

Speech by Kieran Bailey

Bruges Group International Conference 2013

Opening

Thank you Chairman. It is a great pleasure to be here today to address your conference and I thank all of those who were involved in inviting me to speak. Being the youngest and perhaps the most obscure of speakers at this event places a deep obligation to fulfil people's interests so I hope I am not too disappointing.

A referendum on our EU membership is now a guarantee at least by one major party and withdrawal from the EU is more likely now than at any time since we joined. It is absolutely essential that we consider the best process to withdraw from the EU as if we leave it to the last minute then we risk a dangerous isolation. Going it alone doesn't need to mean hovering like an iceberg in the mid-Atlantic despite what the defeatist lefties might say. It means grasping our nation back once again, re-aligning our position and re-adjusting our compass.

Just to clear it up I am not personally an advocate of withdrawal, the Prime Minister's strategy of a renegotiation followed by a referendum seems the perfect strategy and continental governments know that if they fail to renegotiate then Britain will leave. We cannot fear leaving and by plotting out how we can move from Brussels to the Departure Lounge and then out as quickly but effectively as possible we are taking out a light insurance so that if the time comes then we are ready.

Part One

Many highlight the fact that the Lisbon Treaty's Article 50 sets out how we can withdraw and how we can enter into withdrawal agreement negotiations thus supposedly providing the most comprehensive ticket out.

However who wrote that Treaty? Who forced it through? It wasn't the peoples of Europe through a democratic agreement, it was the federalist gang sitting in Brussels as they do plotting and planning how to abolish the nation states. The proposed process has been deliberately designed to encourage nations to remain part of the project. It is a process where 26 other countries and the federalist-dominated European Parliament must approve a nation leaving on amicable terms though the nation itself may wait two years – yes a whole TWO YEARS – and then ignore its opponents and listen to the people.

What could be better for the federalists who are worried about the EU fragmenting than to make an example of the most Eurosceptic country in it? And it is not just the undemocratic Eurocrats it is also some member states. Take Belgium for example – the home of neutral pro-federalism [JOKE] – which enjoys all of the investment associated with the organs of the EU and which economy depends on the EU. The construction industry building fancy offices for Eurocrats, the foreigners wishing to study European integration, the publically subsidised job creation, the consumer spending power... Herman Van Rompuy [JOKE] – there a multiple amount of things.

Would it want to see the EU wither down? Would it want for other countries to look at Britain having a wonderful new position - part of the single market, free to determine its own laws, freedom over trade, freedom over immigration, connection to the security measures, a flourishing economy whilst the continent is still stuck in a protectionist waste barrel, and a new wave of Eurosceptic is fuelled? Some people have loyalty to pro-Europeanism - usually it is those who are benefiting from it - but people who are suffering the results of their nation's economy being killed off by an ineffective one size fits all - cling to the best figures policy, will lose all loyalty to those whom they consider have no loyalty in return. Generations of people have been lost across southern Europe and as this starts to get even worse, what is going to happen? Uprising, conflict, a return to the pre- War fascism. Is this the future that countries such as Belgium or Luxembourg would want to see? The EU shrinking into a Franco-German + a few others organisation? Investment drying up, subsidies ceasing, EU budgets plummeting and the fruits of the possible federalism becoming a fantasy?

Of course not but it is the truth. But by making an example of Britain - showing other Eurosceptic countries that withdrawal will lead to a catastrophe not a success would be one of the biggest tools to attack the righteous democratic concerns of people right across Europe.

We cannot forget that the Brussels Command will stop at nothing to stop democracy from overstepping their precious political project. Their blueprints for further federalisation are superior to the lives of ordinary people. The Command Chief - Herman the Terrible/Awesome - and his comrades in arms Jose Manuel Vader, Dark Night Verhofstadt and Ashton the Avenger will complete their full federal conquest by whichever undemocratic means possible regardless of the impact on nation states.

