

AMERICAN BREXIT COMMITTEE

September 21, 2017

Ambassador Robert Lighthizer
U. S. Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, D. C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

The American BREXIT Committee is composed of citizens who share a concern for the effects Ireland will experience as England leaves the European Economic Union (EEU). Ireland is the only EU nation with a UK border and economists predict the political and economic effects of BREXIT will be disastrous. Also threatened by BREXIT is the future of the 1998 Belfast Treaty deemed critical to an enduring peace. Initially a signature success of US foreign policy, the British now ignore certain of its obligations and undermine its human rights goals.

Although UK talks with the EU have made little progress, British BREXIT Secretary Davies and Trade Secretary Fox have been meeting with you and Secretary of State Tillerson to secure the “..great deal..” President Trump has promised British Prime Minister May. The UK expects America’s help coping with their self-inflicted consequences of BREXIT maneuvering. You are no doubt aware these efforts which may consist of not only trade deals but concessions, waivers, and military and intelligence contracts etc. We are aware that trade negotiations are complex and have long time horizons. The EU will not permit the UK to sign bi-lateral trade agreements with any Country until the EU exit is finalized and that may be at the earliest March, 2019. However, we will be watching developments during these coming months to insure that the great deal promised by President Trump doesn’t turn out to be a great ‘hand-out’ for a nation that has the 5th largest economy in the world.

In this regard, we would like to know what is the current status of the trade compact with the European Community? It was at the point of signing and approval at the end of 2016. We understand that much attention is currently being given to the NAFTA trade pact and its modifications. We have shared with Chairman Brady of the House Ways and Means Committee and Senator Corker, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations our concerns that allowing the EU trade agreement to languish while a British deal is hastily concluded is probably not a good business practice and not in America’s best economic interests. A new UK-US trade deal may prove advantageous for Americans but it should not be at the expense of Ireland’s economy, or before an EU deal with a market of 500 million people or by ignoring Britain’s failing to fulfill its legal obligations under the 1998 peace agreement. The latter issue is being raised with Secretary of State Tillerson.

The Irish government and the European Union can best defend their respective interests with your Department. We, on the other hand, will ask that any bi-lateral trade pact with the UK trade deal be made transparent to Congress and the American public and acknowledge any economic harm British BREXIT policies may inflict on Ireland.

We hope to learn your views regarding these issues. Several of our members are prepared to meet with a staff member to underscore our concerns in more detail. Could you please advise us of a staff member we could meet with in November?

Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Cummings, Secretary
To the Committee

Attachments

Letter to Chairman Brady
Letter to Chairman Corker