

Red lines

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Theresa May wants Labour's support for her ailing premiership. It's an interesting idea: a quasi-grand coalition. I can't think of any reason why Labour should agree, but if they were to make an offer what would the red lines be? I stress, I have no influence on the issue at all, and what follows is not meant to imply I have (in an attempt to avoid the torrent of abuse that might otherwise follow) but it's an interesting issue to muse upon. So, for the record, if I was around the Labour corridors of power I would be inclined to make an offer, but to make it a manifesto style demand. These might be my red lines:

1. To keep all the benefits of single market and customs union membership: to stay in both, in other words. Put a Norwegian style deal on the table in other words;
2. To agree a long transition for Brexit;
3. To compromise on ECJ oversight on agencies like Euaratom and medicines to retain the benefits;
4. To seek limited change on free movement;
5. To abandon all corporation tax changes and to instead steadily increase the rate towards a European norm to end tax competition with our neighbours and signal goodwill;
6. To impose transparency on the UK's tax havens to make clear that this is not the UK's direction of travel;
7. To increase capital gains tax rates and higher rates of income tax to make clear inequality will be tackled;
8. To abolish the bedroom tax and other such penal measures as part of a comprehensive reform of benefits and social care;
9. To radically change work assessments and related measures to end the injustice they have created;

10. To end the 1% pay cap: Britain needs a pay rise;
11. To launch new national savings accounts to direct saving to infrastructure investment and to require that saving in them be an option in all pension schemes;
12. To stop HS2 and replace it with a green new deal creating a carbon army in every constituency in the UK;
13. Stop parliamentary constituency reform measures and start a PR review and reform of the House of Lords;
14. Do not renegotiate the East Coast route franchise with Stagecoach but take it back into public control;
15. Impose an energy price cap and remove many of the differentials between tariffs: it should not be possible to sell 'bad deals';
16. Guarantee no unwinding of QE and no interest rate rises.

I am sure I have missed a few issues and I am aware a few are contentious. But that's the opportunity such an invitation offers. Why not take it?