

## Is this the EU's best offer?

The EU's bad offer to the UK has been conditioned by what the Prime Minister asked for. Mrs May and her team were trying to cherry pick in the way the EU told them not to, so they have ended up with no deal at all about the future relationship after two and half years of talks. If she had asked for a Free Trade Deal along the lines of Canada plus, with various arguments about how the Irish border would work we would be in a much better position. There are plenty of technical and practical ways of handling the border on existing technology, so we would have found out if these issues had been pressed whether the EU was up for a Free Trade deal or not. The Prime Minister's refusal to table a free trade agreement, and her long delay over pressing more practical solutions for the Irish border has led to the current impasse with the UK Parliament and the complete lack of a Future Partnership Agreement other than a few pages a vague aspirations and plenty of negotiation to come.

Once Parliament has voted down the Withdrawal Agreement – as MPs currently say they will – the UK government needs to return to the EU with the individual detailed issues that are best resolved prior to just leaving, and to table a full Free Trade Agreement. We will then find out for sure whether the EU is serious about an FTA or not, and can in the meantime get on with fulfilling the pledge to leave. Immediately anyway the UK government should publish its tariff schedule for March 29 2019, set out details of how we will run our own borders from that date, and provide the necessary permissions for continuing trade and activity.

Mrs May rightly says the country wants shot of all the arguments and delays about Brexit. That is another good reason why we must veto the agreement she has come up with, because it sentences us to an indefinite future of endless talks about our future partnership, shorn of our bargaining position by all the concessions made in the Withdrawal Agreement.

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## Wokingham Carnival

I went to the Carnival this afternoon, and joined the Mayor for carols and the ceremony of turning on the Christmas lights by the Town Hall. It was good to see the town busy for the event, and good that the rain stayed away during the crucial part of the proceedings. I would like to thank all involved in organising it, and all who participated in the procession and wider events.

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## The Prime Minister's letter

Mrs May's first ten points and last point are all ones I want to see happen. The trouble is they do not happen any time soon under the Withdrawal Agreement she wrongly wishes to lock us into and maybe never. Most of the rest of her points are things that re create many features of the E\$U after we have left in ways Leave voters do not wish to do, or vague promises of future co-operation which we can easily enjoy without signing this disastrous Treaty. Some are bizarre – "Gibraltar's sovereignty protected" – it was not at risk until the last minute concessions – and no hard border in Northern Ireland – I never thought the UK was planning one!

This letter and the further concession on Gibraltar are likely to tip more MPs against this Withdrawal Treaty. I remain strongly opposed.

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## Migration White Paper to appear at last

According to the press, the government will soon publish its long delayed Migration White Paper. Mrs Rudd in office never got around to doing this, though she was lobbied regularly to do so. Apparently government thinks Eurosceptic opponents of the Withdrawal Agreement will be won round by proposals for the future on migration. I have no idea why they think so.

Their first problem is we will not be allowed to have our own migration policy all the time we rest in the unsatisfactory limbo land of so called Transition. With no guaranteed way out that the UK can use on its own without EU permission, what is the point of talking about how we might use freedoms still to be won in negotiation?

Their second problem is the alleged policy itself. Apparently they want to make it easier for people to come to the UK to take well paid jobs, whilst coming up with some plan to restrict someone in a low paid job to an eleven month stay. That would create a revolving door of people coming to take low paid jobs, whilst increasing problems over housing and access to services to those who come to work for the least money and are most in need of help from the state. Why would Brexit voters find that attractive?

It shows a continuing misunderstanding of why many people voted Brexit. We voted to take back control of our laws, our borders and money, not for any particular answer on migration. Vote Leave did not campaign on migration, though answered on it as others did. Highlighting the fact that under Transition we have not taken back control is unhelpful to the government, whilst their particular scheme sounds mean without controlling numbers in the

way voters concerned about this issue would like.

This is another badly thought through policy which is irrelevant were the government to secure its dreadful Withdrawal Agreement.

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## **The great opportunities from leaving with no Withdrawal sell out**

I have often set out the advantages of just leaving next March, here and on the media. I have just sent a pamphlet making this case off to a possible publisher. I am urging like minded MPs to help make the case for the WTO exit.