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The question I've been asked to address today is quite simple, even if the answer is anything but.

It is this. Does the current global crisis – more properly perhaps the conjunction of multiple crises – represent the first post-Brexit opportunity to reset the EU-UK relationship on more positive foundations, six years since the vote to leave?

Six years which have mostly been characterised by deepening political mistrust punctuated by outbursts from both sides at the outrageousness of the behaviour of the other party.

I appreciate that this may seem to be a difficult week in which to tackle this question and that recent events in London make it more difficult to speak with confidence about the future, but I'm going to get my crystal ball out and offer you a reading on the grounds that at the least this will be entertaining.

Where are we following the “no confidence” vote on PM Boris Johnson?

You have all seen the drama of Monday's Conservative Party “no confidence” vote in Prime Minister Johnson. He survived it, but severely weakened, with the great bulk of his own back benches clearly having voted against him. Even the Party's house journal, the Daily Telegraph, described his authority as “crushed”.

Typically, Johnson has no intention of reading the room. Indeed I expect that he will batter on and try harder to appease the forces on the Right who are the likeliest to have another go at decapitating him, unless he does their bidding.

As a consequence, the UK Government, later this week or early next will introduce legislation essentially enabling it not to apply those provisions of the Northern Ireland Protocol which it does not wish to implement in any fashion the 27 Member States would agree.

On this occasion, unlike with the Internal Market Bill which caused a similar furore a couple of years ago, the UK Government is not attempting to argue that this a “limited and specific” breach of international law. It maintains that its actions are legal, citing the novel concept of “primordiality” to explain why it can implement a version of the Protocol out of line with the text but which the Government regards as faithful to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, to which it accords this “primordial” status.

For those here in Florence, it will be obvious that the EU will inevitably view the legal claim as wrong - indeed outrageous - and it is therefore bound to commence legal proceedings. Further, that the EU will view the threat to rewrite the Protocol unilaterally as self-evidently in bad faith, as an extraordinary hostile step to take at this geopolitical juncture - and as warranting “retaliatory safeguard measures.”

In other words, there would be no legal need for the EU to wait until the legislation is passed in both houses of the UK legislature and on the UK statute book before initiating such action.

And the very fact of tabling the legislation will be seen to indicate the absence of any seriousness in London about finding any negotiated solutions consistent with the text of a Protocol that the 27 do not intend to reopen.

What will happen next on the NI Protocol?

If that's where we are, do we need to recognise that negotiations around the implementation of the Protocol have broken down, that neither side now has the appetite to pursue them, and that it's simply a question of the extent and the speed of the collateral damage?

With London concluding that there is a dividend - substantive and political - from establishing new facts on the ground, presumably with the expectation that ultimately the EU would learn to live with them, and would be unable or unwilling ever to impose any costs which would be punitive. If so, it is building its hopes on the impact of the UK's role in the Ukraine crisis, particularly for Poland and the Baltic States, but, as ever, not appreciating that its approach is designed to entrench the EU in its current position.

And with the EU concluding that with a combination of legal action, the freezing of the entire so-called "positive agenda" of things in which London is interested in making progress, and targeted retaliatory safeguard measures, it can elevate the costs to London to such an extent as to force a reversal of policy. Which again misreads how London would inevitably react.

Both sides are likely to want to sustain the illusion that the space for negotiations remains just about open this summer, but the reality would seem to be that this is primarily about not wanting to take any blame for bringing negotiations formally to an end.

The Northern Ireland Protocol dispute will therefore remain as a crucial impediment to any improvement in the UK-EU relationship at least for the years that remain for this UK Parliament and this Commission. Both sides continue to misread each other's political incentives and "reaction functions" and the dispute over the Protocol is only ever likely to be solved on terrain which one side or the other cannot currently access politically.

With Northern Ireland as the dominant issue, relations will probably continue to deteriorate rather than improve in the next 2 years. To tell the dismal truth, this might actually suit both parties - at least in terms of short-term political positioning. Even if it results in a trade war none of us needs or can really afford. Because one can readily sell to one's own political constituency that it is the intransigence or unilateralism of the other side which has brought the trade war about.

This makes the question we are here to discuss today, whether the current global crisis creates any opportunities for improvements in relationships, even more important - while at the same time setting a difficult context for securing those opportunities.

Where next for the Conservative Government and the EU?

