



4 BEYOND THE GHOSTS: DOES EU MEMBERSHIP NOURISH OR CONSUME BRITAIN'S INTERESTS AND GLOBAL INFLUENCE?

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Economic measurements are insufficient to judge this question

The most familiar scales used to weigh the value to Britain of participation in the project of European Union ('The Project') are those calibrated for economic costs versus benefits. They have been the longest in service. Although, over 40 years ago, Edward Heath suggested that amplification of foreign policy influence was another leading benefit of joining, today the preferred test of those promoting continuation of British participation is, often exclusively, one of economics.

Quantified in hard figures, economic cost-benefit is relatively easier to weigh than the metrics that matter most for judging national influence and interests worldwide. There are some technical tests that can be applied to the processes of diplomacy, and results are reviewed towards the end of this chapter. But they are not the most important tests. So, most of what follows discusses the deeper, less tangible, logically prior and decisive considerations.

How best to nourish British interests: two paradoxes

This chapter explores two paradoxes. It will suggest that, where our interests coincide, which they do sometimes but not always,





close British engagement with European nations on security, defence and foreign policy is greatly in the British national interest. It has always been so, and it is especially so in today's menacing world. Transnational cooperation is vital both in combatting the pan-European threat of unconditional Islamism, which is both physically violent and culturally corrosive, and in facing the resurgent malevolence of Putin's demographically and economically stricken Russia.

Ironically, because of the one-way ratchet gearing that was built into The Project from its conception (as will be explained below), and which therefore includes the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) machine that is being rapidly expanded to deliver it, this cooperation cannot occur under the *status quo* of the Lisbon Treaty or anything other than fundamental amendment of it that removes the ratchet. This is the first paradox.

The ratchet is why French politicians often repeat, correctly, that there cannot be a 'Europe à la carte.' It is also why Prime Minister Cameron's 2015 negotiation tactic appears to have been back to front. He appears to have asked what was the most with which the others could live. That tactic cannot deliver Britain's minimum requirements. The starting position with a body constituted as the EU should have been to declare an intention to leave unless Britain recovers full sovereignty by negotiated agreement and basic treaty change. Safe cooperation can only be safely achieved once Britain has *either* been totally released from the CFSP/EEAS by European agreement – and, given the nature of the machine, totally must be totally – *or* removed from that power by the referendum vote of its people.

The 'European idea' died a decade ago for most Europeans, especially south of the Alps. So, firm negotiating should be much easier than before the euro began to poison The Project. By being uncompromising, a second, virtuous paradox appears: in forcing general abandonment of the goal and political trappings of





‘ever-closer union’ to save itself, British success might also save the free trade area for others too: something that might otherwise be lost in the current crumbling of The Project.

If Prime Minister Cameron were to achieve this, Britain would once again have helped to save Europe from itself, and it would be an act of statesmanship that would be on a par with those of Prime Ministers Churchill or Salisbury, or of Foreign Secretary Castlereagh.

Why the EU and its fears are older than you think

The current Project was conceived in the horrors of the battlefield of Verdun, had its first flowering and shrivelling in the 1920s and became a political reality in the wake of World War II. Therefore, it is scarred to its core by the European Civil War (1914–45) that gave birth to it. In 1950, it seemed reasonable, even imperative, to neuter the nations of Europe.

The French *eminence grise* of The Project, Jean Monnet (1888–1979), was a bureaucrat, inspired by that vision of a united Europe that Tennyson had expressed in words cherished by generations of world federalists: ‘Till the war-drum throbb’d no longer, and the battle-flags were furl’d/In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.’¹ Also working at the League of Nations was the Englishman Arthur Salter, his friend and colleague, who wrote *The United States of Europe* in 1931, a book that sets out that shared vision in detail. Another close collaborator was Walter Hallstein, a German technocratic academic who believed in international jurisdiction as the morally superior successor to the laws of the nation states; and his priority is inscribed in the constitution for the ECJ, prescribing travel towards ever-closer union. Monnet, Salter and Hallstein were joined by Altiero Spinelli, a romantic communist who advocated a United States of Europe legitimised

1 Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Locksley Hall* (1835).





by a democratically elected European Parliament. In form, but not substance, that also has come into being, albeit with tepid and cooling public support. Such people were not isolated enthusiasts, but they shared a sentiment widespread among the inter-war European elites. Its animator was the leader of the *Pan Europa* movement, Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi.

