

Walk outs from Parliament over the EU

The SNP walk out today over an EU debate reminded some MPs of the previous walk out by Nick Clegg for the Liberal Democrats in February 2008. Then Speaker Martin refused to allow debate on one of their amendments which wanted an In/Out referendum on the EU. As Nick Clegg said "It is time to give the British people a real referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union". That idea did not go too well for him or his party. I still treasure the yellow leaflet they sent out telling me it was vital the "British people have a say in a real referendum".

Remaining contradictions about Parliamentary sovereignty

I believe in Parliamentary sovereignty, subject to the ultimate sovereignty of the British people. In recent debates some have sought to suggest that those who favour Brexit, who made the case for restoring the sovereignty of the British people and their Parliament, now no longer reflect this view because we wish to limit Parliament's role in the Brexit process.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Parliament reasserted its sovereignty vis a vis the EU by offering UK voters a vote on whether to stay or to leave the EU. The government on behalf of Parliament made it clear in a leaflet to all voting households that we the people would make the decision. When we leave the EU Parliament will once again be able to exercise the people's sovereignty over all government issues, freed of the ultimate jurisdiction of the European Court and the EU Council.

When the voters made a decision which a majority of MPs did not agree with Parliament had to make a choice. Should it honour its promise to the British people, or should it seek to overturn the decision of the people? Wisely Parliament decided to implement the wishes of the people by voting strongly in favour of sending the Article 50 letter notifying the EU of our intention to leave on 29 March 2019 in accordance with treaty law. In a General election voters reaffirmed their view on the EU by voting overwhelmingly for the two main parties who both promised Brexit and rejecting the main party that offered a second referendum or a stay in option. The Commons followed up by approving the EU Withdrawal Bill.

Some in Parliament seem to think Parliament can keep on changing its mind on this matter. They seek a further Parliamentary vote with the intent of overturning the decision of the British people and contradicting all the previous votes in Parliament on this topic. I urge Parliament not to do this. It would be difficult for the world to take the UK seriously if its

Parliament kept changing its mind about whether to leave or remain in the EU. It is difficult to see why Parliament rightly thought it should honour its promise to voters in 2017, only to alter course in 2018. If after filing to leave and undertaking negotiations over the process of leaving the UK announced it wished to reverse this process, the EU would be entitled to be difficult insisting we stick to our Article 50 letter or they could demand a high price for agreement to rejoin. It would also drive a mighty new wedge between people and Parliament with people angry that their wishes had been ignored.

[The collapse of the Venezuelan model and the damage done by nationalisation](#)

There are today 79,900 Venezuelan bolivars to one dollar, compared with 10 last year according to the official rate. No-one can be sure how big the drop has been in national income and output because the government no longer produces figures. There are shortages of many basic items in the shops. An authoritarian government distributes items to those it favours and damages the right to vote for change. What we do know is that thanks to nationalisation, the Venezuelan oil industry has fallen on very hard times.

Venezuela has the largest known oil reserves of any country in the world. Before Chavez took power, Venezuela produced and sold 3.5 m barrels a day. This was modest output compared to the USA or Saudi at around 12 m barrels a day, and eminently sustainable. Under sensible management with private sector expertise, technology and investment it would have been possible to expand output substantially and add to state revenues. Instead today Venezuela struggles to produce just 1.5m barrels.

This came about by forcing oil companies that were producing good quantities for Venezuela into accepting very poor joint ventures with the state, or appropriating their assets. The people who knew how to run the enterprises were replaced. The state overtaxed the exports, leaving the nationalised industry short of cash to maintain and modernise its production assets and to keep its fleet of tankers for export up to international standards. The nationalisation was meant to give the government full control to allow it to perform better and more in the interests of the state. Instead it has led to a sharp drop in output, in state revenues and exports. This is particularly worrying for the country as it is chronically dependent on oil exports for its failing balance of payments, and on oil revenues to meet the costs of government.

[Phase One of The Winnersh Relief Road has opened today](#)

The first phase of the Winnersh Relief Road, connecting the B3270 Lower Earley Way to the B3030 King Street Lane has opened today. It will provide access to the new housing on the former Hatch Farm Dairies site.

Wokingham Borough Council has submitted a full planning application for the Winnersh Relief Road phase two, which subject to planning consent, would connect the B3030 King Street Lane to the A329 Reading Road.

[The EU negotiates against its own interests](#)

We read that the EU wishes to follow its veto over the UK's positive and generous proposals so far with a further push to demand we continue with freedom of movement. This could well be the item that persuades more UK voters that No Deal is the best option.

The EU has broadly stuck to its mantra that you cannot belong to the trade part of the EU without paying contributions, accepting their laws and agreeing freedom of movement. Accepting this many of us said we must leave the Customs Union and single market when we leave the EU. We said offer them a free trade deal. The EU has not even been prepared to talk about this.

This is where they are overplaying their hand. A Free Trade deal is more in their interest than ours. Expecting the kind of concessions from us that they could seek if we wanted to stay in their single market just puts many sensible British voters off any kind of deal.

So now the EU tries to make the Irish border into an issue which can delay Brexit, with no good reason, and works with Remain forces in the UK to tell us we will suffer if we just leave.

The government has nine more months to make sure everything works if we leave without a deal. It needs to show how easy it is to apply the methods we use for non EU trade to EU trade as well. By showing its resolve to do so it will give itself the only chance of actually securing a deal which might be worth considering.