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson, who argued for a slightly different position during the referendum, made the point that when it comes to fish, certainly in the Conservative party, we are all Brexiteers now.

Mr Redwood's intervention during the Estimates Day debate on Education, 3 July 2018

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con): I am concerned that the Department's estimate is not strategic enough to deliver the outcomes we need. Let me take, for example, the recent announcement on grammar schools. I am not against grammar schools—I believe in parental choice—but I am not sure why spending up to £200 million over the next two years on expanding grammar schools is more important than spending £200 million on looking after the most vulnerable pupils. We could look after hundreds of thousands of vulnerable pupils with tuition for 12 weeks a year and transform their life opportunities.

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Surely we have to do both. Expanding grammar schools provides opportunities, and this expansion will particularly target those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which is a great idea in support of it, but we also need to do what my right hon. Friend says for other children. I hope that he, like me, would welcome more rapid progress on better and fairer funding for all our schools, because it is still very low in areas such as mine.