

Der Spiegel is ahead of the game

Sometimes you get a better idea of the direction of Cameron's renegotiations by reading the foreign press than you do from our national daily newspapers. Certainly this article in *Der Speigel* online seems to have the measure of the play-acting going on between David Cameron and the various powers-that-be in the European Union:-

The victor in this game has already been determined. On Feb. 19th in Brussels, David Cameron will prevail with all of his most important demands. The British prime minister, to be sure, will be standing alone at the summit, faced with opposition from his 27 EU counterparts. But in the end, following tough negotiations, he will get his way.

Such is the result envisioned by EU leaders and in fact European Council President Donald Tusk, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have already written the script for their own defeat. "We want Cameron to return to London victorious," say EU officials in Brussels, in an uncommon display of unity. In Berlin, a Chancellery official says: "We will be extremely helpful." Anything that isn't a complete betrayal of European values is negotiable, the Berlin official says.

Their goal is that of providing Cameron with the political tailwind he needs to keep the United Kingdom in the European Union. This summer, Cameron is planning to hold a referendum on Britain's future in the EU. Only if he returns from Brussels in February with a better deal for Britain does he stand a chance of reversing the widespread EU-skepticism that characterizes the country.

So there you have it – a stage-managed confrontation which

will see Cameron seemingly winning against the odds – talking tough and somehow, browbeating all the other 27 countries to get his way, except in reality they are more than happy to be browbeaten because of the fear of Brexit.

For Tusk, Juncker and Merkel, a Brexit would be a nightmare scenario, and one that they are seeking to avoid at all costs. It would shake the EU to its core, continues the article, perhaps with some truth. However, advocates of “remain” on both sides of the Channel have failed to face up to the fact that two contradictory forces are in play that can never ultimately be reconciled.

The EU leadership is unbending in its commitment to “Ever Closer Union.” Angela Merkel herself has said “We need a political union, which means we must gradually cede powers to Europe and give Europe control.” The problem is that the majority of the UK electorate doesn’t want to do this. It’s a bit like Jeremy Corbyn having someone in his shadow cabinet who not only rejects unilateralism but actually rejects socialism altogether! Such a person is clearly in the wrong place.

So, for all the fears of the shock of Brexit, it really ought to be a benefit for the peoples of Europe. If they are at one with their elected (and unelected) leaders in still wanting ever-closer union, then getting rid of the foot-dragging Brits will enable them to achieve their objective a lot quicker.

If, on the other hand, the peoples of Europe are falling out of love with the European project, then we can lead the way towards a peaceful, orderly dismemberment of the EU rather than the chaotic scenes we saw 25 years ago when the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia fell apart. After all, the EU has no divine right to eternal life. Brexit is actually a win-win situation for everybody, but first, we need to ensure that our own countrymen are as well-informed of the true nature of David Cameron’s charades as *Der Spiegel* so manifestly is, so

that we're not taken in.