As we have seen, the political reality is that we are - yet again - in a febrile period of Conservative politics. Monday is now most unlikely to be the last leadership contest of this Parliament.

All putative leadership candidates, notably those who voted Remain, will be desperate to demonstrate to the Conservative party grassroots that their Brexit credentials are impeccable.

No leadership candidate with genuine aspirations to win can afford to say anything - though they may well think it - which suggests the Protocol issue is being mishandled by the PM, Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General. Likewise no candidate can intimate that there is rather a lot wrong and missing in the Trade and Co-operation Agreement or that the economic consequences to the UK of a failed negotiation are becoming ever clearer.

These things are still unsayable by those with any pretensions to power.

It is, of course, just a matter of time before a senior Conservative says that the TCA too is a botched and bad deal, and claims that this stems from our having had to negotiate it under duress and huge time pressure.

This situation is massively comforting - too comforting - to EU elites: let's be frank here.

In their view, last several years have seen a series of major EU tactical negotiating "victories" in successive negotiations over the Northern Ireland Protocol and the Trade and Co-operation Agreement, which have delivered economic outcomes rather heavily tilted in the EU's favour.

As the noises change from "this is a great oven-ready deal" and "this is the FTA of our dreams which restores UK sovereignty and makes us a nimble independent coastal state" and increasingly get replaced in Conservative circles with "this deal is an intolerable assault on UK sovereignty, humiliatingly imposed on us by the EU at a moment of national weakness", and "the dividends of Brexit are not materialising because of betrayals by an establishment which never believed enough in true Brexit and is intent on subverting or reversing it", I detect a tendency in most capitals to think this is a tribute how easily the EU held together in the face of British attempts to split it, and a testament to how dishonest and dismal the UK side was, and remains.

And the more one hears from UK government ministers and former negotiators that Brexit risks failing solely because "true Brexit has not been properly tried" - an uncanny echo of the language of revolutionary ultra-leftists during the Cold War when accounting for all the failures of "real existing socialism" in the Soviet Union - the greater the reassurance to the EU elites.

But if that reassurance is due to a sense that the proponents of Brexit are finally getting a reality check, this is based on a misunderstanding of the revolutionary mindset. The bravado of "we got it done: they said it could not be done but we did it" progressively now gives way to "it's failing only because it is not being implemented with sufficient belief and vigour": the view being that its liberatory potential has been subverted by those who have insufficient faith.

The Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are both already being perceived to have feet of clay, to be tax raisers not tax cutters, and the true believers in Brexit show signs of concluding that they must try to defenestrate Johnson because he was an apostate whose heart was never sufficiently in it.

Meanwhile, EU leaders can take great comfort in watching a UK Government whose ideas of divergence from the European regulatory order seem mostly to consist in rather vacuous acts of populist performative divergence, rather than any serious programme of economic reform.

This is all rather gratifying - even amidst all the other crises - to elites in European capitals and in the Institutions. What they see is the emptiness, the incompetence, the chicanery, the charlatanism, the egregious bad faith in trumpeting and marketing deals as huge triumphs, and then reopening them and repudiating them as dreadful affronts to UK sovereignty, when it's clear from public papers it was entirely clear to everyone who signed it that the Protocol entailed a trade border in the Irish Sea. The entire Johnson premiership makes it incredibly easy not to have to think seriously about the British question. And who wants to think about it right now?

And the greatest failure of British statecraft - or rather its absence - in the last several years has been that at no stage has the UK negotiating strategy really forced the EU to think harder about what it actually wanted from the future relationship with the UK.

It's been easy and comfortable for the EU simply to keep rebuffing the more obviously absurd "have cake and eat it" demands from the British side, and to keep making clear that the negotiating outcome is a derivative solely of British preferences. "You have ended up here because your own desiderata made it impossible to end up anywhere better: your fault".

While Johnson is still PM, I confess I now find it hard to imagine the EU's posture changing. And it's perfectly possible that it could outlive him, if an incoming new Conservative PM were to inherit the Protocol dispute in essentially the state we are now in this summer.

But there comes a point - and in my view, that point is now and this appalling war marks it - at which reconciling ourselves to a protracted "frozen conflict" across the Channel, with virtually no positive business being transacted except for over the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, is simply not sustainable.

Ennui with dealing a Government which proclaims a Treaty a triumph, and 18 months later says the same Treaty was only agreed under severe duress and is constitutionally intolerable, is totally understandable.

