

# The Clunking Fist needs a reality check

It is pretty rare for someone who was once our nation's prime minister to come out with such complete and utter rubbish as Gordon Brown with his recent comments on the prospect of the UK leaving the EU.

Writing in The Guardian yesterday, Brown regurgitates the now discredited "three million jobs" myth and pooh-poohs the Norwegian Option in a manner almost worthy of Nick Clegg. However, his most bizarre comment was to claim that "leaving Europe to join the world is really the North Korea option, out in the cold with few friends, no influence, little new trade and even less new investment."

So withdrawalists are wanting to turn the country into one of the most dictatorial, impoverished and isolated countries in the world, eh, Gordon?

How about a few facts here and there? Withdrawal from the EU would make us more democratic. We would be governed by representatives we could elect and dismiss rather than having to kow-tow to unelected bureaucrats of the whims of foreign heads of state. If we remained within the EEA and re-joined EFTA, we could retain our trade with the EU's single market while being free to renegotiate our own free trade agreements free from the UN-inspired red tape that renders so many of the EU's free trade agreements so bureaucratic. What of the isolation element? Unlike the North Koreans, we speak the world's *lingua franca*. Unlike North Korea, we are, even within the EU, one of the countries offering the fewest obstacles to businessmen. Outside the EU, we could repeal the more burdensome regulations and be even more business-friendly.

Would we lose all our friends when we left? The bonds of the

Anglophone world go deep. In many ways, we would be more likely to strengthen them. After all, withdrawal offers us a chance to redress the betrayal of our Commonwealth friends in 1973 when we reorientated our trade away from them.

As for the “no influence” issue, it is amazing that anyone takes us seriously at the moment when as an EU member state, we don’t even have the freedom as to how we label our bananas! We would still be members of NATO and the Commonwealth. Our well-trained, if depleted armed forces, would still be in demand for training the armed forces of other nations. Our public schools and universities would still be attracting top students from across the world.

Somehow, this doesn’t sound much like North Korea!

Brown said that “Britain has shaped the destiny of Europe and the world before.” History says that we have done much better in shaping Europe from without – in other words, as an independent state. We did more far more good to Europe in 1802-1815, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 than we have done since 1973. The EU was designed as a federal superstate. That’s not what we want and we have failed totally to convince the other member states to ditch the silly idea of ever-closer union. We have failed time after time to persuade the French to abandon the protectionist and wasteful Common Agricultural Policy. We have had forty years of Conservative talk of reforming the EU and ended up with an arch-integrationist, Jean-Claude Juncker, chosen as Commission President in spite of David Cameron’s protests.

Brown is right in one thing:- yes, we who support withdrawal are calling it the patriotic option and unashamedly so. No self-respecting, successful country normally submits to rule from abroad unless it has been invaded. It was patriotism that caused millions of our young men to give their lives in two world wars. Thankfully, no such sacrifice will be needed this time, just a cross in the right place on the ballot form, but

the motivation is the same – freedom from foreign tyranny – a noble and patriotic cause indeed.

Brown has promised to play an active part in the “In” campaign if a referendum is held in 2017. How much he was able to influence the result in the Scottish referendum campaign by his intervention is a moot point, but south of the border he hasn’t been forgotten as the man who raided our pension pots as Chancellor and crashed the economy as Prime Minister. Unless the Clunking Fist takes a hefty reality check, the more he intervenes on behalf of the “in” campaign with gibberish like this, the brighter the prospects for withdrawal. Bring it on, Flash!

Photo by david\_terrar 