

The Cambridge Union debates a United States of Europe

I offer below a speech I could have made on Thursday night at the Cambridge Union. I spoke spontaneously and was not given enough time to say what I wanted. This recreation captures some of what I said then and adds a bit.

This House should not believe in a United States of Europe

It is good to see that some eight years after we had our great debate about whether stay in the EU on its journey to ever closer union Cambridge wakes up to what the argument is all about

It would be quite a turn round for Remainers in the UK to believe in a United States of Europe.

They spent the last 50 years telling us the EU had no such plans.

It is just a single market they told us.

We will not lose more sovereignty they said .

Successive federalising Treaties were tidying up exercises., Nothing to see here

It is true I never believed them.

It was always clear to me the aim was a United States of Europe.

I could hear it in the speeches of many on the continent who were more honest about their direction.

I could read it in the Treaties themselves as they set out on their course of ever closer union.

We went from common market to single market

We went from European Economic Community to European Union

We went from the Treaty of Rome to the Treaty of European Union via Maastricht, Lisbon and Amsterdam.

The aim was always to create a United States of Europe

Many wanted to rival or outshine the United States of America

Today I can tell you there is still a gap between plan and reality.

I know both the USA and the EU fairly well.

I have travelled and worked in both.

I can assure you that for all its federalising and centralising

The EU is no United States of Europe in the way the USA is the United States of America.

Let us look at some of the differences

The USA has a powerful President elected by the voters of the whole nation

The EU has five Presidents jostling for authority. Not one of them is elected by a pan European electorate.

If any government in the world wants to talk to the USA, they ring the President in the White House.

Who are they meant to ring if they want to talk to the European Union?

If the USA wishes to meet a foreign country at senior level the President meets the Head of the other state.

If the EU wants to meet they often send a couple of their Presidents who argue over who is senior

The USA backs its foreign policy with the world's most powerful army, navy and airforce.

The EU's small forces cluster under the NATO umbrella and rely on US protection

The EU says it promotes peace

So what went wrong with its interventions in the Balkans?

How is it promoting peace in Ukraine?

The EU claims to be democratic

In Poland the new government is busy locking up Ministers from the government of 2007 despite a Presidential pardon

Germany has put the AFD Opposition under surveillance

The EU backed Spain in sending Catalan nationalist politicians to prison

The EU seems happy with stopping critics of its scheme from standing for election

The European Parliament has no organised Opposition saying the EU's policies are wrong and offering an alternative

The EU says it promotes free trade

Yet it is slow to reach agreements with other countries

And quick to impose protections at home

The EU's idea of a single market is

Laws telling everyone what they can make and how they can make them

No wonder innovation withers

All they needed was the simple rule that if you sold a product in your home country

Then you could also offer it for sale in any member state

The EU claims to foster a digital revolution

So how come all the world's main technology companies are in China and the USA?

The EU claims to be good for growth

So how is it that the fifteen largest quoted companies in the world are all American – yes 15

How come the USA has outgrown the EU so much in recent years?

US GDP has now hit \$80,000 a head

That almost double the EU's \$41,000

Time to ask who has the better model for growth?

Where the USA gives us great digital innovations and services

The EU taxes and fines US companies for daring to supply what the public and business want

The USA creates an exciting 21st century of opportunity and investment

The EU is stuck in the last century worrying that innovation brings threats

The EU wants many to buy battery cars

Pity they will largely be imported as China corners production of batteries

The EU poses as kind to migrants and asylum seekers

Yet it and its member states have been in recent years busy building more border wall and fence than Donald Trump

The EU promotes trans European networks.

All the time we were in the EU no trans European train turned up at Wokingham station

Whilst HS 2 was ground down by cost overruns and extreme delays

The EU's energy policy has left it short of energy and facing high bills

Germany's bad decision to close all her nuclear stations did not help

The worse decision to build pipelines to make themselves dependent on Russian gas followed

The EU has a great idea to put in more solar and wind energy

Such a pity China will supply much of the kit

Meanwhile the EU has not worked out how to store renewable power when

plentiful

Or how to use electricity in planes and trucks

The USA under Biden as well as Trump carries on drilling for more oil and gas

So they can send gas to Europe to keep the lights on

The EU's farming policy became so hostile to producing food

That a Dutch government fell because of it

The EU fishing policy is great at allowing supertrawlers to Hoover up far too much fish

Damaging fishing grounds and sea bed

The Euro is the jewel in the federal crown

The chosen means to complete the Union

It has been a currency in search of a country to love it

Now the EU is making progress with the common budget, common taxes and common borrowing a USE needs

The Germans agreed to the Euro on grounds that it would take a tough anti inflation stance

They wanted no return to currency printing and debasement that so damaged Germany 100 years ago

In recent years the ECB did turn to money printing and ended up with high inflation

Germany agreed to monetary union on the basis that all states would need to keep their debts and deficits down.

Those rules are now suspended and most countries are way over the borrowing limits

One of the main constraints on fast progress to complete the United States of Europe is the huge costs it will impose

The EU itself is trying to overcome the cash shortage by its own huge borrowing spree

It aims to add a short trillion euros to EU debts

Which will fall to be guaranteed by the member states

The EU is a long way off commanding the mighty resources of the USA

The Euro is still no match for the dollar

As the EU worries about its defence and security, worries about its long and exposed borders, worries about its cash need, worries about where to find extra tax revenue from highly taxed people the US storms ahead with the digital revolution

I warn you

Do not be a small business in the EU – they will regulate and tax you too much

Do not be an entrepreneur in the EU – they will make innovation difficult and impose high taxes

Do not be a believer in freedom in the EU as they have a law for everything

Do not believe the emerging United States of Europe will outshine the USA

History tells us the attempts at European unions fail

The Holy Roman Empire broke up

The Scandinavian union broke up

The USSR broke up

To say nothing of the forced unions some European countries sought to impose on others that caused so much harm and loss of life

So EU

You do want to be the USE

But you are nothing like the USA

Why would anyone believe in this lopsided underfunded over regulated legal structure?

That is no new successful country

It is the comfortable well paid redoubt of an elite that is fast losing it with many voters.

Yours sincerely