But it's not really a policy.

"So" people ask, "what would you have us do differently? Why, at a time when the rules-based international order is under threat from authoritarian governments worldwide, should we indulge a Government which thinks it's fine and legal unilaterally to repudiate a Treaty we signed and ratified with it?"

I just have no glib answer I can offer to that. Except perhaps to say that the absence of any long-term wisdom from Prime Minister Johnson does not have to be met with the same from elsewhere.

All I can really argue at this point is that the alternative to the negotiation of a solution which can stick - which has to stick - on the ground by commanding consent across Northern Ireland communities is self-evidently much worse. Intractable situations require some bravery.

Because if unilateral UK rewriting/repudiation is met with a wider freeze, legal action and retaliatory escalation, then a wider trade war becomes inevitable.

At some point, maybe months down the track, the question of whether all the trade elements of the TCA should also be suspended or terminated then comes on to the table. And the incentives on both sides become about how much asymmetrical punitive damage one can inflict on the other. And there will then be no easy way to end that spiral, and the politics on both sides are probably more likely to fuel it than terminate it.

I was reading the other day that Christopher Clark's brilliant work, *Sleepwalkers*, on the run up to World War 1 remains required reading in Berlin establishment circles on the question of the handling of Moscow right now, so as to try to avoid a generation-scarring post Versailles Treaty political reaction. Perhaps it could usefully be applied to the question we are discussing here.

This issue is of such significance, and the highly probable consequences will have such an impact on relationships, that in the next couple of years it will quite possibly crush the positive opportunities that we are here to discuss. Nevertheless, those opportunities exist, and they could take us in the direction of what we so badly need – not a return to the past, but a new way forward.

The way forward from here

I have never thought the Protocol and TCA framework a robust and durable political framework for the EU-UK relationship. It was always thin, fragile and most unlikely to last long.

I remain convinced that the UK will not rejoin, and indeed that post Brexit institutional developments, on EU spending, borrowing and now defence, all made much easier at 27 by the absence of the UK make that inconceivable for any political party with aspirations to win in the UK

The real question therefore always was, and remains, whether we now stagger into something even worse, and live for years with a “frozen conflict” with isolated pockets of co-operation, or whether we can find a politically viable way on both sides to turn the page and deliver something more sustainable.

In that spirit, I offer some modest thoughts as to what both sides need to do. Just not in any expectation that they will do much of it.

But there will be a world after the current mistrustful paralysis ends, and sooner or later, we shall need fresh ideas ready for it.

1. Build on what’s going well

First: we should at least try to build on what has gone well in the last 100 days.

We face the most dangerous, flagrant, repellent aggression on European soil for nearly 80 years, and this crisis marks a genuine *Zeitenwende*, necessitating reappraisal of both our security and our economic architecture and of many of our domestic and international policy settings.

These are still very early days in what will be a protracted set of crises, but the response of the US, EU and UK has, whatever else, been more coherent and determined, less mercantilist and frankly less self-deluding, than our collective response to the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

On sanctions, the UK started off rather slowly, bedevilled by a post Brexit legal framework which bizarrely seemed to have made the adoption of effective sanctions much more difficult than in the EU regime the UK system had done so much to help construct. But that problem has now been addressed, and the three systems are working pretty much in lockstep, within a G7 format.

That intensity of co-operation has to extend well beyond the sanctions arena in the coming months and years, and our collective security and prosperity depends on our ability to strengthen the collective resilience of others in the liberal democratic camp, not just ourselves. We also have to render that collective camp systematically more appealing than the camp of authoritarian rivals. I come back to the implications of that broader economic and regulatory values policy agenda shortly.

2. Recognise our collective security is an essential mutual interest

Second, we should recognise that European collective security architecture and capability remains an existential issue for us both.

Some in the EU, in my view erroneously, read the UK’s integrated review of its foreign and defence policy as indicating a loss of interest in the European theatre with an Indo-Pacific tilt in security to match the economic diversification tilt in UK trade policy. This was not helped by absurd desire not to mention the EU as collective entity, except as analogous - which of course it is not - to other multilateral institutions. It is indeed precisely because the EU is not remotely like other multilateral institutions in its reach and the nature of its governance that Brexiteers fought to leave it.

The current UK Government is wedded to a bilateralist inter-state view of the world which is of course not the reality that any of the 27, even its major powers, inhabit any more, or would wish to.

