

Cameron has already lost

If Mr Cameron wins the referendum, he will have achieved a pyrrhic victory. It will not have achieved his objective to settle the "British question" once and for all.

An article in last Tuesday's *Independent* concludes on the basis of recent opinion polls, that the UK electorate will vote to remain in the EU, still unhappy with it, but unconvinced there is a sound economic case for leaving. In other words, we would continue to play our accustomed role of "the Awkward Partner", far from sold on the vision of a federal Europe, dragging our feet with the integration process and generally upsetting the other countries as we have done for much of the last 40 years.

It would be the worst of all possible worlds and a deeply unsatisfactory outcome for Mr Cameron. However, it seems that this is what he wants. The fear card is still being played for all it is worth. Last Friday's newspapers claimed that withdrawal would make our food, air fares and holidays more expensive. Read any article on this subject in detail and beneath the headlines, it amounts to little more than scaremongering about the drop in the value of the pound, based on its fall earlier this week. As we pointed out here, there are many reasons why currencies rise and fall. Currency traders only think in the short term. No one would deny that the herd instinct may cause a brief drop in the value of Sterling immediately following a "leave" vote, but once the markets realise that the sky hasn't fallen in, it won't last long. Our economy is sound – especially relative to that of much of the EU.

Mr Cameron is orchestrating a fear campaign which began within hours of his return from Brussels. Can he really keep this up for another four months? If so, the best he can hope is that people just turn off in boredom. More likely, this incessant

diet of fear is going to breed a healthy cynicism which the “leave” camp could – and indeed intend to – exploit to the full. Watch this space!

Cameron has all too many accomplices in trying to shut down open and honest debate. Not surprisingly, his sidekick George Osborne weighed in, claiming that “this is not some political parlour game, this is about people’s jobs and their livelihoods and their living standards. In my judgment as Chancellor, leaving the EU would represent a profound economic shock for our country, for all of us, and I’m going to do everything I can to prevent that happening.” Considering Mr Osborne’s track record so far as Chancellor, we must be thankful that there will be no economic armageddon for him to save us from, or else we would be well and truly doomed.

More disturbing was this article in Friday’s Daily Express describing how a teenager at a school in Southampton was accused of “political extremism” for accessing the UKIP website from a school computer and was subsequently reported to the police, with teachers claiming he had raised welfare concerns by visiting “politically incorrect websites”. He was then referred to a specialist team whose usual brief is preventing vulnerable youngsters from being groomed and indoctrinated by Islamic State jihadis.

Furthermore, the letter written by Jeremy Heywood, the Secretary of the Cabinet & Head of the Civil Service to civil servants and special advisors ordering them to limit assistance to ministers supporting the “leave” proposition, does nothing to suggest that there is any intention to conduct the referendum in a fair, even-handed manner. It was encouraging that Owen Paterson MP challenged the Prime Minister in Parliament about this breach of the fundamental principle of civil service neutrality. Unfortunately, Paterson’s intervention did not receive the media coverage it deserved.

The one weakness of the Leave Campaign to date is our failure thus far to present a coherent seamless exit strategy. This, however, will be addressed next month at the launch of the Leave Alliance in London, to which all are welcome.

Armed with a suitable weapon with which to counter Cameron's fear tactics, we will fight for all we are worth to secure that crucial "leave" vote.

Of course, if he wins, Mr Cameron will try to depict us as bad losers, but no one can possibly claim this is a fair and open contest. Our best hope is that we won't lose because the public can see through his games and ask the very obvious question that if remaining in the EU is such a good thing, why does it require such spin, deceit, fear tactics and rigging of the debate to convince us that this is so?

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