

BREXIT: FROM WHISPERS TO HISTORY

An all-Winners Game.

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**‘Some things benefit from shocks;
they thrive and grow when exposed to volatility,
randomness, disorder, and stressors;
and love adventure, risk, and uncertainty’**

Nassim Nicholas Taleb

In the House of Lords, the state of HM’s Union and the future and security of the former empire are openly debated. Philosophical subject-matters, however, are usually not eligible for public debate as the peers prefer to devote their time in more mundane issues of non-financial significance. The future of democracy, at the turn of the century, a time when democracy seemed to be under siege, seemed to matter more than mere amendments to legislative matters to only few peers who have served Queen and Country for generations¹.

The UK is a country that the concept of democracy and democratic values are still rooted in its institutions. It was therefore unthinkable, around the turn of the century, that the end of history – the literal end of liberal democracy – was deemed to be upcoming because of the build-up of a European behemoth with an uncontrollable and ever-expanding bureaucracy². It was the time that former PM Tony Blair promoted aggressively the proposition that governments may delegate powers to supranational institutions under carefully controlled conditions. The concept of ‘security’ and ‘stability’ found resonance for those leaving within the walls of the behemoth and was promoted as a bonus, albeit at the expense of democratic values. There was only one action that could arrest the process of abolition of democracy in the era that technology has tilted the balance against the best of the worst systems of governance³: the exit from the superstructure that long established UK institutions could not control.

The prospect of Brexit found supporters in both the ‘left’ and the ‘right’, those incoherent and verbalistic ideologies, whose proponents still fought a futile endless battle to achieve the impossible: to tilt the balance of political equilibrium solely to one’s ideological favour. The unexpected concurrence between the proponents of those two redundant models⁴ of governance, that sponsored internationalism and patriotism respectively, gave rise to the worst nightmares of the hegemonic project: the spin out of one of the European Union’s core members.

The integration process of the UK in this hegemonic project⁵ reached its peak when President Bush Jr. declared that *‘Turkey belongs in the EU and that Europe is “not the exclusive club of a single religion” in what amounted to a rebuff to the French leader in an address at Istanbul university’*⁶. This seemingly detached and irrelevant to the subject-matter internationalist statement touched a sentimental string in the hearts of both hereditary peers and commoners regarding its merits for the former empire. Common

people started debating openly about the consequences of a possible break up with the European Union⁷, stiff upper lips only dared to whisper about it.

The non-governing elite during the years leading to the uncontrolled expansion of the European superstructure remained silent in the background. It was June 29th, 2004 that marked the pivotal point in the future of the European Union: it suddenly awoke from hibernation the political forces of those few among the peers that their intervention in the political process could change history. The non-governing elite, remarkably, had still the power to shape the direction of a democratic Nation. Their pressure for political action to the elected politicians culminated the announcement by former PM Cameron in 2013 that he will hold a referendum in case he is re-elected in office. The referendum would ask whether the UK should leave the hegemonic project to follow a lonely path leading to the build-up of 'Global Britain'⁸.

The political success and economic boom of the United Kingdom lasted more than twenty years and certainly outpaced any economic developments in the rest of the European Union. This successful economic model reached its peak during the Blair years. At that time, the fervent efforts by his most prominent Ministers almost succeeded to introduce elements of centralisation in UK's political system that would have resulted in the complete surrender of British independence to Brussels. Part of the political elite, and in retrospect the majority of the 'common people', even though they both enjoyed the fruits of economic success, blatantly resisted to the surrender of British national independence to unelected officials in Brussels. It was both grass roots pressure to the political system, together with whispers coming from the elite, that led to the referendum of 2016. The referendum was the reaction to the faltering 'permissive consensus'⁹ for further integration of the United Kingdom into an increasingly germanised and apolitical - thus technocratic - European Union.

Further integration to the EU was also resisted by certain segments of the business and diplomatic circles in London. Their strong inkling for a divorce with Europe was based on an uneasiness about the role of Germany in the European hegemonic project. Instead of a pure economic union that promoted trade among its members, the EU was becoming an alternative model of ultra-national governance. Unelected officials had the final say both on matters of business practice and national importance. Brexit was deemed necessary for the survival of UK's very institutions that came under attack from their mandatory alignment with the superstructure's mechanisms.

