

The Union of the UK

The government's decision to unbalance our constitution further by removing English votes for English laws shows a lack of understanding of the politics of the Union. They seem to accept Gordon Brown's view that the Union is only threatened in Scotland, and that it can be preserved in Scotland by giving in to SNP demands for more devolution. Any observation of the history of the Union since 1997 should tell you how wrong that was.

In my book *The Death of Britain?* in 1999 I argued that Brown's devolution would provide a platform and more causes for the SNP. There is no amount of devolution which will satisfy them, as they wish to split from England. I also argued that the EU's wish to strengthen the devolution of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and to wipe England off the map, balkanising it in a set of unloved regions would further undermine the UK. As I expected the English regions failed to win popular support, so Labour in office lost the only referendum on having elected regional government they dared to table. The EU nonetheless persisted in demanding regional plans and grant schemes whilst refusing England the place at the table it offered to Scotland and Wales. As we proceeded with Brexit it also became clear the EU wanted to detach Northern Ireland from Great Britain and wished to assist the Republican cause and support the Irish Republic.

The government should grasp that Brexit helps our Union. The first threat to it arises not in Scotland but in Northern Ireland, given the EU's wish to distort the Agreement with a view to disrupting GB/Northern Ireland trade and wider relations. The UK government needs to push back firmly, and assert its rights under the Agreement to ensure our internal market runs smoothly and well. By taking back control of fishing, farming, trade, internal market and the subsidy and transfer schemes the UK Union can do good, working with the many Unionists in all parts of the country.

The problem of Scotland has to be tackled by winning the arguments against the SNP and demonstrating continuing support for the clear view expressed in the recent referendum. Every time the UK government gives in to the SNP it provides an argument for floating voters to back the SNP to demand more. You cannot compromise and reach agreement with people who fundamentally disagree. The SNP treats almost every debate in the UK Parliament as an opportunity to play up its case for secession. The SNP needs to be reminded that they claim to speak for the people yet they have lost two important referendums designed to settle our constitutional issues. As they do not accept the result of either referendum they appear in Parliament as an anti democratic force permanently complaining about the very country Scotland voted to stay in in 2014.