

Cut and run

So now we have the date! Much to the fury of the SNP, the referendum will take place on June 23rd. Having come back with nothing of substance, Cameron has decided to cut and run, hoping to sneak through a “remain” vote before the “leave” campaign has time to build up a sufficient head of steam.

Listening to BBC Radio 4 today, it is very obvious that the “remain” campaign is going to play on the fear factor. If I was given £1 for every time David Cameron, George Osborne and others used the phrase “a step into the unknown”, I could make a very substantial dent in my mortgage.

In spite of the best efforts by Mr Cameron, he has come back with nothing more than a deal yet further diluted from the draft version whose inadequacy was well illustrated a couple of weeks back on this website and on others too. As Peter Lilley pointed out here, things have gone downhill from Cameron’s initial desire to be on the world’s top tables, including the EU’s. We would now merely be “the appendix of Europe”.

After following the debate for much of the day, a few things are apparent:-

1. Remainers will have a real problem trying to defend the deal. George Osborne was squirming when cross-examined by John Humphrys on the *Today* programme. It amounts to nothing of substance and he knows it.
2. The crucial group, the undecideds and “soft” voters in either camp can be won round, and the shallowness of the so-called deal can be exploited to our advantage, but the “deal” will be history by June 23rd. It’s going to be broader perceptions of the EU that count – and to a degree, the perception of our political leaders too.
3. We need better, more robust arguments than many put

forward by some “leavers” I heard on the radio today. Access to the Single Market is a crucial issue. We need to move on from “They will trade with us because they sell more to us than we do to them” or we will lose. To make the case that staying in is the risky alternative (which it is), our arguments must be watertight.

4. The potential influence of Boris Johnson in this debate has been grossly overstated by the media

On this brief note, CIB wishes all those campaigning for our freedom from the EU the very best as we prepare for a long four month slog. It’s not the timescale we would have ideally liked, but we’ve got to make the best of it, work our socks off, believe in ourselves and pray for a miracle.