Twitter Thread by Objective Columnist

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I have a memory of @anandMenon1 et al writing about a TM deal being greeted with a surge of ‘it’s a deal’ goodwill (it wasn’t) but the argument seems to hold true for the current deal.

Some of it is relief that we have all avoided no deal although I’d argue that much of the no deal furore was prestidigitation (as it has always been).

Some of it is exhaustion. Everyone (apart from enthusiasts and lunatics) is very tired indeed, especially after this annus horrificis.

Everyone wants to move on. Labour is a great example. That they were going to vote for the deal was visible from space. If Labour can banish the twin albatrosses of Corbyn and Brexit then, hey presto, it becomes competitive again.

So almost overnight a new consensus seems to form. The Christmas gift isn’t just a deal it’s a new beginning, again.

And yet.

This ain’t Star Wars. It certainly ain’t It’s A Wonderful Life. Maybe it’s the Grinch without the happy ending. Possibly it’s King Lear or more Likely Titus Andronicus. Reservoir Dogs without the brilliant writing or Fleabag with none of the funny bits. Apocalypse not quite yet.

So unless you believe in magic gnomes, fairies with sparkling wings, wish granting djinn and unicorns with the silverest horns and fluffiest manes this pretty consensus has, appropriately, the duration of a prime ministerial promise.

The profound demographic divisions aren’t going away. Brexit induced radicalisation on all sides isn’t going away. Independence movements in the UK’s nations aren’t going away. Neither is cronyism nor the absolute battering our institutions have received in the last few years.

In the cold light of day. Imagine, sometime in the middle of February. Freezing, grey, wet. How are we left? With a thin deal and a pandemic. And the virus doesn’t care about any of this. Thank god for the vaccine. The standout achievement of this century.

A huge national rebuilding effort is required. And yet we have a government with neither the enthusiasm nor the skill set for bridging divides. A government that will buy a bankrupt satellite company but will not participate in Erasmus. Priorities.

It’s not all bad. It could have been worse. No deal would have been a disaster. More importantly, our state of fragmentation brings opportunities. Now is the time for insurgent narratives. If you want to change things you’ll never have a better chance than in the next 10 years.

I wonder if this is Brexit’s most important legacy, it’s intentional but unintended gift to the nation. Perpetual revolution.

Happy Christmas Everyone!

/ends