Twitter Thread by Peter Foster



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The UK refusing to give full diplomatic status the EU's mission in London is baffling at at time when @BorisJohnson is trying to connect with @JoeBiden - because it recalls what Trump administration did to the EU ambassador back in 2019. Stay with

@BorisJohnson @JoeBiden The spat has been going for a while - we reported it in May, when the #Brexit trade talks were getting testy and - I assumed - it was the UK seeking a bit of leverage as the talks progressed. But we have a deal...and still no deal on the EU mission/2

https://t.co/O7bdVDAcvo

@BorisJohnson @JoeBiden Essentially the UK government wants to treat the @EUdelegationUK as a "international organisation based in London" - and not accord it full diplomatic status, as almost every other country in the world does, including the United States /3

@BorisJohnson @JoeBiden @EUdelegationUK Indeed when EU formed it's External Action Service (EEAS) the UK supported the idea that EU representatives should be full ambassadors - a fact reflected in the Treaty of Lisbon which we signed - and which reflected on fact EU had a currency, made laws etc. /4

@BorisJohnson @JoeBiden @EUdelegationUK It took some time for everyone to recognise this, but after @BarackObama came to power in 2016 even the USA did the same....then along came Donald Trump and in 2019 surreptitiously downgraded the status of the EU ambassador @D0Sullivan /4

@BorisJohnson @JoeBiden @EUdelegationUK @BarackObama @D0Sullivan Mr O'Sullivan only found when he attended George H W Bush's funeral and found he was listed not in proper order of precedence (according time served in DC) but at the back of the queue. /5

Genial fellow that he is, Mr O'Sullivan didn't kick up a stink, make a scene (some uppity ambos of my experience might have been less genial!) but when it got back to Member States/Brussels (which of course then included UK) there were furious /6

In the end, Trump quietly backed down but why on earth would @BorisJohnson - a PM trying to shake the "Britain Trump" moniker - pick this fight to score a few petty points at home? Baffling. /7

@BorisJohnson As @@D0Sullivan observed to me and my colleagues @jimbrunsden @Mikepeeljourno today, it really is a "surprising" approach to take - and one that gains the UK frankly nothing that I can see /8

> David O'Sullivan, who was EU ambassador to the US at the time of the status downgrade there, said the UK decision to take a similar approach was "surprising".
>
> EU member states, including the UK, objected angrily to the move, which became apparent when Mr O'Sullivan found himself seated behind all the 150-plus bilateral envoys at former president George HW Bush's funeral. The decision was quietly reversed, reverting to the full recognition granted by the Obama administration three years previously.
>
> "I would be extremely surprised if the UK government were unwilling to accord full diplomatic recognition to the EU ambassador — as is the case in the vast majority of countries around the world, including the United States," Mr O'Sullivan told the FT.

@BorisJohnson @D0Sullivan @jimbrunsden @Mikepeeljourno The UK argument seems to be that the status they ARE prepared to accord @ValedeAlmeidaEU will still confer the same practical powers as full recognition....which of course, as always in matters of Protocol, misses the point /9

@BorisJohnson @D0Sullivan @jimbrunsden @Mikepeeljourno @ValedeAlmeidaEU As @Tobias_Ellwood - Tory MP& Chair defence select cmme - points out, this is "petty", but worse than that, surely is that it's clumsy and incompetence and surely isn't going to help @DominicRaab
forge links with Bidenworld /10

https://t.co/djhBVICEQ1

> This is simply petty.
>
> Biden commits to strengthening alliances and we engage in silly spats which will not help strengthen security and trade cooperation.
>
> We are better than this. pic.twitter.com/m9CwG7YZga
>
> — Tobias Ellwood MP (@Tobias_Ellwood) January 21, 2021

@BorisJohnson @D0Sullivan @jimbrunsden @Mikepeeljourno @ValedeAlmeidaEU @Tobias_Ellwood @DominicRaab I frankly couldn't give a monkeys about anyone dignity or the flummeries of diplomatic protocol - it's the clumsiness that kills

you. /11

@BorisJohnson @D0Sullivan @jimbrunsden @Mikepeeljourno @ValedeAlmeidaEU @Tobias_Ellwood @DominicRaab
This should have quietly gone away in January.

Now the govt risks damage in both Brussels, EU capitals & DC...just when we're trying to strike the 'global Britain' pose and learn how to play piggy in the middle with those two regulatory behemoths.

Way to go. END