The culmination of frank Utopian federalism came in the form of French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand's proposal for a European Federal Union, which in May 1930 went the same way as the 1928 Kellogg–Briand Pact proposal to outlaw war. The rebuff caused Monnet and his friends to reassess in a less innocent spirit. They chose creeping federalism (the covert acquisition of ever more power without consent). By playing a constitutional game of Grandmother's Footsteps² with the unenlightened *canaille*, approaching the goal of federal union obliquely and enticing electorates with tasty a-political morsels at first, it could become – *pouf!* – an irrevocable *fait accompli*. This functional tactic is known as the Monnet Method. Irrevocability is the heartbeat of the process that expands the *acquis communautaire*: the unrepealable 'Community inheritance' of accumulating laws, policies and practices. They sought and obtained the support of popular political leaders such as Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and Alcide De Gasperi to translate the Monnet Method into concrete political forms. One of Coudenhove's ideas from the 1920s was to create a European coal and steel community. In 1952, as 'the Schuman Plan', this became the initial step. Why the reckless sense of mission that justified playing such a game? Because they trusted no one but themselves, and least of all the common people.

2 An English children's game. One person ('grandmother') walks in front of a group of others who try to catch up with her to touch her without her seeing them coming. If 'grandmother' turns around, everyone freezes. Anyone caught moving by 'grandmother' is out. In the EU version, the people are 'grandmother' and the federal enthusiasts are trying to catch her without being noticed in time. For a more charitable assessment of such games, see Carls and Naughton (2002).





The Monnet generation was devastated by the Great War. It held the emperors, monarchs, autocrats and diplomats (the sleepwalkers), and the states that they ruled, responsible. Their bungling, they believed, had smashed the long peace for insufficient cause; and we might see why they felt that way.³ They surveyed the wreckage of Eurasia's multinational imperial states. So, too, did Lenin and Rosa Luxembourg and an assortment of Balkan, Turkish and eastern European nationalists. All agreed that, given their gigantic inequalities, their autocratic rule and their unreformability, the breaking of these empires was deserved, and we too might understand why they thought so. All agreed (as Rousseau once wrote) that 'what can make authority legitimate?' is the axiomatic question in politics; and certainly we should entirely concur with that.⁴

However, they came to wildly different conclusions about what should come next: from democidal communist revolution via national cultural revival to Utopian cosmopolitanism.⁵ The USSR (deceased in 1991 after one human lifespan) was the product of the first reaction. Today's ailing EU is the product of the third. Across the century, all that specific diversity and fear boiled down in the brains of the founding fathers into a generalised critique of the nation state as pathological in principle, which it certainly is not. The success of the British nation state both in itself and as a global role model must not be tarred with the transcontinental failures of Austria-Hungary, Russia, the Balkan states, imperial and later Nazi Germany – or France.⁶

3 In light, most prominently and persuasively among the centenary books, of Clark (2012).

4 First quoted as his compass in Kissinger (1957: 3–4), in subsequent books and most recently repeated in Kissinger (2014).

5 'Democide' is death at the hands of one's own government. On the grim calculations of Professor Rudi Rummel (1994), it killed more people by human agency in the twentieth century than any other means.

6 The matter is discussed from many angles by the contributors to Möhring and Prins (2013). Essays from across the political spectrum, in particular by Michael Gove





‘With Europe but not of it ... linked but not compromised’

To play Grandmother’s Footsteps with such momentous matters is to play with fire. Just such tactics threatened breakdown of trust in the anti-Napoleonic league, observed the British Foreign Secretary – one of our greatest – in 1820:

In this Alliance [for which, today, read EU], as in all other human arrangements, nothing is more likely to impair, or even to destroy its real utility, than any attempt to push its duties and its obligations beyond the Sphere which its original conception and understood Principles will warrant ... it never was ... intended as an Union for the Government of the World, *or for the Superintendence of the Internal Affairs of other States* [emphasis added] ... It was never so explained to Parliament; if it had, most assuredly the sanction of Parliament would never have been given to it.⁷

In Castlereagh’s words, that is the nub of the British people’s complaint about the EU: having from the outset been led up the garden path about the federal purpose and one-way direction of the European project by ghost-haunted and eventually self-confessed federalist Edward Heath, and colleagues, who thereby poisoned the wells of trust in our politics.

