

Clamping down on animal cruelty

I participated in the debate on the Animal Cruelty (Sentencing) Bill yesterday.

Several constituents contacted me to support it. I intended to, as I have long thought we need to do more to protect animals in our care and to punish those who think cruel abuse of animals is acceptable. We were told some harrowing stories of what cruel people have done to dogs in their care, deliberately injuring them for the warped amusement of the owner.

The Bill reinforces the Animal Welfare Act of 2006 giving the courts the right to impose a prison sentence of up to one year for a summary conviction and up to five years for a conviction on indictment. The aim is to provide a stronger deterrent to those thinking of being cruel to animals, and a more appropriate punishment to those who do serious and sustained harm to an animal.

What do we need from a new Ambassador to the USA?

The outgoing Ambassador was right to resign. His position was undermined by the leaker, who needs to be identified. He could no longer perform his role, as the President took his criticisms personally. The next Ambassador must be capable of good analysis in private communications, expressed in moderate and professional language, and be a great advocate of the United Kingdom. He or she will need to rebuild trust and regular exchanges with the Administration after this most unfortunate rupture. We need someone who likes the USA and respects the democratic decision of US voters.

The new appointee should be expected to regain access to senior officials and the President and to reassure them that the UK respects the Administration in office and wishes to work with them, whilst of course reserving the right of a trusted friend and ally to give unpopular advice in private and to disagree in public about policy where our interests as countries diverge. The first report back home should explain the successes and aims of the White House as they set them out, and to remind us that we can learn from their economic progress. The US is growing considerably faster than the UK or the EU. It is enjoying considerable success in creating many new jobs and getting real wages up. The President's tax cuts have made people better off, promoted more investment in the USA and helped establish more and better paid employment. The President, unlike his predecessors has kept them and us out of difficult Middle Eastern wars. More background to US achievement would be helpful and provide essential political context to the long run up to the next

Presidential election, which Mr Trump is in a good position currently to win.

Of course the Ambassador should also inform London of the Democrat critique of the Presidency to provide balance. Instead of siding with the Opposition the analysis should evaluate chances or probabilities of the Democrats finding a candidate for the Presidency who might be able to win, and in the meantime assessing what the Democrats in the House of Representatives can achieve on issues where the Congress has a say.

The diplomatic memo should not be cheer leading for the President's critics, giving a false sense of their chances of gaining control. Nor should it be propaganda for Mr Trump, whose policies should be reported and scrutinised professionally. The new UK representative needs to be proud of the UK and our decision to leave the EU, and alert to the many opportunities Brexit offers for the US relationship, not just in our minds but in the mind of the President.

[Winnersh Post Office](#)

I have been told by the Post Office that the Winnersh office "is temporarily closed for operational reasons"
They have not given me any more details or any indication of when they will be able to resume their service. I have urged them to restore it as soon as possible.

[Why do so few people buy electric cars?](#)



<https://johnredwoodsdiary.com/>

The government's enthusiasm for electric cars is well known. The whole EU has embarked on a huge top down reform of the motor industry, seeking to transform it from a range of vehicles based on modern low emission diesels

and petrol vehicles to one based on new electric cars. So far in most countries including the UK customers have not been impressed by the electric cars on offer, so their market share languishes around 3-4% of the total market, with under 1% of the total stock electric. Meanwhile threats of more bans and taxes to come have put many people off buying a new conventional car at all.

There seem to be several worries that people have about electric vehicles. The first is range. Present electric cars have varied ranges from say 70 miles to perhaps 200. A modern diesel or petrol car has a reliable range of more than 400 miles or up to four times as much as the electric substitute. People are particularly worried about range on an electric car given the issues over the time it takes to charge them and access to charging points.

A petrol or diesel car does not induce range anxiety because there are so many filling stations available. You pass them on most journeys. It takes less than five minutes to fill and pay and regain full range again. In contrast it may take hours to recharge a battery car, with fast partial charges taking maybe 30 minutes once you have access to a fast charge point. If you want to do a 400 mile journey in an electric car it will take considerably longer than in a petrol or diesel which can get there on a single tank of fuel, given the need to stop off more than once to recharge the battery.

People also worry about battery life. There are manufacturers that will guarantee a battery for 60,000 miles or even for 100,000 miles, but doubts linger about the possibility that a large and expensive battery will require replacing well before the engine and vehicle are in need of replacement or major overhaul. A battery deteriorates, making it more difficult to recharge and undermining its power delivery and therefore range of the vehicle before the owner gives in and buys a new one or before the manufacturer agrees the battery needs replacement.

Some worry about the green impact of these machines. How will the state require people to dispose of or recycle the metals used in the manufacture of the battery? How much energy is used in the manufacture of the vehicle and its battery?

Some think governments will turn to taxing the electric car once more are bought, as they will miss the large revenue streams that come from VED and fuel tax on conventional vehicles. People are naturally distrustful of governments offering low tax and subsidy just to get people started.

It is true the electric car will stop all exhaust particulate emissions, which is good news. Increasingly however particulates come from tyre wear and brake pad use, not from exhaust emission given the big work done to clean up the back of a diesel. Electric cars will still generate tyre and brake particles.

How long will it be before there are electric cars that a majority of the car buying public want to buy? What will they look like and how will their specification be different from today?

An undiplomatic Ambassador

The UK Ambassador to Washington made wrong judgements in his leaked memo. He showed he favours the Democrat criticisms of Mr Trump to the President. He should deliver balanced analysis with temperate language. What is "inept" about a Presidency that has delivered its main promises to electors? Why use the phrase "knife fights" to describe normal arguments over tactics and policy within a government?

By all means report the Democrat critique of the President, but do not make it the official view in the memo. That shows lack of judgement and fails to reflect the political realities in Washington. Of course the memo should have been kept private, but it reveals an attitude of mind which will impede the Ambassador in his dealings with the President and his immediate circle.