But the crisis has amply demonstrated that the UK still recognises that the primary security threat on which it can and must play a major role is in this hemisphere. And it still cares about the Eastern

frontier from the Nordics and Baltics to the Balkans and still intends to play a serious operational role. That should be unequivocally welcome to the EU. As should its very important role on both supplying weaponry and training in Ukraine.

I don't want to be too caustic about concepts of strategic autonomy, because I welcome a stronger more concerted, EU defence effort, but there is no version of EU defence strategic autonomy which is viable in the foreseeable future, and the UK will, in any event, remain core to European autonomous capability even - perhaps even especially - in any world in which a different US Administration, takes a different view about the scale of US commitment to European liberty.

The question we face is how best we work together on maximising capability efficiently - which includes very difficult questions over future complex weapons procurement, which could divide us - in ways which do not impinge on UK sovereignty and EU decision-making autonomy.

Both sides have to stop fighting the last war here. The UK is no longer a member and consequently no longer has a veto over CSDP developments which it might have wanted to thwart had it remained. Nor could it expect massive German rearmament - which it must welcome in this gruesome new context - to take place wholly outside of a European policy frame.

Many of the requisite policy decisions can be made in NATO, many of the discussions can be conducted bilaterally. But not all. And Putin has provided more impulsion to more serious moves towards EU rearmament, defence integration and rationalisation alongside NATO than anyone in two generations.

The UK can no more stop those moves from outside the club than it could veto the doubling of the Own Resources ceiling and prevent massive new borrowing by the Commission under Next Generation EU.

It's time to recognise too that the Danes ending their EU defence policy opt-out, and thus moving in precisely the opposite direction from that confidently predicted by Brexiteers 5 years ago, is part of the same phenomenon as Finnish/Swedish NATO accession, not an opposed one. Putin has enabled both.

One benefit of Brexit could perhaps be the UK ceasing to obsess about the theological failings of the Church it has left.

What matters is collective capability and resilience. If the EU can find ways to help states spend more and with less gross inefficiency than currently, a sane UK Government should be welcoming it.

3. Recognise the scale of the challenge to the policy framework of the last 30 years

Third: Recognise that this crisis calls into question - or simply torpedoed - both the style of globalisation of the last 30 years AND your domestic economic policy settings, and requires the liberal democratic world to think radically differently - and together - about both.

As I said earlier, the European and UK - and indeed US response - to Putin's earlier military adventures was a combination of complacency, wish fulfilment, complacency and delusion.

That applies above all in my view to German energy policy, which, driven by an industrial manufacturing policy elite which depended on Russian raw materials and energy - and was entirely and wrongly relaxed about doing so - essentially determined German foreign policy and thus heavily influenced European foreign policy.

Or should I say, a bit more provocatively, contributed, via a mercantilism obsessed with running large trade surpluses, to ensuring that there never has been - there could never be, to date - a strategic EU foreign policy.

It applies also to the woeful inability of the British political elite to tackle the London money laundromat; indeed to regard attracting kleptocrats, and kleptocrats 'dirty money, as part of its business model.

Welcome though it is to see scales finally fall from eyes in both those capitals and in others, and in the EU institutions, I think we are inevitably a long way still off internalising what this means for both European and British economic policy.

First and most obviously, however impressive it has been to see the degree of unity on severe sanctions to date in comparison to the disunity in 2014, really to terminate Russia's ability to finance its aggression you must also hit its current account surplus - which has actually increased sharply during the war. This ultimately means a full energy embargo. Further than we have so far been able to go, precisely because of the policy naïveté and errors of decades past.

We are going to have to get there, and doing so requires radical rethinking not only of our energy policy models but of an economic model, notably in Germany, which was predicated on them.

Secondly, the fantasy - and maybe it always was a fantasy - of a rules-based liberal international order encompassing the entire globe is disintegrating. This fragmentation into competing models - aggressive, more closed, regionalism with contestation over values, rules and standards, and with trade and investment flows dictated much more by the need for national or regional resilience than by the need for just-in-time efficiency - is not the early century multilateralism of either EU or Brexit Britain dreams.