Each further step of European integration has advanced on the same principle, unidirectionally and steadily removing power from the nations and banking it in Brussels under the lock of the

and Frank Field, by Michael Ignatieff and Daniel Hannan, and by Roger Scruton and Julian Lindley-French, explore and refute the accusation that the nation state in any form is ineradicably ‘pathological’. The case for the prosecution is best made by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s (FCO’s) licensed thinker at that time, Robert Cooper. Cooper’s view that it is in Britain’s interest to depart from its successful 400-year strategy for dealing with the Continent (Cooper 2003: 52–3; 138–51) is once more at the heart of the debate with which this chapter is concerned.

7 Viscount Castlereagh, Confidential State Paper, 5 May 1820, reproduced in Ward and Gooch (1923: 622–33).





acquis communautaire, and interpreting ‘subsidiarity’ to mean that Brussels decides what powers shall remain with the nations. This is the opposite of the usual meaning. The *passerelle* or ‘foot-bridge’ clause of the Maastricht Treaty increased the Council’s power to accelerate one-way transfers of power to Brussels. The meshing of this ratchet gearing (*engrenage*) is expressed in the goal of ‘ever-closer union’ and cannot be disengaged without exploding the Monnet project and mechanism. It applies to all areas. In foreign policy, it has been under vigorous acceleration since the creation of the EU foreign policy (CFSP) and External Action Service by the thinly disguised EU Constitution (now known as the Lisbon Treaty, signed in December 2007). The New Labour government objected to both the CFSP and EEAS during negotiations on the draft constitutional treaty, only to be brushed aside and then to capitulate (Open Europe 2007: 10–11).

In short, either the EU must change its very nature, or the British must leave The Project and revert to the script of Lord Castlereagh’s great Confidential State Paper of 5 May 1820, which served British foreign policy well for over a century. Winston Churchill memorably condensed its essential message in 1930, writing that, ‘we are with Europe but not of it. We are linked but not compromised’.⁸ In 1820, Castlereagh spelled out our objection in words that are exactly applicable to Britain today:

The fact is that we do not, and cannot feel alike upon all subjects. Our position, our institutions, the habits of thinking, and the prejudice of our people, render us essentially different. We cannot in all matters reason and feel alike; we should lose the confidence of our respective nations if we did, and the very affectation of such an impossibility would soon render the Alliance [for which now read the EU] an object of odium and distrust ... We must admit ourselves to be ... a Power that must take our

8 Cited in Leach (2004: 25). Churchill was commenting on the rebuffed Briand plan.





Principle of action, and our scale of acting, not merely from the Expediency of the Case, but from those Maxims which a System of Government strongly popular and national in its Character, has imposed upon us: We shall be found in our place when actual Danger menaces the System of Europe, but this Country cannot and will not act upon abstract and speculative Principles.⁹

Only Palmerstonian coalitions of the willing – that is to say, since nations do not have permanent friends but do have permanent interests, coalitions of sovereign nations that share material interests in a concrete issue – are worth having.¹⁰

The transforming consequences of the euro

Enthusiasts for The Project dislike and rarely discuss this history. If confronted with it (although the history is what it is), they like to denigrate it as conspiracy theory. Nowadays that is harder to do, because, during its short life, the rolling economic and social disaster of the hubristically named euro has lurched and barged its way to the centre of European affairs. Too hastily promoted by the French elite to counterbalance the crisis (for them) of German reunification, which meant that the sturdy German horse was threatening to unseat the skilful French rider (the phrase is General de Gaulle's), the single currency experiment culminated in the Greek crisis of July 2015.

In September 2015, at the time of writing, the July crisis is following Jean Monnet's prescription that 'people only accept

9 Historians have sometimes described Castlereagh as 'non-interventionist' in contrast to his successors; whereas this passage and Canning's own words confirm a continuity that expresses Britain's rooted geopolitical interests to this day. This historiographic point is further discussed by Castlereagh's most recent biographer in Bew (2011: 481–2).

