

Stuart Cook

To: Adriaan Dirkzwager (djatirot@me.com)
Subject: EU etc

Dear Adriaan

The contents of your mail of 20th May are a reflection of your better understanding than mine of various important historical steps in the development of the EU story since the whole process started. I have kept broadly abreast of this process but with the knowledge that I lived in the Americas from 1960 to 1987 – as a young man not that interested in the European scene – I have to admit that I did not pay any attention to this whole saga. My life revolved around my work (learning all about domestic banking and trade finance in Peru and Brazil followed by corporate and international finance in the USA) plus, of course, enjoying a fairly active social life during that whole period of 27 years. 1976 to 1981 were spent in the UK prior to the family's transfer in January 1981 to The Netherlands. Once again I have no recollection of thinking at all about the European question presumably because it had no impact on my business life, and even if it had done so my general disinterest in politics would have resulted in my not attempting to follow this topic in the press, specifically matters relating to ongoing developments connected to the final objectives of the Treaty of Rome. It was only when we reached Spain – whose entry into the EU along with Portugal in January of 1986 – that I began to inform myself, at least enough to make me sufficiently knowledgeable on the subject in my position as Country Manager for Lloyds Bank.

This is the background to my having to admit to you that it is only since we returned to live in the UK at the end of 1987 that I began to take a mild interest in what was happening in Europe to include, of course, prospects for the future of the EU. Things have obviously become much more tense of late and we now face the unenviable task of dealing with the Cameron-inspired referendum and attempting to filter out from all the barrage of "in or out" media coverage, plus a very uncertain world geopolitical situation, should the UK stay or leave. Unlike you, I do not believe that the Europe's interests will be best served by the EU progressing to the last step foreseen in the Treaty of Rome, namely the creation of a federation of all the current member states, controlled by a central government with uniform laws, taxation and judiciary. This objective quite simply looks far too much like the old Comecon bloc (ie: the USSR but just covering a different set of countries, several of which were ironically part of the old USSR), and this is something that, for me, is beyond contemplation. Recent experience suggests that the UK alone will be wholly unable to initiate any changes to the way the European Commission manages the affairs of the EU – there is certainly a group of member countries which sympathise with some if not all of the changes that the UK government see as essential to the development of a sensible and less centralised group of European nations, but seemingly there is no sign of this group being sufficiently motivated or realistic enough to join the UK in seeking those changes.

Given these considerations, and because I have absolutely no confidence in the European Commission or, for that matter, in the role of the European Parliament – plus the fact that I do not believe in the concept of an ultimate Eurosuperstate – then there is no option but to vote BREXIT in next month's referendum.

I am actually going to post this to you as I have a copy of an article^{attached} from today's Times that gives a very good summary of why the UK should not stay in the EU. The writer, Tim Montgomerie, is a regular contributor to The Times and used to work in the Conservative Party headquarters some years ago.

All the best

Stuart.

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2016

Britain will be better off out of sickly Europe

Now that Cameron can no longer use the civil service as a propaganda tool, the economic argument begins in earnest

**Tim
Montgomerie**



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Britain wants to leave. That's the country's bedrock view. If people think their incomes will be unaffected by Brexit the Out campaign commands a 9 per cent lead, according to research by Professor Philip Cowley in association with YouGov. People want control of immigration, their taxes spent on the NHS rather than rich French farmers, and less meddling from Brussels. But looking at the polls, they are hesitating because they understandably worry about their jobs and pay.

Cowley's research also found that Remain opens up a 19 per cent lead if voters believe they'll be £500 better off staying in. This kind of research explains why David Cameron has threatened recession and higher food prices but also why the Vote Leave campaign ignores voters' economic fears at its peril. While there are diehards on both sides, the floating voters who at their core want to leave are focused on their wallets

and aren't getting enough reassurance from the Brexit campaign. That may change after today because Vote Leave is finally set to enter the economic fray.

Up to now the Brexit battle has been David versus not just Goliath but an army of Goliaths. The PM has been using thousands of civil servants and Foreign Office diplomats, in liaison with scores of international bureaucrats, to concoct his blood-curdling warnings, but purdah has arrived. Sir Jeremy Heywood, the cabinet secretary, is required by law to stop Whitehall aiding the Remain camp.

Now that the battleground should be evened up, people need to hear

If we stay we chain ourselves to the slowest growing continent

the economic benefits of leaving and risks of remaining. Brexiteers could repeat the three killer questions posed by Andrew Lilico of the Europe Economics consultancy: If the EU is so good for growth, why has the US grown 6 per cent faster than the EU over the past decade? If it's so good for jobs, why is Spanish unemployment at 21 per cent? If it's so good for trade, why are deals with

Japan, the US and Canada at risk of breaking down?

If we stay we will be chaining ourselves to the world's slowest growing continent (except Antarctica). We risk losing our rebate and paying more money into the EU budget as punishment for threatening to "desert", to quote the childish, menacing language of Jean-Claude Juncker, one of the EU's many unelected male chiefs. And you don't need to believe Turkey will join the EU to think immigration might skyrocket. When the world falls into recession hundreds of thousands from poorer EU nations may seek work in Britain, just at the moment that our own workers are most at risk of losing their jobs.

In terms of a positive economic case for leaving, let's have a five-point pledge card of the kind Tony Blair and John Prescott once brandished, but this time with substance.

Pledge One: A new Office of Free Trade at the heart of government, charged with negotiating trade arrangements with growing economies. Rather than being at the back of any queue, Britain should be able to secure trade deals more quickly because we won't be at the mercy of a veto from France or any of the slowest members of the 28-nation EU convoy.

Pledge Two: Use £1 billion of our

contribution to the EU to set up a world-beating export support service. David Davis MP has talked of "an 0800 number where a small manufacturer in Lancashire can call Shanghai, Mumbai or Sao Paulo, and find out in English how to negotiate the import regulations, find a freight forwarder or hire a warehouse".

Pledge Three: Allow sterling to fall a bit. Britain boomed after leaving the ERM in 1992 and a more competitive

Employers should help draw up an intelligent immigration policy

pound could provide what economists call an economic stabiliser.

Pledge Four: Invite Britain's employers (large and small) to help draw up an intelligent immigration policy with the twin aims of a substantial reduction in the number of low-skilled immigrants from Europe but with more room for economy-boosting engineers from India, doctors from Australia or postgrad students from Canada.

Pledge Five: Build alliances with Volkswagen (which sold 223,784 cars in the UK last year); Audi (166,709); Mercedes (145,254); BMW (167,391); Italian fashion giants; the French wine industry; Spanish hoteliers and

so on. They can't afford to lose British customers. Make them our allies in renegotiating our relationship with the EU.

And, finally, Vote Leave must take the gloves off. On Monday the Tory minister Chris Grayling paid tribute to George Osborne's economic management before criticising the chancellor's scaremongering. Observing intra-Tory party courtesies won't win a referendum that is much more important for Britain's future than any general election. The PM certainly thinks so. On *Pesford* on Sunday he all but admitted that he'd rather have a Labour government inside the EU than a Conservative government outside it.

Unleash David Davis, Nigel Farage, Gisela Stuart or anyone willing to go toe-to-toe with Mr Osborne. Every voter should be reminded that this chancellor and PM have failed to get rid of the deficit, failed to cut spending fairly and, irresponsibly, have failed to prepare a contingency plan to help the economy prosper in the event of Brexit. Because it can with a plan. The EU is stagnating because it is fundamentally dysfunctional. Twenty-eight members cannot agree how to solve the Eurozone crisis or how to respond to the continent's other challenges. Let's unchain ourselves from the sinking EU economy because we're better off out.

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