The British elite did not wish to part-take to EU's supranational model of governance and pay any price, if and probably when, this disintegrated. Disintegration would be the outcome of the rolling of Brussels on an infinite loop: as the European Union's very declared mission was, and still is, to keep Germany in check, Germany was, and still is, dominating the mechanisms that are dedicated to control her! Having dominated the decision-making mechanisms of the Union, German introvert policies are doomed to threaten sooner or later the very existence of a superstructure that the UK helped create. Thus, there was no role, for the United Kingdom to play in a Union with a broken-down mission: Germany could not be controlled within the walls of the European Union. To contain her pursuit for new allegiances and alliances, Brexit seemed to be the only option.

Brussels – mirroring German policies - never fully trusted the United Kingdom to concede her unconditional access to its decision-making mechanisms within the EU. Thus, British bureaucrats and diplomats found it difficult to operate with Anglo-Saxon efficiency in the inefficient, and slow decision-making environment of the EU¹⁰. In short, the European Union was, and still is, too germanised for the British to entertain sufficient control over its decision-making mechanisms. Despite the many years of running an empire, the United Kingdom ended up losing part of her independence – as per the terms of the deal of her membership in the EU - while at the same time failed to force enter the core of the Union's decision-making apparatus.

The UK entertained no other choice; unable to enter the core, where the few govern, she was obliged to leave the whole: to exit from the European Union.

Germany taking advantage of the infinite loop where the controller is also the controlled, has the comfort to promote a bipolar foreign policy. On the one hand she is pursuing her internal foreign policy goals that are solely advocating German national interests: among them to independently form alliances with the view to becoming a dominating geopolitical pole in the 21st Century. On the other hand, the German national bureaucracy is preparing the ground for their country to enter the next generation of unions and alliances that are going to replace the already shaking and failed structures of the past two centuries¹¹. This internal German policy is formulated under the assumption that global US presence and influence, irrespective of who is in the White House, is waning¹². An assumption that the United Kingdom finds very difficult to advocate to.

British orientation to the Atlantic relationship is more than a mantra of her foreign policy. As the European elite, does not seem to affirm the predominance of American hegemony this is a clear reflection of the fact that the Germans are preparing for the end of Pax Americana. With the upcoming end of Pax Americana competition for global predominance will be fierce amongst various candidates. Despite British orientation to the Atlantic relationship, the UK had no choice but to also contrive to fill the void by having formulated plans for 'Global Britain'.

The concept of 'Global Britain' is not only a post Brexit manifesto formulating the relationship with the EU since Theresa May's speech in 2017¹³. It is more of an anxiety call for Britain's future role in a world where US influence is under evaluation. On the financial front it is of great relevance that the London Stock Exchange partnered with its Chinese counterpart in 2018 while Brexit negotiations were still undergoing. To proceed uninterrupted with the implementation of her own plans to form alliances for the 21st century, the UK had no choice but to leave the European Union.

Germany was also looking to fill the void left by Brexit by implementing a dual policy. She pursues the Germanisation of the EU even more ardently; and, at the same time, she is coming politically and financially closer to third countries that serve to satisfy her ever increasing energy appetite, namely Russia¹⁴. In a multipolar world, the pole that is deemed to have better chances to prevail in the pursuit of global predominance, is the one that will end up forming an alliance/union with Russia. Thus, UK and US partisanship with anything relating to Russian influence on European affairs.

To get aligned with Russia, Germany - either as independent pole or by using EU as a proxy, had to remove British political influence from the European Union. It is a declared official UK policy that *'Russia and the UK have fundamentally different perceptions of recent history and the current international order. UK foreign policy is predicated on the maintenance of the rules-based international order and of international law, self-determination for sovereign nation states and the promotion of human rights and freedom of expression. Russia's post-Soviet experience and the apparent self-interest of the governing elite has led to a Russian foreign policy which explicitly rejects and undermines that order and the principles on which it relies^{15'}*. The UK could never allow Germany to align her interests deadlocked with those of Russia. Outside the EU, the UK would have the flexibility to use her old diplomatic contrivance to try to keep both actors at bay.

