

A spectacular future

If any backbench MP or minor businessman says that withdrawal from the EU would be a disaster, you can bet your life that their comments will be splashed all over the press the following day. However, a recent gathering of heavyweight academics, politicians and figures from industry sending out a very different message seems to have received precious little coverage in the media.

The Conservative MEP David Campbell Bannerman was the moving sprit behinds last week's conference entitled "Alternatives to EU Membership: What are the UK's options?" Among the speakers was Owen Paterson MP, the former Environment minister. He did not mince his words. "We have to leave", he said, adding, "I see a huge optimistic vision for this country, a really spectacular future, but to do it and to get there, we have to leave."

John Mills, a CIB Committee member and Chairman of the Labour Euro Safeguards Committee, delivered a stark warning to his party leader: "If Ed Miliband becomes Prime Minister in May and renegotiates without committing to a referendum, he will inevitably weaken the UK's bargaining position. Minds in Brussels are much more likely to take renegotiation seriously if they know that there is a substantial risk that the UK will leave the EU if there is not a satisfactory deal on the table to persuade the UK to stay in", he added.

Another Tory MP, Bill Cash, finally answered a question has kept many supporters of withdrawal guessing for years:- does he support withdrawal or not? We finally received the answer. "There is no alternative except moving to exit", he told the gathering. "There is more nationalism now. There is chaos, less peace, less democracy. There are riots, protests, economic instability. Implosion is imminent, or the alternative is irresponsible coercion of the kind being

imposed on the Greeks now.”

Another myth was shattered. Not all senior figures in the American political scene want us to stay in. Dr Nile Gardiner, a former aide to Margaret Thatcher who is now based at the Heritage Foundation think tank in Washington DC addressed the conference using a video link. “The biggest threat to the Special Relationship is the European project itself, exemplified by the grandiose dreams of a European super-state”, he said. “Nothing could be worse for America than a Britain that is unable to act independently, straight-jacketed by a forced common foreign and security policy.”

The same day as the conference was staged, a detailed rebuttal of the “three million jobs would be lost if we left” myth was published by Global Britain and the Democracy Movement. Far from worrying about job losses on independence, the report expressed concern about the jobs that would be lost by not leaving. Stuart Coster, the Democracy Movement’s campaign director said: “This report demolishes once and for all the EU lobby’s scaremongering about jobs should Britain choose to leave the EU and reveals reality as the opposite of their claims.” (The full report can be downloaded [here](#))

Such a shame that a day of great hope for our country’s future was largely ignored by most of the daily papers. Apart from the Daily Express, from which some of this information was gleaned, the only other coverage of the Bannerman conference came in the shape of a rather sneering report in The Independent Well, let them sneer. The speakers at the conference were promising, in Mr Bannerman’s words, a “far better, freer and more prosperous future outside the EU”. Anyone who turns their noses up at such an exciting prospect and continues to support our country’s bondage to this club of failures is worthy only of contempt.