

When Theresa May was recently presented with a slightly revised 'instrument' at Strasbourg concerning the backstop, we can note a recurring pattern: a habit in the EU to present complex and legally 'dense' documents at the very last moment, giving MPs little time to assimilate matters before they are expected to sign up to them. Brexiteers regard this as nothing more than an attempt to make Brexit equate to 'No Exit'!

Feelings over this remain highly charged. As things currently stand, after the 'drama' of the high profile Parliamentary votes this week, it is almost certain that very few will be entirely happy with the eventual outcome, but with both Parliament and nation deeply fragmented it is right to continue to pray in the whole process.

Father, shape, refine, and direct these matters, for every decision made at a political level in these coming days will have direct consequences for weal or woe in the lives of many, now and in the future. Have Your way, we pray, so that it is not human hands and might that direct our days, but rather You, and You alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

On January 20th 2008 the Sunday Telegraph noted:

"MPs required to ratify Lisbon treaty without reading it"

"In an almost unprecedented display of contempt for Parliament, the Government will tomorrow ask MPs to approve the EU treaty even before they have a proper chance to examine what it is they are voting on.

"Despite Gordon Brown's promise that the Commons would be allowed three months to discuss the treaty in detail – as a sop for breaking his promise that it would be put to a referendum – the only text MPs will be allowed to see is a mass of disjointed amendments to previous EU treaties which, out of context, are virtually meaningless and incomprehensible."

The fact is, the Lisbon treaty tied the UK more closely into Europe through a huge number of legal treaties and clauses, the vast majority of which cannot readily be understood by anyone without specialist knowledge. It could never be a simple matter to seek to extricate the nation from so much red tape. This difficulty is exacerbated by the strong sense of disconnect so many feel now exist between the majority in the country who voted to leave, and the ongoing majority in the House of Commons for whom the negatives of leaving outweigh the positives. (This is equally as true in the House of Lords).

Uncharted waters though these are, what matters most to the Lord is surely that we do not allow spirits of bitterness and division to prevail, both within our own community at this time when tensions are running high, and with our European neighbours. Given people's strength of feeling, it is hard to express this, but ultimately it is only God's plan and purposes that matter, rather than the 'anything-goes-for-the-sake-of-peace' mentality. Pray particularly about the danger of long buried resentments and vested interests resurfacing. We all know what happened in the former Yugoslavia once the 'restraints' of Tito's leadership were removed. We have already seen more than a hint of the potential for unpleasantness in the so-called ['Scallop Wars' between British and French fishing fleets off the French coast.](#)

Information sharing

It is crucial that proper and harmonious contacts are maintained at all levels – which most certainly needs to include information sharing as well as regular supplies of food and medicine. History reminds us that the consequences of not properly sharing confidential security information can be devastating. (I did some research on this, and found it depressing – so many lives lost because security concerns were either not properly shared, or if shared, were not sufficiently believed and acted on).

Pray that communication and security links with Europe remain excellent whatever happens at the day to day political level.