Together with their UK cousins, the US deep state contemplates German foreign policy actions regarding her national aspirations for the 21st Century since the G. W. Bush presidency. To counter and subtly push off truck Germany's bipolar foreign policy initiatives, the deep state in the United States has since taken various subtle - and sometimes not so subtle - diplomatic and/or covert initiatives. The US sought to keep a balance between the so called 'interests of NATO and the western alliance' and Germany's attempts to a more independent foreign policy¹⁶. Irrespective of diplomatic lingua the US often felt that by pronging with a spear Germany's side and letting her bleed financially¹⁷ was in the best interests of the Western alliance. Thus, what best for US interests but to be sponsoring Brexit¹⁸.

Post-Brexit, the waning of US global influence in the 21st century can be expressed directly by Germany and her proxies in Brussels, without any pressure from the United Kingdom. The ink had not dried on the farewell treaties yet, and on the 31st of December 2020 European Union officials announced the EE- China treaty¹⁹. An announcement which coincided with the change of the Administration in the US. Pleas from the incoming Administration not to go public with the treaty until they had a chance to review it and comment on, were not noticed from European officials²⁰.

Surprisingly, and contrary to popular opinion, Brexit was a winners' game for all those who were implicated²¹. All major State actors came out of the so called 'difficult' negotiations having achieved their medium-term foreign policy targets. The US, to the satisfaction of its deep state, enjoyed the consequences of discomfiting Germany by the loss of a net creditor to the Union's coffers. Russia was also a winner, as she can now freely negotiate directly with Germany, and her proxy the EU, regarding energy exports. British diplomats can no longer block any attempt to bridge their differences. Equally, the UK will carry on her long-term course for 'Global Britain' without facing institutional, in other words German, resistance. Germany is also an obvious winner; she is untended to continue her course into forming a geopolitical pole the 21st Century.

Least but not last, the redundancy of the ideologies of the past came about with a golden parachute for their aging proponents who have now reached pension time. The political left can celebrate because the space freed by the UK's exit can only be filled with further integration and thus more Germanisation of the superstructure; albeit making it more fragile and volatile. Never mind that its fragility will most certainly cause its breakup in two large parts: the debtor countries with France acting as their leader, and the creditor countries with Germany leading them as the core. This may well be interpreted as an indirect reward to Germany's national policy. A breakup will enable her to form alliances with third countries including Russia, in her

pursuit to become a major geopolitical pole. France can claim victory as well, as she will be able to form her own geopolitical pole, a credible force on the continent facing the aggressive and expansionist German opposite.

In the UK, proponents of the political right can also claim victory as they witnessed the worst nightmares of a hegemonistic project come true: the breakup of one of its core members. As June 29th, 2004 was a pivotal peak point in the life of the superstructure, for the political right this behemoth just started its long green mile walk.

Brexit is not a whisper anymore; it is just history.

Endnotes:

¹ The House of Lords were largely pro remain, however. *'In all 91 hereditary peers still sit in the Lords, with vacancies supposedly being 'elected' from a wider pool of hereditaries who cannot sit. In effect this is just a self-perpetuating oligarchy selecting new members from among the aristocracy with a tiny 'electorate'*: <https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/the-uks-changing-democracy.-2.pdf>

² <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24027184?seq=1>

³ <https://blogs.fcdo.gov.uk/petermillett/2014/03/05/the-worst-form-of-government/>
PM Johnson in the UN General Assembly: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-to-the-un-general-assembly-24-september-2019>

⁴ The 'right' is represented by what is now called fractal localism and is deemed to express patriotism. Fractal localism *'is not a political system but a rigorously defined political structure that can accommodate various systems, which can even include communism, libertarianism –though not anarchism as naively presented'*. Nassim Nicholas Taleb. *Principia Politica*. p.12

⁵ On the opposite end, the liberal intergovernmentalism by construction, retains its status as the 'default' interpretation of integration and formulation of an hegemonic project' advocated by the 'left'. You can read [Andrew Moravcsik \(1993, 1998\)](#)

⁶ <http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/06/29/bush.chirac.turkey/index.html>

