

## The undemocratic few in Independent Labour

The MPs that are defecting to the Independent group do not get on well with democracy. They all dislike the result of the People's vote in 2016. They now wish to change their views on big issues, compared to the Labour and Conservative Manifesto platforms they stood on in 2017. If they are keen on democracy and a People's vote, they should offer themselves for election in a series of by elections soon.

An MP who changes party allegiance is not obliged to resign to create a by election. Indeed, if an MP resigns from his or her party to be independent because he or she thinks their party is failing to carry out promises they jointly made at the last election there is not even a moral pressure to hold a by election. But if an MP wishes to change party, or to be a so called independent on a very different platform to the one they stood on for their original party, there is plenty of moral pressure to ask the electors their view.

When Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless decided the Conservatives were not Eurosceptic enough they resigned to join UKIP. They did the decent thing, stood in by elections and won. It did not work out well for them personally, on the assumption they would have liked to carry on in Parliament. Mark lost his seat in the following General election, whilst Douglas ended up in substantial disagreement with the Leader of UKIP and also ceased to be an MP.

The media seem to think the Independent group will morph into a new party. As it does so there will be more pressure on its members to answer why they do not submit themselves to an electoral test of what they are doing. This is particularly apposite given the belief of many of them that the public should be offered another vote on the issue of the EU. Wasn't the 2017 General election another vote on the EU? I remember the election being dominated by the Brexit issue. 82% of the public voted for the two main parties who both said they would implement the result of the referendum. The Lib Dems made the case for a second referendum and slumped to 10% support.

I would be interested in what name you think would be most appropriate for this new grouping? Would it be unkind to suggest the We know better than the voters party, or perhaps the Not the Labour party.

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## My intervention during the debate on

## Exiting the European Union (Aquaculture), 20 February 2019

**John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** I seek to clarify my earlier question, which did not seem to get through. Is the Department working on a better regime for fishing in general, and for fish health in particular, for once we have left? This is a great opportunity, and fishing is an area that has been very badly damaged by EU membership.

**The Minister of State (Mr George Eustice):** My right hon. Friend will be aware that the purpose of these regulations is to ensure that we have an operable law book on day one after leaving the European Union, but he will also be aware that, separately, the Fisheries Bill is going through the House—it has completed its Committee stage and will return shortly on Report.

I can confirm that the Bill has a dedicated provision that gives the Government power to legislate in the area of fish health in particular so we can improve on the current regime and make any necessary changes. These regulations are simply about ensuring we make retained EU law operable, and I commend them to the House.

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## My intervention during the Urgent Question on Leaving the EU: Economic Impact of Proposed Deal, 20 February 2019

**John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** Will the Treasury issue a codicil or a clarification of its economic forecasts, looking at what happens if we leave in March under the managed World Trade Organisation model, when we spend the £39 billion-plus of the withdrawal agreement on boosting public services and boosting our economy at home? We are bound to be better off—is that not true?

**Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Mel Stride):** It is important to recognise that the modelling is on the basis of the status quo, so the model would not take into account factors of the kind that my right hon. Friend has raised, or indeed changes in productivity or trade flows and other factors. It will be for individual Members to assess the specific issues that he raised, in that context.

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## My intervention during the debate on Exiting the European Union (Structural and Investment Funds), 19 February 2019

**John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** Before the Minister moves on from the money, will he explain how the money would be calculated, and whether we would have to make a contribution to the administration costs or just to the actual costs of the programme?

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (Mr Richard Harrington):** If I may, Mr Speaker, I will use this opportunity to answer my right hon. Friend's earlier question about the dispute resolution. Any disputes in relation to how funding is spent are dealt with through the audit and default functions and the provisions set out in the existing funding agreements. As for his second question, I will have to give the matter some thought, as I must confess I do not know the answer. If I do not think of it in the next half an hour or so, I will certainly write to him with the answer on that. My memory is quite good and usually things come back in due course, as I know they do to you, Mr Speaker.

I mentioned that the EU is making separate legal provision for us to continue to participate in the Peace and Interreg V-A programmes. That provision is intended to enable continued access to the programmes in the event of no deal, but it does not resolve the problem of payment powers, which is why we need both the EU regulation and this statutory instrument to safeguard those programmes and to ensure the continuation of their benefits. Not having this instrument in force by exit would also prevent the Government and our devolved Administrations from paying out the guarantee to UK partners of other territorial co-operation programmes, risking their financial viability.

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## My intervention during the Urgent Question on UK Nationals Returning from Syria, 18 February 2019

**John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** How will the UK authorities go about finding the evidence concerning those UK citizens who went abroad to join a terrorist

organisation and to fight or intervene in acts of brutality or support those who did?

**Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr Sajid Javid):** My right hon. Friend highlights an important issue. Members will understand why it is very difficult to gather evidence when someone has gone to a completely ungoverned space where we have no consular presence and no diplomatic relations of any type, and nor do our allies.

That said, we put a huge amount of effort—I take this opportunity to commend our security services, the police and some of our international partners—into gathering battlefield evidence and having that ready to use whenever appropriate. If we can supply that evidence in some cases to our partners for cases that they wish to bring in front of their courts, we will try to work constructively with them. The UN has also been looking at this. New measures are being considered on battlefield evidence conventions, and Britain, through the Ministry of Defence, is making an incredibly important contribution to that.