Greece - the mother of democracy - now conquered by the Dream Team and controlled by the Van Rompuy Troika. Its capital once Athens now it is two euros. And whose fault is that?! The Greeks? Well to an extent yes but where does the root cause lie? And that is obvious it is in Brussels. The hub of Euro Mania, Herman and his Merry Men leaping across once great nations squashing them to protectorate status in order to force an eventual amalgamation of the whole lot.

We must consider what is the likely outcome of entering withdrawal agreement negotiations? Eurocrats would delay any agreement for the two year provisional limit then when we reach that limit do we extend it as we are able to or do we cut our losses and split? With the British people angry at still being part of an organisation it voted two years previously to leave, angry at continuing to pay contributions and angry at continuing to have to abide by EU legislation, what would politicians do? We would have a rushed unplanned cut off. Then we would be plunged into isolation. In one single day everything which we have attached ourselves to for the past 40 years would be made null and void without a coherent strategy for our new position. Britain would be in a danger zone, weak and unstable. We have so tightly attached ourselves so closely to the EU and shut ourselves off from the rest of the world - isolating ourselves within the ring of steel defeatist protectionism of the EU that to undertake an incoherent withdrawal could spell disaster. In such a vulnerable position we would not experience economic shock we would experience economic fall of a cliff! No offence of course to our American friends.

Part Two

So what must be done? How do we come out? Surely anything other than what is in the treaties is illegal?

The fact that we are a member of the EU and the fact that EU law applies in British law is because of one the fact that we signed the treaties and two because of the European Communities Act 1972. If we were to repeal that Act then EU law would no longer be part of our national law – it would no longer apply. We would need only one short repeal bill to repeal that Act and others such as the European Communities (Amendment) Acts, the European Union Act, the European Parliament (Representation) Act etc. The European Union Act 2011 in its so-called Sovereignty Clause, being Section 18, re-affirms that EU law only applies in British law because of the European Communities Act. This is the decision of Parliament which it has chosen to assert and in line with our national unwritten constitution.

Some would argue that the complex legal nature means that this Act simply being repealed would not withdraw us from the EU. Effectively however it would, Britain may have signed the treaties however as we have a dualist system for treaty approval whereby Parliament must consent through legislation, if that legislation is repealed then Parliament's approval is also removing one of the necessary two components of implementing a treaty into British law.

It is a possibility that the European Commission could seek a legal challenge however is this likely as the Commission would then be viewed as absolutely undemocratic and this could fuel euroscepticism. The Commission would know that Britain is leaving, it will not be staying so what is the point of wasting time going through the European Court of Justice asking them to block Britain's withdrawal until it agrees to do so in line with the treaties? By the time the Court will have reached its decision the two year limit would have probably expired so that front would be likely to have been handled anyway. We are a law-abiding country but first of all we abide by OUR LAWS. The will of Parliament is sovereign, which is crucial to our national democracy under an unwritten constitution.

Now we could not do this straight away upon invoking Article 50 which we would do anyway in order to notify the EU that we planned to withdraw. No. We would need a short period of time to prepare for its repeal. Certain major areas of EU policy such as Agriculture would have to be dealt with through notifying the EU of our decisions and arranging that when we directly withdraw we would handle these matters ourselves and the EU would no longer have any jurisdiction.

Just talking in terms of the Common Agricultural Policy we could shift the cost of subsidies to the British taxpayer for the first year or so of leaving and then over an additional one year period take the courageous free market approach which New Zealand did and abolish agricultural subsidies altogether. This has been shown to increase competition and food production and drive down prices. We only have to think back to under Peel and the Corn Laws here in Britain where agricultural production was driving up the costs of grain rapidly and hurting ordinary British people in order to protect the farming industry. Agricultural subsidies are damaging to the free market and they do cost substantially.

