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Tim Congdon's latest e-mail



Dear fellow member of UKIP (and others concerned about the UK's relationship with the EU),

This is my first post-referendum e-mail intended mostly for UKIP supporters. It is superfluous to say that I was thrilled by the outcome on 23rd June.

Further, the UK's prospective departure from the EU is due, above all, to the hard work, commitment and passion of UKIP and its members, and of course of Nigel Farage. David Cameron promised a referendum in his January 2013 Bloomberg speech in order to neutralize UKIP's perceived threat to the Conservatives. And, for all the Establishment's sneers at the party, it was UKIP that generated and articulated key arguments in the debate running up to 23rd June.

I know from personal experience that the Europhile Establishment was shocked and stunned at public meetings to find that the Leave side generally put up better-quality arguments and did so with more conviction. They simply hadn't expected this, and weren't prepared. Project Fear was a disaster for the Remain camp, but it reflected intellectual shoddiness and political insincerity. (His involvement in Project Fear may have ended George Osborne's political career. I would prefer not to be mean, but he deserved it. I don't think Vote Leave was much cop, in the few weeks that it existed. Such organizations as the Bruges Group, Campaign for an Independent Britain, Better off Out, Global Britain and the Freedom Association had developed the arguments over many years, and – like UKIP – were important to the 23rd June result.)

Without UKIP's pressure, the Conservatives would have done nothing and the UK would be stuck in the EU forever.

But we cannot celebrate yet. Brexit turns out to have many meanings, while the government remains one led to by the Conservative Party (the party of Neville Chamberlain and Ted Heath, don't forget) advised by civil servants. In the accompanying [video](#), I point out that two alternative approaches are emerging,

- **The Single Market option.** The UK recovers parliamentary sovereignty and judicial supremacy, *but it remains 'in the Single Market' in order to have tariff-free access to its neighbours' home markets.* The UK does not have control of immigration from the EU – and may even have to pay some money ('danegeld') to the EU for tariff-free access, as Norway and Switzerland do.
- **The free trade option ('the WTO option').** The UK recovers parliamentary sovereignty and judicial supremacy, *and also leaves the EU/EEA Single Market.* UK companies become subject to the common external tariff, unless specific arrangements are made by negotiation. (Cars, aerospace components, and agriculture and fisheries are priorities in such negotiations.) The UK has full control of immigration, including from the EU. It does not pay any 'danegeld' to the EU.

I think it is of the utmost importance that UKIP supports the free trade option. Free trade works. (Compare Hong Kong and Singapore with North Korea and Cuba.) My fear is that the government will favour the Norway option with variants. We recover full control over our borders only if we do not belong to the Single Market. Outside the Single Market (which is really an area of common regulation) we would continue to have access to the European market, even if tariffs (quite low tariffs, by the way) were payable.

Obviously, this debate will figure prominently in UKIP's coming leadership election...I realize that some party members might favour protection for British industries. No, all the experience of the last 250 years – since the start of the Industrial Revolution – is that free trade is good for economic growth and living standards. By becoming the champion of free trade in the UK public debate, UKIP would be occupying the intellectual and emotional high ground, as well as appealing to one of Britain's most attractive and successful political traditions.

With best wishes,



Runner-up in the 2010 UKIP leadership election
UKIP Economics Spokesman 2010 – 14