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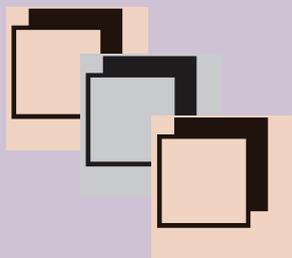
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# THE FABRICATOR

## Comment

So, the Brexit deal's done. The terms dictated by a minority political group and based entirely on doctrinaire self interest. But we can move onto a trade deal. Or can we? The minute there was agreement the Brexit lobby started its cant.

Gove told us that if we don't like the deal we can change it at the next election. One presumes he means that he and his buddies could bring down the present government, triggering the election, with himself as prime minister leading the country to sunny, Europe free uplands. He and Boris then both laid down the law as to the kind of trade deal we want and David Davis has suggested that if we don't get what we want we would welch on the 'divorce' agreement.

It rather concerns me that those who we appoint to lead us live in such fantasy lands. Though then I suppose that in politics these days there is really little but fantasy. If they couldn't imagine themselves as leading the country (imagine Gove Coer de Lion seated on a charger, sword held aloft) to conquer all our foes – well the French first of course, then the rest of Europe – there is little else for them to do.

But I digress:

What really concerns me is that those whom we obediently elect to lead us can be so self centred as to cheerfully cause damage, perhaps serious damage, to the country's economy. And it is not just me and the rest of the 42% of the population who voted to remain in Europe, the Americans are worried too. A US think tank, the Rand Corporation, reckons that with a 'no deal' scenario the UK economy would be 4.9% poorer by 2029. It also says that the 'soft' Brexit scenario would still leave us worse off than staying in the EU.

The Rand Corporation plays a significant role in the US with half of its funding coming from the US government. In Europe it advises the UK government on a variety of topics as well as advising both the European commission and the European parliament.

Its report reckons that Brexit is likely to have a 'mostly negative' effect on US interests in Europe.

If you are thinking about trade deals it may be worth noting that trade negotiations between the US and the EU (the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) are not supported by President Donald Trump and are 'in a hiatus'.

According to Charles Ries, a vice-president at Rand and the report's lead author: "The analysis clearly shows that the UK will be economically worse-off outside of the EU under most trade scenarios – the key question for the UK is how much worse-off."

He says: "It is in the best interests of the UK, and to a lesser extent the EU, to achieve some sort of open trading and investment relationship post-Brexit."

The people playing politics are unlikely to be much affected whatever happens. A few backbenchers might be thrown out of work following an election but the principle protagonists are pretty well healed anyway and in the unlikely event they get chucked out, jobs on boards, in the city and journalism await. As for the rest of us? Well, there is always universal credit to fall back on.

I wish all our readers worryfree Christmas and a prosperous new year.

*John Roper* The Fabricator 2017