

Goldsmith Speech 18.09.08

Teddy Goldsmith Story (unscripted)

- Not Jimmy but Teddy
- Almost impossible task
- Bed next to mine
- Dog racing
- 3/6
- 4 to 1 shot
- 5 dog
- Obligated
- Pre-decimalisation
- 17/6
- Hilarious dinner

Jimmy Goldsmith Story (unscripted)

- 25 Years
- Got me a wife
- Unusual deal
- £1000 a lot
- Suited both
- 11 to 10 about evens
- Scrabbling
- First date
- Restaurant
- Two Iranians, John Aspinall, Jimmy Goldsmith
- Wrong twice
- You won £100 really
- Tessa not put off

Now Jimmy was a huge risk taker. I have heard it said that he was only interested in deals that had the ability to break him if they went wrong. Perhaps assessing and taking risks is something he and I had in common. But we also had something else in common: a passionate interest in two important issues: Europe and climate change.

One we agreed on; one we did not. You can probably guess which is the one we agreed on

I am taking a bit of a risk with this audience in choosing to voice my views on climate change; less of a risk, I suspect, on sharing my views on Europe – so let's start with that one.

I know that Lord Pearson will speak later about how the Lisbon Treaty was passed through the House of Lords. So I shall leave that to him.

Let me, however, say something about the court case in which I tried to force the government to keep its promise to hold a referendum on whether the treaty should be ratified.

The first stage came when the government submitted that I had no arguable case and should not be permitted a judicial review at all. Mr Justice Owen rejected that emphatically in finding in my favour and he made a somewhat unusual order about costs.

Normally the side which loses a case has to pay the costs of the winning side, not only at the final hearing but at all preliminary hearings. Significantly Mr Justice Owen ordered, having found in my favour, that in this case, the government should pay its own costs of the hearing in front of him, whoever won in the end. Evidently he thought the government should not even have tried to prevent a judicial review.

The odds seemed to be getting better!

A few weeks later came the main hearing before Lord Justice Richards and Mr Justice Mackay. I want to make a point, very carefully, about the choice of judges. It is often said – rightly, I believe - that justice must not only be done; it must also be seen to be done. I am not sure that that happened in my case.

Lord Justice Richards was the senior of the two judges. He handled the case impeccably. He listened very carefully to everything said on my behalf and his written judgment was much admired by lawyers – not a view I share, but that may be because I lost!

The problem, though, is that Lord Justice Richards, for the five years before he became a judge, was what is called the Treasury Devil. This is a highly distinguished position, but one which meant that he acted almost exclusively for the government during that five year period.

I do not suggest for a moment - and I do not *believe* for a moment - that he was biased against me or my case — not at all.

But I do *not* think it was a good idea, given that justice should be seen to be done, that somebody who had, for five years, worked virtually exclusively for the government, should have been the senior judge to hear a case in which a member of the public was bringing a controversial action against the government which he had so long represented.

Why do I want to stop the Lisbon Treaty? Why does it matter to you and the people of this country that this Treaty should die?

Well, some of the reasons *are* constitutional. Ted Heath was honest about the situation in 1966 when he said, "We should frankly recognise this surrender of sovereignty and its purpose". Later, however, when trying to get us to vote to stay in the Common Market, he said exactly the opposite. He said: "There are some in this country who fear that in going into Europe, we shall in

some way sacrifice independence and sovereignty” and he went on, “These fears, I need hardly say, are completely unjustified.”

Well they were, of course, very much justified: more than half our laws are made in Brussels; we have lost most of our vetoes, we have lost control of our criminal law. I needn't go on.

But I want today to focus on an aspect that should be of very real concern to everyone in this country but which eurosceptics do not, as I see it, emphasise enough. And that is the issue of cost.

Four years ago, two highly distinguished commentators -- Patrick Minford, the well known economist at Cardiff University, and Ian Milne of Global Britain and Global Vision--quite separately, and using different techniques, concluded that membership of the EU was at that time costing the people of this country about £40 billion a year — yes that is billion, not million. That is about £3000 a year for a family of four. I know that the figure is much higher now but let us stick with £3000 and ask the critical question.

The average income in this country is about £17,000 after tax and national insurance. What on earth are the benefits the EU brings to us that are worth a family on that income giving up nearly 20 per cent of its take-home pay? There can only be one answer: It is an insanely bad deal.

And, if the Lisbon Treaty becomes law, that cost gets worse still.

By now, it is reckoned that the cost of regulation alone to the UK is 48 billion pounds perhaps much more, I.E. regulation alone is costing more than the conservative estimate I have referred to.

And if Lisbon goes through there will be more integration, and regulation will get more and more expensive. Someone is going to have to pay for it, and it won't just be the people in this room. It will be the people already struggling with rising prices and more expensive mortgages.

