

Twitter Thread by Peter Foster

Peter Foster

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The UK refusing to give full diplomatic status the EU's mission in London is baffling at a 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 its 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 @DOSullivan /4

@BorisJohnson @JoeBiden @EUdelegationUK @BarackObama @DOSullivan 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