

The UK Internal Markets Bill effectively ends many devo...

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There has been much, appropriate, furore over the consequences of the UK Internal Markets Bill for Northern Ireland. There should be at least as much for the consequences for Wales and Scotland. Section 46 of the bill reads as follows:

46 Power to provide financial assistance for economic development etc

- (1) A Minister of the Crown may, out of money provided by Parliament, provide financial assistance to any person for, or in connection with, any of the following purposes –
 - (a) promoting economic development in the United Kingdom or any area of the United Kingdom;
 - (b) providing infrastructure at places in the United Kingdom (including infrastructure in connection with any of the other purposes mentioned in this section);
 - (c) supporting cultural activities, projects and events that the Minister considers directly or indirectly benefit the United Kingdom or particular areas of the United Kingdom;
 - (d) supporting activities, projects and events relating to sport that the Minister considers directly or indirectly benefit the United Kingdom or particular areas of the United Kingdom;
 - (e) supporting international educational and training activities and exchanges;
 - (f) supporting educational and training activities and exchanges within the United Kingdom.
- (2) In this section –
“infrastructure” includes –
 - (a) water, electricity, gas, telecommunications, sewerage or other services (for example, the provision of heat),
 - (b) railway facilities (including rolling stock), roads or other transport facilities,
 - (c) health, educational, cultural or sports facilities,
 - (d) court or prison facilities, and
 - (e) housing;

“promoting”, in relation to economic development, includes taking any measure likely to contribute directly or indirectly to economic development (which might include, for example, measures relating to social inclusion);

“providing”, in relation to infrastructure, includes acquiring, designing, constructing, converting, improving, operating and repairing infrastructure;

“sport” includes any physical recreation.

Note that the bill applies to all parts of the UK, without exception.

And note too that the Bill extends to almost all devolved powers, including health, education, culture, justice, housing and provision of utilities, all of which have distinct

and crucial devolved aspects to them.

This Bill is not just an act of international aggression, although it is most certainly that. It is also an action deliberately designed to undermine the devolution and to recreate the UK in the form in which it has not existed for decades.

The external provocation within this Bill is astonishing, but no less important is the internal conflict that it will create.

Cummings is going for broke, and it could be very ugly.