So what should we do about Lisbon?

We cannot, unfortunately, assume that the welcome Irish No is a final No. Every bribe in the book, and every threat in the book will be used to persuade them to say “Sorry, We Meant Yes”.

So, we – or the British Government - have to withdraw our ratification of the treaty.

This will only be possible if the Conservatives come to power before it is law. But it is highly likely that the European elections in June next year will take place before any new Irish referendum. So, we have to pin the Conservatives down to two highly specific promises they must make in their manifesto for the European elections. And we must pin them down with great precision.

Why? Let me tell you what happened just under a year ago. It was the Thursday of the Labour party conference. It now seems like a different era. Gordon Brown walked on water, having dealt so capably with floods, fire and pestilence. The boy David had yet to fell Labour's Goliath and he seemed to most people, including the bookmakers, unlikely to do so.

As Labour dithered by the seaside, I was at a big Conservative do and David came up to me and said “You must buy the Sun tomorrow, Stuart. You'll like what I have said in it”. I did buy it, and I did like it. Very much.

He had said “Today I will give this cast-iron guarantee: if I become PM a Conservative government will hold a referendum on any EU treaty that emerges from these negotiations”.

That seemed pretty clearcut and cast iron. But clearcut glass and cast iron seem to have a tendency to melt a bit as the heat of political success is turned up.

Once Gordon was felled, and David's odds changed with startling speed, I began to sense a certain wobbliness creeping into the commitment to a referendum. Politicians in or close to power seem, on Europe, to start to feel that they must not be nasty to the EU. I was asked after a speech I made yesterday why I thought this happened.

Perhaps they're afraid that at EU meetings everyone will be horrid to them. But the truth is: I don't know: it is a mystery.

So we kept up the pressure and the party has now said that it will definitely call a referendum if Lisbon has not been ratified when they come to power. We must be sure that, when in power, they actually do call it. If, as I think very likely, there is a big majority against ratification that will have a huge effect on the political scene – including, of course, on the Irish.

But what if the treaty is already law when the Tories come to power?

All that the shadow cabinet has been willing to say so far is that it will “not allow matters to rest there”. That is nowhere near good enough. A number of my eurosceptic friends and colleagues seem to think that the ‘grown-up’ thing is to accept it. If that is grown-up I do not want to be a grown-up.

The reality is that a new Conservative government will have a great deal it wants to achieve which has nothing whatever to do with Europe. It does not like thinking about Europe - and it does not in fact think much about Europe. So, Europe is all too likely to be put on the back burner.

If the UK were unfortunate enough to have me as its dictator I would say two things to the EU.

First, we want massive changes, (and I would tell them what they were), and
Second, we want them quickly.

Oh, and thirdly, if we don't get these changes, we shall be out. This, for me, would have the effect of saving every family in the country £3000 or more a year, making me, perhaps, the most popular dictator in the world !

So if there are any Tories here, and I suspect there may be, I urge you to tell your MP, MEP or candidate that, unless two pledges are in the manifesto your support in the euro elections will not go to the Tories and may well go elsewhere:

These are the two pledges they must make in that manifesto:

One: a promise, with no weasel words, that if Lisbon is *not* law when they come to power, they will hold a referendum on whether to withdraw our ratification.

Two: A promise that if Lisbon *is* law when they come to power, there will be an immediate, massive renegotiation of our whole relationship with the EU, to be followed by a referendum on whether to accept the result.

It's that simple.

So, now let me get out of the political frying pan and jump straight into the environmental fire.

On climate change, or rather, to be specific, on global warming, the political class is agreed:

- it is happening at an alarming rate

- there is a significant danger of catastrophe for the world unless it is stopped
- it is largely man-made
- measures to curb it now will cost far less than they will in a hundred years if we do nothing now.
- we must take such measures,
- and if we don't, we shall lose millions of votes because people will think we are putting the planet under threat.

The real situation is very, very different.

First, is global warming happening? Well, no, apparently not at the moment. The warmest year in recent times was 1998, even though carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere continued to rise over the 10 years since then.

All right then, is it going to happen in the next ten years? Well, no, not if a lot of the global warming alarmists themselves are right. They say that for "special" reasons, it may well get cooler over that period before, of course, resuming its dangerous upward trend after that.

So was there a lot of warming before 1998? Well, the global average temperature in the last century did go up — perhaps by three quarters of one degree centigrade. Bear in mind that you or I would be completely incapable of telling a difference of three quarters of one degree - and that it took a hundred years for this indiscernible change to occur.

I don't know if you have heard of a body called the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Its pronouncements are treated rather like the Pope's ex cathedra pronouncements to Roman Catholics — they can never be wrong.

