

More nonsense rebutted.



If anyone still believes the “remain” side will play fair, a couple of newspaper headlines in recent days should be sufficient to dispel such illusions.

Firstly, Charles Powell, Lady Thatcher’s private secretary during much of her time in Downing Street, claimed that she would have backed David Cameron’s renegotiation and voted to stay in.

Bill Cash MP has rebutted that claim by producing a letter she wrote to him making it clear she would not have signed the Maastricht Treaty (See above), which meant that she therefore would have taken the UK out of the EU. If Maastricht was a step too far for her, therefore it is inconceivable that she would have supported keeping the UK in the EU under the terms agreed by David Cameron and Donald Tusk, which accept the further integration to which successive UK governments signed up with the Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon treaties.

Now David Cameron, following in the steps of Hilary Benn, has raised the spectre of the Russian Bear. Mr Putin would be delighted to see the UK leave the EU, so we are to be warned. It would “weaken Europe”.

If Benn and Cameron’s alleged fears are based on military concerns, they are unfounded. Firstly, let’s be clear: we are wanting to withdraw from the EU, not Nato. It’s the all-important alliance with the USA which has helped maintain stability in Europe and given the reluctance of most EU member states to spend much on defence, it’s the organisation including a country prepared support its military that will count in the years to come if Mr Putin needs to be kept at bay.

Furthermore, within the EU, the UK has been the biggest foot-dragger when it comes to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy. It's the usual story. While our leaders insist they want our country to remain an EU member state, they disagree with the other member states over the question of defence, just as they don't want us to join Schengen or adopt the Euro.

Only today, French Finance Minister Michel Sapin expressed his enthusiasm to proceed with further integration within the Eurozone, declaring our country will get "no veto, no mechanism" – in other words, no special deal to protect the City of London. On so many issues, they want to go one way, we want to go another. Although the other countries don't want us to go, our presence actually makes the EU weaker. Our departure is therefore likely to delight Mr Putin far less than the scaremongers would have us believe; in fact, it probably won't bother him one way or other.