The Single Market is the largest of these areas and the most important. Withdrawing from the single market would free up Britain to enter its own trade arrangements, its own direct investment arrangements, free us from the regulatory collar of the EU and allow us to open ourselves to the world. It is in our national instinct to be free market as we have always been so. Some people say that in numbers as part of the EU pact we are able to negotiate free trade easier and that big agreements such as with the US will happen quicker because we are united. However let us just take Singapore, a city-state in the Far East, they had a Free Trade Agreement with the US in 2003. Now are we really saying that we the US's greatest ally cannot forge our own FTA with them especially when our economies are so similar? Continental protectionism and the anti-Atlantic attitude will be likely to hold this FTA up even further.

Trade with the EU is indeed a great concern. Many companies which invest here are continental focused and would be likely to change their approach. But why do we need the Single Market? Why? Is that the only way in which we can trade with the EU?

It would be crazy to join the EFTA which is a group of yes very rich countries but all of which are completely uninfluential. Does anyone look to Liechtenstein for military support? How would that be a good representation of the new independent Britain? The EFTA is a second hand agreement which would force upon us the burden of EU regulation and the outer tier second hand position but does not give us any representation within the EU itself.

If we leave we need to look beyond the European Economic Area and look to the outside world. Europe will grow again but when? This week we saw the European Central Bank take the tokenist approach by cutting interest rates even lower. I don't think many of us can be in much doubt where that Bank is heading in terms of its stability. If you are in doubt then the clue used to be Athens.

A Free Trade Agreement with the EU like that which the US is looking to have would be far more effective and give us far more control over ourselves than any other second hand agreement or IOU. Switzerland can be blackmailed at any time by the EU and is itself in a very vulnerable position to negotiate.

In the short term it would be difficult to get the FTA in place. However Europe need us effectively more so than we need them. How would it help the peoples of Europe who already in deep crisis to lose free trade with us? How long would the Brussels Dream Team and Protectionist Heroes' sulk last? And even if we did lose trade in the short term with the EU it would be more than made up for with a strengthening of our Commonwealth trade and our outward looking position. There is no point in rejecting Europe totally – it is on our doorstep – but there is more and we have opportunities as a nation outside in the world which we are not using at all.

In the short term we would need to impose our own trade tariff on EU imports which yes would be costly in terms of our trade with Europe but we are not going to have full prosperity immediately upon leaving. It will take time. Slowly our economic connection with the EU would be re-established possibly quicker than we think and we would in economic terms be enjoying the best of both worlds.

In terms of the trade tariff we could keep it at the same rate as the EU for the short time whilst making reductions for Commonwealth countries. Maintaining the existing tariff in the short term would be the safest option.

Our national influence over Europe would be cut but that is inevitable when you leave the continental organisation. However we are based geographically in Europe, some of our closest allies such as France are located in Europe and to completely wipe ourselves away from Europe would be impossible. If we established an ongoing panel between both Britain and the EU on foreign and security affairs, then we could continue to have influence to an extent and also strengthen our individual position.

Conclusion

We would need to re-adjust ourselves and standing from a tall independent position establish a new relationship with Europe. One where we are still relevant, still engaged but not part of it. Some say that is a dream I say it is a reality. Why would Europe want to disassociate itself from the strongest military power in the geographic area? From the country with the closest relationship to the only remaining super power in the world? From the country which has throughout its history stood by its allies in Europe and elsewhere? From the country which offers so much economically, militarily, in terms of human rights, in terms of democracy, in terms of culture and so on?

Withdrawing from Europe does not need to mean isolation. Before we joined the EU we were an independent nation but we were never a Switzerland or a Lichtenstein, we have always been outward looking. We must not allow for ourselves to be confounded by the knavish tricks of Eurocrats, duped into being the scapegoat example simply because we seek democratic control over our own nation and to plunge multiples of generations into the lost world.

Withdrawing means fundamental change, it means a short-term slip and it probably will mean a reduction of influence. It is for the British people to decide and if they decide to leave then we must leave right.

Thank You.