Twitter Thread by David Henig

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Quick intro to more analysis later - since Freeports are mentioned in this article worth making the point that it seems to me under the UK-EU deal that if the UK provides subsidies for them, or relaxes labour or environmental rules in them, the EU can take retaliatory action.

> Michael Gove: "Outside the EU, with a good trade deal in place, we can tackle the injustices and inequalities that have held Britain back."
> The UK did not need to leave the EU to tackle injustices and inequalities at home. Not a new point, but true.https://t.co/fE4glUAylc
>
> — Jennifer Rankin (@JenniferMerode) December 26, 2020

There has never been level playing field content like this in a trade deal. The idea it is any kind of UK win, when the UK's opening position was no enforceable commitments whatsoever, is ridiculous. https://t.co/iXlWqzzrlu

> For the lawyers. Night. pic.twitter.com/5XvFMhcaeE
>
> — Sam Lowe (@SamuelMarcLowe) December 25, 2020

The EU can take retaliatory action against the UK if we weaken labour standards, weaken pretty firm climate change targets, unfairly subsidise, or just in general seem to be out of line. There are processes to follow, but it looks like the PM did it again...

Asked in the Commons by the veteran Tory backbencher Edward Leigh about the prospects for a deal, Johnson said: “Our friends in the EU are currently insisting that if they pass a new law in future with which we in this country do not comply or don’t follow suit, then they want the automatic right to punish us and to retaliate.

“And secondly they’re saying the UK should be the only country in the world not to have sovereign control over its fishing waters. I don’t believe that those are terms that any prime minister of this country should accept.”

Final one for now. Quite how Labour gets itself in such a fuss about whether to support a deal with the strongest labour and environment commitments ever seen in a trade deal is a sign of just how far it hasn't moved on from leaving.

PS well... (sorry DAG). It certainly didn't have a good effect. And I think if we had settled LPF issues with the EU much earlier there is a good chance the conditions would have been far less stringent. By making an issue, we made it much worse. https://t.co/M4MYbjSbK3

> As a lay person is it fair to say that the \u201cthreat\u201d to break international law in Ireland was possibly a strategic blunder that has now determined the future trajectory of the UK for the next 20 years? I can imagine most countries will study what\u2019s baked into this and replicate?
>
> — Meister 1 (@blueelmacho) December 26, 2020

Interesting... https://t.co/V4DimjmVPm

> If you're curious how other countries are presenting the UK-EU deal, this is the verdict from a French left-wing paper:
>
> It is "packed with regulatory brakes stopping London from undertaking social, ecological or fiscal dumping" https://t.co/aPCtyfPKmy
>
> — Pascal \U0001f1ea\U0001f1fa\U0001f1ec\U0001f1e7 (@PascalLTH) December 25, 2020

Oh, here's the text. Have a quick flick through it, be astonished at the dull legalese, wait for specialist takes. Well that's my plan anyway... https://t.co/sOAyoi5AKJ

> EU-UK TCA.
>
> Happy Boxing Day!
>
> https://t.co/39fVCycPUI
>
> — Rem Korteweg (@remkorteweg) December 26, 2020

So the UK signed up for ECJ as well, in a, shall we say, limited and specific way. Inevitable I think, but a powerful precedent. https://t.co/FEDCYJIWMM

> Government argue fact that the tribunals are not connected to ECJ, shows the win here on sovereignty ... only one reference in entire text to ECJ here on governance of UK access to EU programmes (eg Horizon), where ECJ arbitration judgements and orders will be enforceable in UK pic.twitter.com/WEIS8WYO01
>
> — Faisal Islam (@faisalislam) December 26, 2020

I am incidentally very much looking forward to distinguishing between those in the ERG who drop their principled objections to follow the prevailing political wind (true followers of Johnson?) and those who note that Johnson never saw a UK red line he wasn't prepared to relax.

Rules of origin quotas. Catnip for @SamuelMarcLowe. https://t.co/3zVyDilYbC

> May I be the first to say, \u201clol, that looks like a quota\u201d.
>
> (I\u2019m just joking, these aren\u2019t normal quotas. They are special rules of origin quotas: a certain tonnage of the product gets to use more accommodating rules of origin.) pic.twitter.com/BE2CyQIggS
>
> — Sam Lowe (@SamuelMarcLowe) December 26, 2020

Most of the year has actually been internal negotiations within parties, the crucial bit that the media misses. And in the UK the need for a deal to safeguard car manufacturing in the short term seems to have won in the end. https://t.co/YgahmntPQ0

> Rather than negotiations, most of this year has just been choreography.
>
> Merry Christmas! \U0001f384
>
> — Sam Lowe (@SamuelMarcLowe) December 25, 2020

This is the Brussels Effect.

(Incidentally I'm reading as well, but copying the best points I see from others). https://t.co/BsJQU3sJWP

> Last point from industry trade expert...
>
> Export businesses will not lobby for lower standards/ aggressive regulatory competition in this environment, indeed EU-facing ones will lobby against such moves if it risks retaliatory tariffs. Thoughts? pic.twitter.com/1fluBNsy0e
>
> — Faisal Islam (@faisalislam) December 26, 2020

Absolutely this (from a former negotiator). My evolving conclusion is that a UK failure to reach a realistic internal position sufficiently early on LPF and fish in particular has meant ending up with a worse deal than expected in these areas. https://t.co/sww9JNejEj

> At the very least negotiators should have been allowed a lot more freedom to prepare landing zone scenarios on fish months ago.
>
> — Dmitry Grozoubinski (@DmitryOpines) December 26, 2020

On even simpler, talking tough to the domestic gallery when competing with a very experienced trade superpower is a very poor negotiating strategy, particularly if your leader has form for folding when the going gets tough.

Alternate view. https://t.co/MNsl46xkV5

> Boris Johnson losing in negotiations with the EU is probably a victory for UK strategic interests

— Alexander Clarkson (@APHClarkson) December 26, 2020

And more worth considering, especially in comparison to Conservative MPs with their Number 10 briefs claiming improbably the opposite. https://t.co/rgenUqwGmv

> The Deal has set up a framework for pragmatic UK reconvergence with the EU short of full integration in the EU system. Future governments can tack various bits of reconvergence to deal with specific UK voter complaints or business sector problems relatively smoothly. NAFTA model
>
> — Alexander Clarkson (@APHClarkson) December 26, 2020

A weak deal for UK agricultural exporters in terms of checks. https://t.co/rJsp413oRK

> Lastly food industry, already smarting from events, say lack of equivalence for GB agrifood/ SPS problematic as it stands they say \u201cNew Zealand has a closer relationship on SPS with the EU than GB from Jan 1\u201d with an agreement that limits checks (1%) & simplifies paperwork
>
> — Faisal Islam (@faisalislam) December 26, 2020