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## Tony Blair's secret memo to Alastair Campbell: My 12-point plan for stopping Brexit

Written by  
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Austin Mitchell was Labour MP for Great Grimsby between 1977 and 2015.

*Through the good offices of Austin Mitchell, BrexitCentral has been passed a memo written by former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to his former Director of Communications, Alastair Campbell, on the subject of Brexit...*

Dear Alastair,

While commending your enthusiasm for the cause I wouldn't want you to antagonise the British people, particularly former Labour supporters who made the mistake of voting for Brexit. Our task is more subtle. It's to force the government to negotiate with every vested interest in this country rather than the EU, so we don't build up anger against Europe. The aim must be to make Brexit look so difficult that government gives up rather than increases dislike of an EU which is so good for our people, even if they don't know it.

With this in mind I suggest:

1. Pretend to accept the referendum result. No use putting it down to lies, Russian gold, or "too close to call". The majority was bigger and clearer than what the Tories got in 2010, 2015 or 2017. People won't like being told their votes don't count.
2. Don't call Brexit voters stupid, under-educated, racist or gullible. Many of them voted for me. We won't win their votes back by abusing them.
3. Don't defend the EU's point of view: say they're right to require us to jump three hurdles before they'll talk nitty gritty, or suggest offering them bucket loads of money. As negotiations turn nasty, we can't afford to appear to be on the other side, rather than Britain's.
4. Don't fraternise with the enemy or run to Juncker, Merkel or Macron. All these pilgrimages (*mea culpa*) make it look as though we're helping them and snitching on Britain.
5. Don't bang on about the joys of the Single Market – we're in a deficit of £60 billion with it and selling off railways, companies and utilities to finance it. So defend it as better than being assaulted by Trump and forced to eat chlorinated chicken.
6. Don't start attacking the government for being too tough in the negotiations. However incompetently, they are carrying out the wishes of people and, to be realistic, the EU has us over a barrel if it just sits there and demands that Britain jumps through hoops and hands over huge sums before it can be told what it can get. If it had any sense, the government would

start whipping up anger about EU intransigence and we don't want to be seen as defending that, however much it helps us.

7. This government could collapse, bringing Labour into power. Then our former party will have to choose between fighting and failing. We can't trust Corbyn to see things our way, but it will be disastrous to be seen as the sell-out party.

8. Much as cosmopolitans like you, me and Peter love the EU, it was always a deal designed to suit the interests of France and Germany rather than Britain. So it's no use portraying it as Britain's salvation and the greatest thing since Sure Start. It's a good idea to urge changes which will make it better for Britain. They won't happen, of course, but it makes us look better than telling people it's wonderful when they know it isn't. Talk of returning to "lead" Europe is better than admitting that we'd be slinking back, humiliated, to sit on the naughty step.

9. Another fear campaign won't work. People won't believe it any more but it's difficult to admit that our government allowed manufacturing to shrink so far that Britain can neither pay its way nor support the structures of an advanced society. So talk of all the help we get from the EU without saying 'it's our own money back'. Don't mention the drain of belonging or Germany's huge surpluses at our expense.

10. Accept that Britain has its problems but don't admit to the scale of a disaster which can be blamed on us. In or out of the EU, we'll face the huge problem of building back to viability. We must avoid the Dunkirk spirit for the moment, but create just enough fear to make people think it's safer in the EU than standing up for ourselves. This is a bit difficult because Europe punishes failures like Greece rather than helping lame dogs over styles. So we need to concentrate on suggesting domestic reforms, particularly any which help such symbols of our national greatness as the City of London, the banks, the multinationals and all those foreign investors who've bought up our companies, utilities, railways and properties because of their faith in this country. Keep the people happy by building more houses and offering bigger mortgages, rather than dirty factories or risky investments.

11. Warn about galloping inflation rather than the cheaper food available outside EU agricultural protectionism.

12. Don't mention the war, Germany or the euro. Your skill at putting a first-class case for second-rate policies served us well in the old days before Gordon messed it all up. Now the issue is not the future Labour offers Britain, but the gloomier one Brexit offers you and me. I don't want to diminish your enthusiasm for the cause but we must not open ourselves up to accusations of sexing up the EU or offering another dodgy dossier. This is an occasion when the hand of history must be portrayed as punching our people in the gut, rather than resting on the shoulders of you and I, or the rest of Britain's elite.

Your Fraternally,

Tony