10 There is nothing insular or introspective about resumption of our historical norm, as Andrew Roberts also stresses in his essay 'British engagement with the continent of Europe' (Abulafia 2015: 29–33).





change when they are faced with necessity and only recognise necessity when a crisis is upon them.’ The so-called Five Presidents’ Report of 22 June 2015 is plainly a massive attempt in the Monnet mode to use this euro crisis to push for greater fiscal and hence political integration.¹¹ So, it will probably produce a temporary ‘success’ for The Project by following the pattern of all previous EU crises: namely, on the German plan, a ruthless subordination of Greek sovereignty to the General Will, ignoring the result of the Greek referendum of 5 July and accepting the consequent fury and further declining public assent for The Project.¹² This looks like a pyrrhic victory. In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes lists ‘the insatiable appetite, or bulimia, of enlarging Dominion’ as one of the ‘diseases of a Commonwealth’. The EU is still only a regulatory machine and has patently not become a state of mind for Europeans (which is why, by the way, it is no more likely to exceed a human lifespan from foundation than did the USSR). The legal philosopher Philip Allott mordantly observes that ‘bulimia plus bureaucracy is a reliable recipe for the decline and fall of empires’.¹³

The July crisis of 2015 has gutted the currency experiment; and the debauching of Greek sovereignty by German paymasters, trying to treat a state like a busted factory, is indeed a dirty fall for the whole Project. It has had two further consequences. The humiliation of Syriza was clearly intended to be a deterrent,

11 Juncker (Commission), Tusk (Council), Dijsselbloem (Eurogroup), Draghi (ECB), Schulz (EuroParliament), European Commission (2015).

12 In the course of research for the LSE Mackinder Programme project on European integration following the 2005 French and Dutch referenda, an eminent Belgian interviewee happily confirmed Monnet’s view that federalists never waste a good crisis, and indeed welcome them, with the charming, informative (and, to any horseman, dangerously inaccurate) analogy that ‘you have to frighten a horse to get it to jump a big hedge’. Prins and Möhring (2008), preamble and *passim*. A frightened horse is an unreliable horse that will one day buck you off.

13 ‘Of those things that weaken, or tend to the Dissolution of a Commonwealth’, Hobbes (1651, 1985 edition: Chapter 29, 375); Allott (2002: 175; on the ‘unimagined community’ of the EU, 229–62).





but it may have produced the opposite effect, alienating The Project's natural supporters on the Left. In Britain, the new Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has hinted as much. Worse, the attempted criminalisation of the former Greek finance minister Varoufakis for having dared to draw up secret contingency plans for a return to the drachma has inflamed the confrontation (Evans-Pritchard 2015). The British electorate will not have failed to notice all this.

Allott (2002) presciently remarked that the crisis facing the EU is fundamentally one of social philosophy. Matters of personal and political culture have been the least common framing of the question of cost and benefit. Yet they are of the very essence when judging the national interest. In the British case, the Magna Carta concerns are pre-eminent: for the sovereignty of the monarch in Parliament, the distinctiveness of the Common Law, the rights of property, of *habeas corpus* and of a British citizen's freedom under the law, which was Britain's gift to the world.¹⁴

The flaw in Europeanism

Recent decades in continental Europe have witnessed a growing rebellion against a fake and forced European identity. This makes British people less eccentric among the peoples of Europe; but it is intensely threatening to the world-view and sense of entitlement of the EU elite, because it strikes at the heart of the foundation myth of Europeanism. It deepens the gulf between rulers and subjects, who now wish to be citizens and not

14 A story freshly and readably retold from beginning to end in Hannan (2013). The initial trigger to a vigorous re-examination of why and how British society diverged from that of the continent was Macfarlane (1978). Scruton (2000) elaborates clearly how the essential enduring features grow from these foundations to become the great oak tree that shelters the 'little platoons' of English society, which are the first principle of public affection leading to patriotism (Burke 1790, 1968 edition: 135). The shallower eighteenth-century overlay described by Colley (1992), and what is happening to it, must not be confused with these foundations.





just atoms in ‘civil society.’ Larry Siedentop famously applied Alexis de Tocqueville’s four tests of democratic legitimation formed from his observations of America, to Europe. Siedentop argued that Europe failed the tests essentially because there is no culture of consent or the ingredients to make one (which makes this a basic reason why Britain should maintain sea-room from the continental lee shore).¹⁵ Why this long-standing deficit in Europe?

We must look well before the double disasters of the European Civil War that seared the minds of Monnet and his friends in order to understand that. France has struggled to the present via fifteen further constitutions from its ‘stock-jobbing constitution’ of 1789 (‘...the display of inconsiderate and presumptuous because unresisted and irresistible authority’ in Burke’s contemporary description). Germany and Italy are established little more than a century, and state identities (let alone democracies) across southern and eastern Europe are more fragile and newer still. In such company, Britain is unusual as an old country, which once successfully ran the world’s largest empire and has three times saved Europe from itself since 1815.