It is also obviously inflationary. Which makes me doubt even more than I did before the transitoriness of inflation. With a renewed focus on fiscal policy, debt issuance will ultimately cease to be the easy option, which in turn points to higher, not lower, taxation and to a squeeze on corporate earnings.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, when talking about the need for "friendshoring" supply chains amongst allies with democratic values - again, resiliency and national security prioritised over efficiency - said "we cannot allow countries to use their market position in key raw materials, technologies and products to have the power to disrupt our economy or exercise unwanted geopolitical leverage".

That is directed overwhelmingly at China and Russia, but its whole logic is also a fundamental challenge both to EU and to UK economic and foreign policy.

The EU's because the mercantilist German model in particular has relied on secure and relatively cheap Russian energy to sustain a massive manufacturing base exporting heavily to, and investing heavily in, China. And that now looks an increasingly strategically unsustainable choice.

The UK's, because the vision of global entrepot Britain, freed of deep entanglement with "its" home bloc and able nimbly to diversify by securing preferential trade deals - values free - with every bloc on the planet, whilst striking out in different deregulatory direction from both EU and US in order to maximise competitive advantage, does not easily survive contact with a world in which supply chains prioritise shortness, values-friendliness and resilience over efficiency.

And in which the need for a consistent liberal democratic economic model to promote and propagate against those of authoritarian regimes in the major conflict of systems of the coming decades points to the need for greater not less regulatory homogeneity - on data, internet, AI,

telecoms, batteries etc. And the need for much more systematic joint working on defence, satellites, rare earths, energy security, food security, competition policy and plenty more.

And, to be clear, these cannot, if the competition is primarily with a Chinese model, just be blah blah discussions within a liberal democratic bloc, ending in delivering aspirational declaratory communiques. These are going to need to be substantive deep discussions with operational consequences - including for private sector operators - where parties are taking binding legal commitments to action which impinge on their own sovereign choices.

This is not to argue for a monotype in future Western capitalism. The essence of a more localist, less old style globalist, response to this crisis has to leave more space for local social preferences. Socially, that makes a good deal of sense, even if economically it adds to inflation risks.

But it is to argue that in a plethora of policy areas, security and resilience and values issues will increasingly trump economic efficiency ones and developing concerted liberal democratic world regulatory regimes which are open to others to join is going to become more appealing, because essential to winning a global systemic conflict.

I can well see this view meeting resistance from forces ranging from German - Italian, French and others too - corporatists who prefer something closer to strategic equidistance between the US and China and Russia for the sake of their balance sheets, as well as from Brexiteer deregulators who don't want to be hobbled by superpowers from being global entrepôt Singapore on Thames.

But the world is getting rather cold for both.

4. Recognise we need to find the right forum for the development of a new policy framework

Fourth: Recognise that these policy discussions - view them perhaps as the economic, strategic and regulatory counterpart to NATO - need to happen somewhere, and it's clear that, at least as regards EU and UK, there is no current venue.

This is actually a much wider problem than just EU-UK

By definition, with the G20 membership splintering, this is not the forum which can replicate for any of these issues the success it briefly had at the height of the Great Financial Crisis.

The WTO remains on life support and may struggle to find a purpose in a world in which globalisation fragments, and truly multilateral rules and deals become a thing of the past. And it is, in any case, simply the wrong institution for the bulk of the issues. Nor, self-evidently, are the other Bretton Woods institutions.

The G7, perhaps G7+, format can take forward discussions like those on sanctions and other elements of the immediate strategic economic response to the Ukraine war. It can catalyse on issues ranging from tax to climate finance to vaccines, albeit, as we have seen, with highly variable success and generally quite poor follow through. But in my experience as UK sherpa it's most unlikely to be able to bear the load of multiple much deeper regulatory and economic resilience discussions where initial views may well diverge widely, but where the new model multilateralism within the democratic block requires more convergence to develop a model others can - and want to - import.

Bilaterally, between the regulatory superpowers, there is of course the Trade and Technology Council. And the early signs on that seem pretty good and suggest that some key lessons have been learned on both sides of the Atlantic from the TTIP experience. The EU may well conclude,

understandably, that this is a much more important forum in which to make agreements than any involving the UK

If you can resolve issues over data protection and privacy, or over AI, over competition, over digital markets etc., with the US, why do you bother excessively about the UK? Why, equally, if you are the US, would you spend as much time bothering with the UK on these issues as with the EU? What the two great blocs can agree will, by definition, largely constrain and prescribe what other democracies do in a world where data is ceasing to be borderless.

