Twitter Thread by Paul Patrick

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1. #Belfast #IrishSeaBorder There is no doubt that Brexit & the accompanying Irish Sea Border has destabilised the Union. Whilst the constitutional status of Northern Ireland has not changed, the fact of N.I remaining in the single market of the EU confirms it is"a place apart".

2. Belfast Steve Aitkin/UUP, Mervyn Gibson/OrangeOrder,Jim Allister/TUV, Jamie Bryson/Unionist Blogger, etc etc, all see the Irish Sea Border & different economic arrangements for NI apart from Britain as a "betrayal". It comes in a long line of Tory"betrayals".

3. #Belfast They are correct. The Irish Sea Border & EU single market moves N.Ireland closer to the Republic of Ireland in terms of economic https://t.co/tdKZhjKhWu,it doesn't change the constitutional status of NI but it is a huge psychological blow to a Unionism.

4. #Belfast The DUP utterly failed to "strengthen the Union". Their attempt to hold the minority Tory Theresa May govt to ransom backfired spectacularly when Boris Johnson won a significant majority. Their arrogance led them to be isolated & resented in Westminster.

5. #Belfast How does Unionism now react to this?Retreat to the"Bunker"?Repeat the ineffective "Flag"street activism of the past? The Union can now only be saved imo by reaching out to the 5-10% swing vote that will decide a future Border Poll on Irish unification,& it is coming.

6. #Belfast However, where in Unionism is the leadership to achieve this? It is not in the mediocre incompetence of the DUP(I completely accept their electoral mandate)or in the snarling,sneering,revanchist tropes of Jim Allister/TUV.

7. #Belfast An "inclusive Union"? A positive Union? Who in current Unionism is promoting that? Around all this is the dysfunctional Stormont Executive. They have been found wanting during this COVID period. Riddled with mediocrity, shortsightedness & sectional interests.

8. #Belfast Lets be clear,pre-Covid the NHS was falling apart here. It was already 2,000+ nurses short.Waiting lists for treatment were huge.Massive problems of homelessness(just walk around CityCentre at night),drug addiction,suicides,lack of housing,a divided Education system.

https://t.co/aXjd4GVdYr #Belfast Plus we have the cancer of sectarianism here. Division on Religious background & NI Constitutional status have distracted from unifying class politics.If 2021 is going to be better for all ordinary working people then change is needed now.■