

Mrs May's EU Vassal State

How much humiliation are Mrs May and Mr Davis prepared take at the hands of our European Union (EU) overlords? When will the pain they are going through reach such a level that they finally grasp the reality of the EU's superior machinations? It is now so obvious that the United Kingdom is to be made the latest example of what happens when the power of the EU's rigid, self-interested bureaucratic and political machine is defied; it cannot be bargained with or changed – just obeyed. And worse, Mrs May through her mistakes and Mr Davis through his slothful ignorance, has not just allowed it to happen, but made the EU's worst excesses unavoidable. The first (So-called transitional) phase of Mrs May's 'deep and special relationship with our EU partners' after 29th March 2019 amounts to being a vassal state to the EU Empire just as around 2000 years ago Judea under King Herod the Great was a vassal of the Roman Empire. They eventually took over completely. The EU is threatening to do the same. What has gone so disastrously wrong?

In January this year Mrs May in her Lancaster House speech ruled out continuing membership of the Single Market (and European Economic Area, EEA aka Internal Market). Continuing membership is possible through membership of EFTA (The European Free Trade Association). All the UK has to do is join – or rather re-join – assuming the existing EFTA members would have us back, which seems far from improbable. This route offers the ability to limit immigration from the day we leave by unilaterally invoking Article 112 (the Safeguard Measures) of the EEA Agreement. The EFTA route to EEA membership does give members outside the EU a say in EU legislation affecting the EEA, is largely free (although 'voluntarily' Norway does contribute to regional development funds) and is outside the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The EEA *Acquis* or body of law is about a

quarter of the total EU *Acquis* since it only relates to successful functioning of the EEA. And EFTA members make their own trade agreements with other countries. Membership of the EEA solves the problem of maintaining a soft border in Ireland between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. It is EEA membership that allows seamless trade since regulatory measures are the same for each side, whereas being a 'third country' outside the EEA brings a hard (often protectionist) border with the EU of controls, tariffs, inspections etc.

Mrs May rejected even temporary EFTA/EEA membership (for reasons that have never been stated) and now, in order to get a transitional agreement (to buy time to negotiate a free trade agreement), she is being faced with having to agree a far worse arrangement with the EU (see European Council (Art. 50) meeting (15th December 2017) – Guidelines). For two or more years (subject to EU agreement) we will continue to be subject to the full EU *acquis*, pay into the EU budget, accept freedom of movement, be unable to make our own trade agreements with other countries, and accept the overall jurisdiction of the ECJ. It gets worse. During this transitional time (after 29th March 2019) the UK would have to accept unconditionally any new additional or amended laws and costs the EU wants to impose. All whilst actually being excluded from any decision making – all pay with no say.

Even an agreement from the EU to this transitional agreement is not a foregone conclusion, in spite of Mrs May being forced to fall into line just to get this far. She has had to agree to the EU's methodology for working out outstanding financial liabilities, She has had to accept the ECJ creating a different (potentially privileged) legal status for EU citizens here and the Irish border being effectively an internal EEA border; (though she may not yet realise that is the only workable solution for a soft border). We would be stuck with the Common Fisheries Policy and there is nothing to stop the EU imposing further demands for accepting a

transitional agreement or during implementation whilst we remain a vassal state, for example, participation in the emerging EU Army and its common procurement (concealed under the initials PESCO), implementing centrally imposed migrant quotas and paying EU imposed fines.

Mrs May's recent Brussels 'triumph' is more likely a poisoned chalice where there is little incentive for the EU to be accommodating or to hurry up with a free trade agreement. Such discussions are very much on the EU back burner until after we become a vassal state (aka "leave the EU in name only" on 29th March 2019). Mr Davis talks about having a FTA agreed before we leave the EU and Mrs May talks about its implementation period, but this isn't going to happen, as explained above. Indeed, it was spelt out by the EU's Trade Commissioner back in 2016. Even if they believe what they are saying, these are no more than wishful thinking and no matter how often they repeat them, it won't make their hopes come true.

Looking at the bigger picture, progress so far by Mrs May, our EU negotiators and the Department for (Not) Exiting the European Union in managing Brexit has been lamentable and cavalier towards managing risk. The recent Joint (progress) Report, (and EU Commission Communication), containing contradictions, fudge and weasel words to appease all interested parties, amounts to 15 pages. Although not legally binding, it is likely to become politically binding upon Mrs May, contradictions and all. Then there are the 58 non-existent sector-by-sector impact assessments which Mr Davis once claimed existed, but has since denied. How can the best route out of the EU be chosen when those doing the choosing haven't a clue what could go wrong or even how anything works? By contrast, here are impressively informative sector-by-sector assessments by Eureferendum.com.

Predicting the future is fraught with imponderables and the

potential exists for unforeseen events completely to change outcomes. So in the end, it is possible that things could be fine. However, judging by experience to date, this looks increasingly unlikely. We can but hope that Mrs May will abandon her single-minded rejection of the EEA/EFTA option, as the options she seems to be pursuing contain impossible contradictions. Perhaps she doesn't know enough yet to understand all the practicalities. Meanwhile, how long can Mr Davis will keep on talking up imaginary progress towards a free trade agreement whilst getting nowhere and at the same time, making regular, very public gaffes that undermine the credibility of Brexit negotiations?

Another question remains unanswered, perhaps because nobody has asked it yet:— why put all your efforts, concessions and kowtowing into negotiating a complex transitional agreement, which could end up lasting a long time, when a far better (or less damaging) simple solution exists (of EFTA/EEA membership) at least for a transitional arrangement? **You rejected it once, now you are leading us into a worse mess all round until who knows when, why?**