But the UK is absent, will evidently never be a third wheel in that forum, and has nothing really analogous for these issues under its Trade and Co-operation Agreement. Not least because, though it talked a good game endlessly demanding to be treated as a “sovereign equal” - always asserted, saloon bar style, as if it were a sign of national self-confidence, but always actually indicating precisely the loss of it in a Government wholly out of its depth - it took - it takes - a ridiculously outdated view of what free trade consists in - can now consist in - in 2022.

Free trade - freeing trade - now is overwhelmingly about chiseling away at complex behind the border barriers, about standards, about cross-border services provision, about public procurement and competition rules, about regulatory convergence, and, as I say, increasingly about the values which underpin regulatory regimes of the free world as against the unfree.

The UK sooner or later will come back to the realisation that if it wants a serious role in setting future global governance in the free world, a bunch of thin FTAs do not cut it.

5. Tackle today’s questions today and make progress in areas where there is scope for movement

And fifth, and finally: avoid thinking one can solve many of the acute problems in the EU-UK relationship by going back to discussions of architecture. There are huge issues for the EU to confront over enlargement to the Western Balkans, and obviously now to Ukraine and Moldova.

It is nothing to do with us Brits any more - one of many manifestations of the UK’s reduced importance in the economics of geostrategic issues in our own region. That’s what we chose; there is no going back, and there remain hard security contributions we can and must make, even if some are ancillary to the main event.

I remain a great enthusiast for EU enlargement, notably in the Western Balkans, which are and will remain, one key cauldron of the conflict between systems which we have long known we face but now confront in much clearer existential terms. I personally think the EU does have seriously to rethink the enlargement process and it does have to develop a conception of its wider neighbourhood which is less formulaic and technocratic than hitherto.

But my point is simply this. The UK is a sui generis issue for the EU which can’t be fitted into a wider template.

There might have been a moment even post Lisbon - though frankly it’s really not obvious - when even a Eurosceptic Conservative Government might have been able to deliver a reasonably durable political settlement, with the UK remaining in the “base layer” of integration - the Single Market, much of which the UK played a key role in designing, and Customs Union - but absenting itself in perpetuity from all other “clubs” as new chantiers of integration opened up.

There might have been a moment on exit, where, instead of taking the bizarre quasi Customs Union route May ended up proposing, predictably failing entirely both within her own Party and with the EU, we quit the Customs Union, in order to be free to set our own sovereign trade policy and

leave other common EU policies, but tried to negotiate a version of Single Market membership which was “EFTA-ish but with British characteristics”.

But the primacy of the ending free movement question for May plus the obvious rule-taking issues for the UK, which, let's be candid, are much less tractable than they are for Norway, ruled that out as a runner in 2016.

You don't, in my view, go back to such questions with profit now. Even once we are through the phase we remain in with the Conservatives: namely “ the only true version of Brexit is the hardest possible one and all else is treason and betrayal”. None of which of course was what was said to the public pre 2016.

That phase will eventually pass. I just can't tell you exactly when, but even amidst the revolutionary praetorian guard, you can feel the growing unease in the face of realities. The louder and more bellicose they get, the more worried they are. It's an iron law.

When it does pass, whoever is in office in London, we need to focus, I think starting bottom up not top down - though it will clearly need a serious package of potentially deliverable agreements in order for there to be enough political interest in it on both sides - on a whole series of pragmatic things where both sides know the present settlement is either deficient or silent.

That is no easy matter. But there is a plethora of those - from a new mobility agreement which addresses some of the more damaging lunacy of the current settlement, to an asylum and readmissions legal agreement, from defence procurement to research and scientific co-operation, from deep energy and food security co-operation and climate finance to serious collaboration on policy towards sub Saharan Africa, again in the face of sometimes very appealing authoritarian competition, to the more prosaic but crucial work of facilitating cross channel trade in ways that both sets of authorities can agree.

There are many more.

Medium-longer term, I remain optimistic that a quite deep, effective EU-UK relationship can be built despite the last several years, and the current bitter impasse. And these very dark days of Russian aggression have actually strengthened that optimism.

But shorter term, let's not delude ourselves: it will continue to be bumpy, conflictual, tortuous. It may well get rougher in the coming months, essentially because of the narcissist politics of self-preservation which will continue to dominate in the UK. The job for everyone who cares about the relationship and about the future of our democracies facing far bigger first order challenges, is to look beyond that and find the ground on which to start building.