All the same that panel in its third so called assessment in 2001 gave tremendous prominence to the so called hockey stick argument by which a young scientist called Mann purported to show on a graph that for a thousand years world temperature remained about the same, only to shoot up in the last one hundred years — impressive stuff. But this theory has now been so conclusively rubbished that in its most recent assessment report, the fourth assessment, the IPCC, which had made so much of it earlier, dropped the graph altogether.

Next, is this indiscernible warming caused by CO₂ emissions? Al Gore's famous — or it should be infamous — film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, drew attention to a correlation over thousands of years between warming on the one hand, and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, on the other.

Unfortunately for his theory, this correlation - far from suggesting that carbon dioxide caused warming - suggested if anything exactly the opposite, because the warming came before the increase in CO₂. So, it was apparently the warming that caused the carbon dioxide!

Now greenhouse gases do have some warming effect and carbon dioxide is one of them, though not nearly as important as water vapour, but the real "inconvenient truth" is that the temperature in the world has always changed for all sorts of reasons. And inconveniently, we do not fully understand those reasons. But the fact that carbon dioxide must be *some* part of the cause of this very small warming over a hundred years is hardly a reason for impoverishing the world.

So then, what is the catastrophe which global warming, if not eliminated, will cause? What indeed?

There's no doubt that shortage of food is one of the most critical problems the world faces at the moment.

So let's look at what the IPCC says would be the effect of rises in temperature on food production. The panel says that for the first three whole degrees centigrade of increase from current levels, food production would go up, not down.

So if warming were to take place at the rate at which it did in the twentieth century- remember there has been none this century - it would take four hundred years before we got to the temperature at which food production went down. Four hundred years is quite far enough, for me, in fact a lot too far, to try to look ahead. So food is not the problem.

What is? Deaths from being too hot? Well, there will be some if warming takes place but not nearly as many as the lives saved by people not being too cold.

What about sea level rises? This subject is the one on which Al Gore's film was most disgracefully misleading of all. He said that levels would rise by some twenty meters over one hundred years. But even the IPCC admitted that the most likely rise was only around 18 to 59 *centimetres*. All the same it may be that this small rise would cause significant damage to some poor countries.

But they could be enabled to build the sea defences which they need. Look at what Holland has done. Holland, however, is and has been, a relatively prosperous country.

And that prosperity is precisely the point: prosperous countries can adapt to circumstances.

Helsinki's average temperature is five degrees: Singapore's is 34. But both prosper and they deal with different climates in ways adapted to their specific needs, and it is only by combating poverty that people can cope with any problems that warming may produce. So the rich nations should give those nations which are poor, and would suffer from sea level rises, the financial and other help which they need to adapt. Adapting is the right answer to any problems of this kind; after all, that is what the human race has done for thousands – if not millions – of years.

But finally, what if Professor Lord Stern in his well-known review, is right – and I don't think he is, but what if – when he says that it would cost one percent of GDP now to deal with what he sees as the problems, but would cost five percent of GDP if we leave it for one hundred years? Lord Lawson, our Chancellor of the Exchequer at one time, has this point well answered in his excellent, short book, *An Appeal to Reason*.

Let me quote him, "Even on the basis of the IPCC's flawed economic assumption we find that the.....threat to the planet, which we must do all in our power to avert, is merely that living standards in the developing world in a hundred years time, are projected to be 'only' some 8.5 times as high as they are today, instead of 9.5 times without the alleged ravages of global warming." 'Save the planet' must surely be a strong contender for the most ludicrous slogan ever coined'

So which is better, to reduce the desperately low current GDP of poor countries by one percent now, at the cost of many lives and much misery, or to reduce their GDP in a hundred years time from a level which is so high that they can very easily afford the reduction?

Global warming is a huge, and a hugely complicated subject, involving climate science and economics. And I'm neither a climate scientist nor an economist: I'm just a bookie.

But bookies – just like Jimmy – know a thing or two about taking risks, and I think the political class is making the wrong call on global warming. They may think that it is a vote winner, and they may be genuine when they say they think it should be their number one priority for saving the world.

But I think the average member of the public disagrees, and is right to disagree. He or she believes that the Government's punitive green taxes are being levied, not to save the planet, but to shore up the finances of a near bankrupt Treasury.

Once again, it's about cost, but in this case the objection is not only that the money being taken off us – all of us – is simply another method of raising revenue, but also that the ostensible reason for the taxes is not a good one.

It was another Goldsmith, the 18th century writer and poet Oliver Goldsmith, who wrote:

“Don't let us make imaginary evils, when you know we have so many real ones to encounter”.

I am reasonably certain that the Goldsmith who wrote that, himself an Irishman, would agree with me that the most pressing and real evil is the encroachment of Europe. And, if push came to shove, I'd certainly bet eleven to ten that Jimmy would have said the same.

Thank you, and I shall be happy to take some questions after Lord Pearson has spoken.