

The DUP : No deal is better than a bad deal

It is proving difficult to explain to some politicians how negotiations work. If you want to buy someone's house you do not say you want to buy it whatever the price, and then pay up when they take advantage of your folly. If they ask double the market value you refuse.

So it has to be with political deals. A Supply and confidence agreement with the DUP would be helpful. People would know in advance that the government has a majority to get through spending plans and to see off any No Confidence motion. If we do not have a formal agreement it is still very likely the DUP will vote with the Conservatives, given their views on Brexit and Mr Corbyn. There is a lot of common ground on the EU, the Union and the economy.

The main issue that has held up an Agreement seems to be money. How much extra can we afford for Northern Ireland, and what will be the reaction of the rest of us representing English or Welsh or Scottish constituencies?

I am relaxed with or without a deal. I think the government will have a majority to pilot the main legislation through, even allowing for the likelihood that Labour will be difficult and seek to undermine the very Brexit they proposed in their Manifesto.