

Sorry, Douglas, but you are a bit premature

Douglas Carswell resigned from UKIP last month and now sits as an independent MP. On his resignation, which was announced a matter of days after Mrs May triggered Article 50, he said "It's a case of job done....we have achieved what we were established to do."

In other words, he felt that UKIP had served its purpose – a theme to which he returned yesterday during a speech at an event hosted by the Institute for Government:- "I think we've done our job, and I think we should award ourselves a medal, or a knighthood, and take pride that we've won....if you've won a battle or a war you disband and you go home".

But is Mr Carswell right in saying that the job is done? Winning the referendum last June against all the odds was an amazing achievement and the triggering of Article 50 last month to begin our divorce from the EU was a truly significant milestone for our country, but there are still hard campaigns to be fought in the next two years if Brexit is truly to be Brexit.

Many readers will be aware of the campaign by Fishing for Leave to see a swift denunciation of the 1964 London Convention and the exclusion of all CFP-related legislation from the "Great Repeal Bill" so that we will regain control of all our waters once we leave the EU. While there have been a few positive signs that the Government is listening, a long, hard battle will need to be fought if we are to secure a Brexit that truly means Brexit for our fishing industry.

An equally fierce battle will need to be fought to extricate the UK from the European Arrest Warrant. Chief Police Officers support continuing UK participation in this odious scheme and

they have the backing of the Home Secretary Amber Rudd. Last month, the Campaign for an Independent Britain hosted a meeting where legal expert Torquil Dick-Erikson highlighted the grave flaws in the EAW and mentioned some of the miscarriages of justice which it has engendered. Thankfully, there is a growing awareness of this issue among Leave-supporting Tory MPs and Peers, but it will not be easy to force Ms Rudd to climb down.

A third critical issue is foreign policy. Our friends in Veterans for Britain are seriously concerned about our being far too closely linked to the EU's military policy even after Brexit. On independence, our foreign policy will inevitably diverge from that of the EU. There may well be instances when we will wish to work alongside them, but we need to keep our distance from the European Defence Agency if Brexit is truly to mean Brexit.

If that is not enough, the battle is not won when we have taken the UK out of the EU. The EU needs to be taken out of many UK citizens, especially young people. Those of us who took part in debates in schools and universities were made all too aware of the damaging effect of years of pro-EU propaganda. Of course, some europhilia among our young people is very shallow and superficial, revolving around the ungrounded fear that Brexit will stop them travelling around Europe. Such concerns can be easily dissipated by older people relating their experiences of inter-railing in the 1960s, years before we joined the EU.

For some, however, their love of the EU goes deeper and will require somewhat more intensive de-programming. A re-vamp of our GCSE history syllabus is essential as so few young people have any knowledge of our development as a nation. This, of course, will be mean challenging the far too prevalent self-loathing mentality which likes to talk about racism and slavery and generally to demean our great country, ignoring our many remarkable achievements over the centuries which

prove that we have the capacity to manage our own affairs – and indeed, to run our country much better without the EU’s “help”.

Mr Carswell’s comments were directed primarily towards his former party. While this website is not the place to debate whether his assessment of the state of UKIP is correct or not, we can but hope that he and those who agree with him will resist any temptation to put their feet up as far as the battle for independence is concerned. The referendum result and the triggering of Article 50 were indeed causes for celebration, but the battle for independence is not over yet.