

Holiday homework – suggested reading

So much of the information around the Brexit debate is highly partial and skewed to one agenda or another, as politicians, media folk and journalists ride their hobby horses fiercely in all directions, often to tight deadlines which preclude calm thought and deep research. So it is refreshing to have a balanced view from a man of undoubted expertise, deep knowledge and unrivalled experience who is trying to bring some clarity and balance to the debate.

Sir Ivan Rogers was the UK's Representative to Brussels until his resignation shortly before Mrs. May's Lancaster House Speech in January 2017. His parting advice to his colleagues was that they must be sure to speak truth to power, especially when the truth was unwelcome. Judging from subsequent events, it seems that all of it may not have got through.

Here he reviews the history of the Eurosceptic debate and suggests a way forward towards the achievement of a rational, prosperous and mutually satisfactory relationship with our nearest neighbours and largest trading partners, as well as with the wider world.

His comments on free trade, the customs union and the unrealistic tone of much of the post-referendum debate are well worth reading. While one cannot know exactly where Sir Ivan stands, he comes across as one of those people who, while naturally not wanting us to be leaving the EU, has accepted the result and genuinely wants to see a successful Brexit. There are unquestionably some pseudo-Brexiteers around – i.e., people who deliberately wish to create a Brexit in name only in order to prepare the ground for our re-entry into the EU, but there are also a good number of ex-remain supporters who are far more concerned about the consequences of a botched

Brexit and don't have any hidden agenda. The insights of such people are well worthy of consideration, regardless of their stance prior to the 2016 referendum.