

# Cameron, Carswell and the Conservative dilemma

✖ The defection of CIB Patron Douglas Carswell MP from the Conservatives to Ukip has been widely reported in the press. Mr Carswell has long been a supporter of withdrawal from the EU. Initially, he welcomed David Cameron's Bloomberg speech last year, which committed a future Conservative government to holding a referendum on UK membership of the EU in 2017 following an attempt to renegotiate our terms of membership. However, yesterday he announced his resignation claiming that David Cameron was "not serious about real change in Europe". Essentially, the Tory plan was a repeat of Harold Wilson's strategy in the 1975 referendum – to secure a token repatriation of a few minor powers from Brussels and claim to the electorate that some big concessions had been made, hoping they will vote to stay in. Mr Carswell wanted none of this and who can blame him?

The dilemma facing the considerable number of Tory MPs who share Mr Carswell's desire to free this country from the EU was laid bare by Cameron's response. He called Mr Carswell's departure from the Conservative Party "bizarre", but then went on to say that "Ukip's desire to 'pull up the drawbridge' will leave Britain isolated." Such idiotic drivel is almost worthy of Nick Clegg. While CIB is not tied to a single political party, we, like all supporters of UK withdrawal, do not see our objective as "pulling up the drawbridge" nor do we believe the UK would be "isolated" if we withdrew from the EU. On the contrary, withdrawal opens the door to reorientating our trade towards the growing economies of the world instead of the sclerotic EU. We could pursue the development of a free trade area with our closest friends, the Commonwealth, instead of being shackled to a customs union with nations who don't share our tradition of free trade and limited government and some of

whom don't actually like us very much. We would still be members of Nato, the G7, the IMF and many other international organisations. This hardly amounts to isolation! Is David Cameron just pig-ignorant or is he showing his true colours? – in other words, is Mr Carswell right in his belief that the Prime Minister has not the slightest intention of taking us out of the EU and is merely posturing to try to con the electorate?

Perhaps the answer is both, but Mr Carswell's principled move makes life harder for fellow-Tory eurosceptics. Maybe they will get away with their alleged strategy of keeping their powder dry until after 2015, hoping for an election victory and then, if David Cameron loses the referendum, forcing him to resign if he will not respect the verdict of the electorate and begin the withdrawal process. Unfortunately for them, winning that election has become that bit harder now one of their former colleagues has laid bare the duplicity of their party leader.

IF anyone wishes to help with Douglas Carswell's campaign in Clacton, please contact UKIP's Lisa Duffy by email. Her address is: [partydirector@ukip.org](mailto:partydirector@ukip.org)