Twitter Thread by Objective Columnist



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I find it very strange that the same sort of people who look back on the financial crisis and austerity as catalysts for great change now seem to see Brexit and Covid as catalysts for great stability.

Partisanship is one helluva drug. Financial crisis = bad crisis. Brexit = good crisis. Even Covid, unequivocally a bad crisis, is characterised in parts as a good crisis (world beating vaccine etc).

A different reading (which spans Labour, Coalition and Conservative governments) is that 2008-2021 has been one continuous period of crisis punctuated by shorter periods of calm.

Crises aren't the exception. Scottish independence and the future status of NI look ahead. They are the rule. More specifically, whether the crises are endogenous or exogenous the state has proven woefully ineffective at dealing with them.

We are meant to try to learn from this. And do our best not to apply partisan blinkers. The problems are deeply rooted. And, very obviously, Brexit isn't the fix. It's an attempt at a cure but in the same way as a radical therapy that solves some problems but creates others.

I do think the public hive mind gets this. The public (in one incarnation or other) keeps voting for change. Gets it. And then votes next time for more change.

Putting the Brexit vote to one side, would anyone other than political apologists look at the events of the last ten years and argue the British state is fit for purpose for the twenty first century?

(And the more that people attempt to deny this point the worse it gets)

It is noteworthy that a key Brexiteer belief is that the EU is on a necessarily downwards trajectory. And that the U.K. (freed) will necessarily do better. But is the latter point supported by the evidence? It's not obvious.

Not all of this is unique to the U.K. Europe & the US have their problems. But the US has, at least for the moment, taken a decisive turn away from instability. And the EU, despite all of the countervailing pressures, continues to respond to crises through further evolution.

As ever, there will be opportunities. Given the Brexit deal and the likely end to the Covid crisis, the U.K. is a decent but, especially for domestic focused businesses. And there will be lots of bargains.

But in the medium / long term the jury is still very much out (especially for international focused businesses). An extended period of stability is required. And there seems little prospect of calm in the next five years.

Crises don't have neat beginnings. And they certainly don't have neat ends. Their origins and consequences stretch back and forth through time in constant movement.

My small view is that we're still trying to find a workable post world war shape. Isn't it obvious that we haven't? Will we keep reeling from change to change or will there finally be a concerted effort to move in a better, more sustainable direction?

The only thing worse than not changing is for change itself to fail. Further radicalism is, I suspect, the most likely response. Of course, it doesn't have to be that way. But a better outcome requires honest recognition that why and how we do things has not worked well. /ends

PS re trying to understand this stuff I recommend looking at Joseph Cornell (American artist) boxes. Here is an example.