⁷ <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/84146282.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/global-britain-delivering-on-our-international-ambition>

⁹ <https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PaperDetails/9668>; <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500206>

¹⁰ Dr. Christopher G. Gifford thesis examines in great detail, from a critical point of view for British politics and the aftereffects of post imperial Britain, the malfunctioning relationship between The UK and the EU. *'The 1990s witnessed the Europeanisation of the Labour party with growing support for the European Union's economic and social agenda (Gamble and Kelly 2000: 3-5). This constructive approach was realised when the Blair government took office and immediately negotiated Britain's incorporation into the Social Chapter. This signalled a new era in Britain's relationship to the European Union and was followed by an 'impressive investment of British politicians in all the European institutions' (Elisabeth Gigou, member of the French parliament, cited in Baker 2003: 237)'*. <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/1752/1/U188014.pdf>

¹¹ Niklas Helwig (2020) Out of order? The US alliance in Germany's foreign and security policy, *Contemporary Politics*, 26:4, 439-457, DOI: [10.1080/13569775.2020.1777039](https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2020.1777039): 'Russia's new assertiveness was not perceived in Germany as a major threat in a way that it could serve as a foundation for the renewal of the transatlantic military alliance. In contrast to some of the Baltic countries or Poland (see Lanoszka, 2020), Germany did not see Russian actions as an imminent threat to political systems or even the territorial integrity of NATO allies, but rather as a threat to the general principles of the rules-based regional order in Europe. From Germany's perspective, the act of

annexing Crimea and starting a war in Eastern Ukraine were wrong and called for consequences, yet, further aggression towards NATO allies were seen as unlikely' and further: : 'Germany forged closer political and economic ties with Russia in the decades after the Cold War. Hope that the Russian state might transform into a democratic and liberal system was promoted through the German policy of 'modernisation partnership' The thesis of the paper argues that Germany is acting within the norms of the EU and in order to further strengthen it.

¹² <https://www.spf.org/en/jpus/spf-woldviews-on-the-united-states/woldviews-on-the-united-states005.html>;
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-berlin-republic-an-independent-germany-faces-the-21st-century/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-governments-negotiating-objectives-for-exiting-the-eu-pm-speech>; and,
<https://journals.openedition.org/osb/2119>

¹⁴ https://www.economist.com/europe/2021/02/01/why-germany-wont-kill-nord-stream-2?utm_campaign=editorial-social&utm_medium=social-organic&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR2Ha7UOw33_Ql_XVln8HPDIdDFEH8t_Mn6sT0tcNVeUMv2rqdFlhx2Dfn8

¹⁵ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmcaff/120/120.pdf>

¹⁶ *'So I take your remarks very seriously, Barack, that the European Union as a whole, but also Germany, needs to recognize that this is our alliance, our common alliance, our transatlantic alliance, that we have to step up our engagement. Because, in the long run, we will not be allowed to accept this imbalance as regards the contributions we give to this alliance. And we have understood this message, and we have started to react' and a question near the end of the interviews: Will you want to know, Madam Chancellor, see to it under the your administration try to make Europe and Germany less dependent on the United States? : CHANCELLOR MERKEL: (As interpreted.) On the issue first of independence of Germany, after the time of national socialism, Germany has been given an enormous amount of help, particularly and also from the United States of America. The fact that we were able to enjoy German unification is due first and foremost to the help of the United States of America. And ever since Germany was able to regain its unity, it is in an even stronger position to give its contribution to upholding this order to which we feel committed, and for which particularly people in the German Democratic Republic stood out there in the streets to keep this up, to maintain this order, particularly also in our country* <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/11/17/remarks-president-obama-and-chancellor-merkel-germany-joint-press>'.

¹⁷ The Greek debt crisis is one of those not-so-subtle US interventions to 'independent' German foreign policy initiatives.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/imf-wants-eurozone-debt-relief-for-greece-until-2040-1463468493>

¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/may/05/donald-trump-brexit-uk-leaving-european-union>

¹⁹ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-12/31/c_139630807.htm

²⁰ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/01/the-strategic-implications-of-the-china-eu-investment-deal/>

²¹ <https://egade.tec.mx/en/egade-ideas/opinion/brexit-losers-game>;