If South Korea can do it, why can’t we?

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The Lord Stoddart of Swindon (Independent Labour)

News Release

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Peer hammers Government for pro-EU bias and stay-in campaigners for belittling our country’s ability to stand on its own

During a debate on the European Union Referendum Bill in the House of Lords (02.11.15), the independent Labour Peer, Lord Stoddart of Swindon has pointed out the bias being exhibited by the Government in the debate about Britain’s future in the EU and strongly criticised fellow peers who regularly talk down Britain’s ability to cope as an independent sovereign nation.

Lord Stoddart said that it is impossible to obtain unbiased information from “…the Government because they are in fact biased. I say that because the Prime Minister has just been to Iceland where he made his position perfectly clear, which is that he wishes to remain in the EU. He believes that it is the best thing for Britain to do, so he has made his position absolutely clear. How can the Government be unbiased?

In a hard hitting speech, Lord Stoddart bluntly stated that “the British national interest cannot be served in the European Union. That is because the European Union is exactly what it says it is and what it wants to become. It has been made perfectly clear by unelected officials and indeed by

elected people that they want further integration. However the Prime Minister tries, he will never be able to join a full Union unless he is prepared to agree to more integration."

Lord Stoddart also expressed serious concerns about the habit those who support staying in the EU have of belittling our country and its ability to thrive as an independent nation. "The other thing that has worried me about this debate is the lack of confidence that so many people have in this country's ability to negotiate with other countries and to stand on its own and build up its own businesses and exports. Why is it that other countries in the world can do it? Why can South Korea do it with a population of 25 million? Why cannot Britain, with a population of 65 million, negotiate successfully with other countries when smaller countries including Saudi Arabia and Iceland can? The Prime Minister of Iceland made it perfectly clear that it was doing very well outside the EU with a population of 350,000 and did not want to go into the EU any longer. Why have we lost confidence in ourselves?"

The full text of some of Lord Stoddart's remarks during the debate are as follows. Click on this link for the full debate.

Referendum Bill – second reading

House of Lords – 2nd November 2015

Lord Stoddart of Swindon (Ind Lab): My Lords, I have been listening to this debate all afternoon and I find it very interesting indeed. I also realise that all the amendments are well meant, but I think that the noble Baroness, Lady Royall, has hit the nail on the head. What she wants is unbiased information, and she believes that you cannot get it from the Government because they are in fact biased. I say that because the Prime Minister has just been to Iceland where he made his position perfectly clear, which is that he wishes to remain in the EU. He believes that it is the best thing for Britain to

do, so he has made his position absolutely clear. How can the Government be unbiased? The noble Baroness said that we have civil servants and they will be unbiased. Civil servants are never unbiased; they take their lead from the boss, as in fact they should. Knowing that the Prime Minister has gone abroad and said that he believes that the United Kingdom should remain in the EU come what may will condition whatever is put into these reports. We should make no mistake about that.

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Lord Wallace of Saltaire: Would the noble Lord allow for the possibility that the Prime Minister might have reached the position he now holds because of his concept of the British national interest and his position as Prime Minister in trying to define that national interest?

Lord Stoddart of Swindon: Yes, I believe that the Prime Minister believes that, but the British national interest cannot be served in the European Union. That is because the European Union is exactly what it says it is and what it wants to become. It has been made perfectly clear by unelected officials and indeed by elected people that they want further integration. However the Prime Minister tries, he will never be able to join a full Union unless he is prepared to agree to more integration, and that of course will also mean joining the euro. Further integration must include the euro and anyone who wishes to be part of further integration will have to join it or else leave or become some sort of associate member. Those are the facts and we should not try to deny them.

6 pm

The other thing that has worried me about this debate is the lack of confidence that so many people have in this country's ability to negotiate with other countries and to stand on its own and build up its own businesses and exports. Why is it that other countries in the world can do it? Why can South

Korea do it with a population of 25 million? Why cannot Britain, with a population of 65 million, negotiate successfully with other countries when smaller countries including Saudi Arabia and Iceland can? The Prime Minister of Iceland made it perfectly clear that it was doing very well outside the EU with a population of 350,000 and did not want to go into the EU any longer. Why have we lost confidence in ourselves? Why is it that so many people say we have to be members of this great organisation to succeed?