

More nonsense from Ed Miliband

The latest sparring match in the election campaign has centred on foreign policy. Ed Miliband accused David Cameron of adopting an “inward-looking approach” to foreign policy at a speech at Chatham House on Friday. According to the Labour Leader, the Prime Minister’s leadership has resulted in the “biggest loss of influence for our country in a generation”.

Like a worn-out gramophone record, Miliband will include a criticism of Cameron’s offer of an in/out referendum on our membership of the EU. Recognising the weakness of the economic arguments, he has had to turn to the alleged political arguments against withdrawal. “The Tory view threatens to weaken further our position abroad, a pessimistic isolationism,” claimed Miliband.

This organisation is no cheer leader for David Cameron. His offer of a referendum is better than nothing, but it is quite clear that a Cameron-led government will bend every sinew to obtain an “in” vote. However, Miliband is living in cloud-cuckoo land if he believes that staying in the EU will increase our clout on the world stage.

Several recent articles which have appeared on the internet bring home the hard truth – the EU revolves around Germany. It has the largest population and is by far the largest economy in the Eurozone. The crisis in Greece has underlined how much Germany calls the shots in the Eurozone. Once Chancellor Angela Merkel and her finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble made it clear that there can be no deviation from the policy of austerity agreed in 2011, the die was cast. The rest of the single currency bloc and Christine Lagarde of the IMF all fell into line:- Greece can expect no realistic easing of credit terms.

There are legitimate grounds for exasperation with Greece. Even the far less confrontational centre right government led by Antonis Samaras, which was ousted by Alexis Tsipras' left-wing Syriza movement earlier this year, dragged its heels. Given Syriza came to power on an anti-austerity ticket, it was inevitable that Brussels and Frankfurt would quickly find themselves at loggerheads with the new régime in Athens. However, for all the criticisms which can legitimately be made of the immature behaviour of Syriza's leaders and the party's ill-judged economic policies, they had a mandate from the Greek electorate.

Is the EU about to undermine this and seek régime change? This is the verdict of at least one analyst who states that "The campaign to bring Greece into line is not just about economics. It is power politics designed to crush any democratic voices that challenge the EU's reigning economic orthodoxy." If it fails, Greece may leave the Euro and possibly the EU, which, while financially manageable, would raise all manner of political implications, especially given Athens' warm relationship with Vladimir Putin in Moscow. However, what if it succeeds?

The writer goes on to say that "Brussels will have definitively exposed its profoundly anti-democratic nature" and that "this will have political repercussions, not only in much bigger peripheral countries like Italy and Spain, also suffering under austerity policies, but in countries like France and Britain that belong to the core of the EU. A German-led exercise of power to crush a democratically elected European government with an iron fist will provoke a strong reaction in France, which sees itself as a bastion of democratic ideals. An off-the-cuff remark by Schäuble at the IMF meeting to the effect that France, too, would probably be happy to have someone force their Parliament to take action provoked a storm of indignation in France cutting across party lines."

Turning specifically to UK, the article goes on to claim that crushing Greece “could tip the scales in a British election next month deemed too close to call, fuelling eurosceptic opinion that could boost not only the anti-European U.K. Independence Party but the Conservative Party of Prime Minister David Cameron, who has pledged to hold a referendum on continued EU membership if re-elected.” Considering Cameron is every inch a Brussels stooge, it would be ironic if he were to benefit from an escalation in the Greek crisis, but at least it would show up Miliband’s claims for the hollow nonsense that they are. Germany rules the roost as far as the EU is concerned. **FACT**. If we want to have any *real* influence in the world, we therefore have to throw off its yoke and regain our independence.

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