

DEAL OR NO DEAL - MY STRATEGY FOR BREXIT

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The UK must seek to conclude negotiations with the EU at the forthcoming December 2017 summit, and proclaim withdrawal from the EU on 31st March, 2018 – whether or not the EU accepts our post Brexit terms.

Our terms must be clear and simple.

Firstly, guaranteeing the right to remain for those EU citizens legally residing in the UK (and UK citizens in the EU) up to and including 23rd June 2016 must be implemented quickly, to end uncertainty.

Secondly, protecting the Common Travel Area in Northern Ireland is essential.

I propose a comprehensive free trade, customs and financial services agreement with the EU. Frictionless customs checks are possible with latest technology – the UK must leave the customs union in order to forge free trade deals with the expanding markets of the future.

Unlike other nations negotiating free trade agreements, the UK starts with a clear advantage; we are seeking to retain the existing zero tariffs and customs duties between the UK and EU members which benefit the EU more than the UK. Any UK-EU deal could potentially be negotiated within months, not years. With a trade surplus of £71.8 billion with the UK [2016 figures], it is clearly in the EU's interest to agree such a deal.

Last, but by no means least, when Brexit occurs, our financial contributions cease. There will be no divorce settlement, nor ongoing payments to an organisation we have been

Therefore, should the EU accept this deal, there will be no cliff edge, as the trading, citizens rights, and Northern Ireland border arrangements will continue unchanged. Rejection of this offer from Brussels will be far more costly to the EU than to the UK

Nevertheless, should the EU reject our terms, the UK will over the ensuing three months prepare digital customs checks, border checks, and imposition of tariffs to be implemented on 1st April, 2018. These arrangements will coincide with the new tax year in the UK. It is important for both sides (especially the EU) to remember that in this scenario, the UK would invest proceeds from tariffs in tax breaks for businesses and individuals.

It is essential that the UK is serious about securing Brexit, and is prepared to walk away from negotiations without a deal should the UK interest be undermined.