However, there is a more fundamental cultural difference between Britain and all those large European countries created ‘from above’. Edmund Burke pointed towards it, observing that British liberties are asserted as an *entailed inheritance* from our forefathers, rather than grabbed as *abstract rights*. Robert Tombs mentions a valuable consequence arising, writing that ‘it is hard to think of any major improvement since Magna Carta brought about in England by violence’. Continental historical experience, utterly alien to Britain, has, in contrast and repeated ferment, brewed up ‘vanguard myths’ that morally justify despotic rule in the imposition of identities on people and that validate a

15 Siedentop (2000). De Tocqueville’s tests were: the habit of local self-government, a common language, an open political culture dominated by lawyers and some shared moral beliefs.





determinist view of history. It is this same concoction that set Burke's nostrils aquiver in 1790:

The worst of these politics of revolution is this; they temper and harden the breast ... so taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgot his nature.¹⁶

This type of Europeanism has no interest in a culture of consent nor any serious interest in who people are. Why? Because they are not necessary. A self-justified act of ruling from above simply imparts information and delivers instructions. It is not a new tendency. In 1714 (1970 edition: 77), Bernard Mandeville introduced his ever-topical explanation of human nature by observing that 'One of the greatest Reasons why so few People understand themselves, is, that most Writers are always teaching Men what they should be, and hardly ever trouble their heads with telling them who they really are'. It has been a feature of earlier 'European ideas', too, notably those of the 1930s; and, of course, belief in the false consciousness of the masses makes it the basic conceit of all Marxists, including today's resurgent pan-European hard Left.¹⁷ Sleight of hand is also a common feature, as Bismarck remarked in 1871: 'I have always found the word "Europe" on the lips of those who wanted something from other powers which they dared not demand in their own name', and as General de Gaulle affirmed in 1962: 'Europe is the way for France to become what she has ceased to be since Waterloo'.

16 Burke (1790, 1968 edition: 119; 127; 156); Tombs (2014: 886; 2015: 26). Human rights are not a valid expropriating trump card, even when so played. The dark side of human rights is seen when attempts to enforce claim rights as normative dishearten or prevent performance of services by obligation-bearers so that everyone is worse off. Dazzled admirers of abstract liberty rights do not see the dark side. The darkness is compounded by muddled allocation of obligations to rights by the Universal Declaration of 1948, which has infected EU derivatives; so it is rather important to understand today. Human rights need to be rescued from the human rights movement. See O'Neill (2005).

17 The 'European idea', Leach (2004: 92–6).





What the ghosts did

Ghosts haunt each side. Shocked by President Eisenhower's brutal undermining of Franco-British military success in the 1956 Suez operation, forcing ignominious withdrawal, the British ruling class lives in a generalised fear and presumption of decline from former power that still haunts Whitehall. Sir Anthony Nutting observed at the time that Suez was 'no end of a lesson'; and the lesson was that if the Americans could not be trusted, and with them that whole implicit confidence in the anglosphere as Britain's multiplier of influence, then it would be better to try to join the club of jaunty foreigners, next door. The Commonwealth was treated atrociously. It is one of the queen's greatest gifts to her people that her skilful, quiet and steadfast commitment over 40 years has preserved a possibility of renewal such that 'the UK could use [the Commonwealth] as a power multiplier, like the EU but without the assimilation costs'. Given how Commonwealth economies are thriving in contrast to the troubled or waning economies of the euro zone, Business for Britain and Tim Hewish argue that therefore Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth requires a major rethink and mutually beneficial amplification and realignment.¹⁸

The Continental ghost already examined is fear of recurrent war. It has dangerously perverse effects. It skews history by suggesting that it was The Project that has somehow prevented European war since 1945, whereas this was more plausibly the work of the Marshall Plan followed by the American-led NATO alliance. Furthermore, it blinds believers to the dangers of ramming 'vanguard' Europeanism, which, as in the Greek July crisis, shreds fragile democracies and summons dark shadows of both Left and Right extremism, as Donald Tusk, President of the Council, correctly identifies: 'It is always the same game before the biggest

¹⁸ Elliott and Moynihan (2015: 271) and Hewish (2014) *passim*, but especially pp. 50–73. Hewish handily enumerates the ties that bind the English-speaking peoples.





tragedies in our European history' (Evans-Pritchard 2015). The Project was supposed to banish them forever. Therefore, to answer our exam question productively, we must go beyond the ghosts. We cannot do this unless we understand who they were, what they did to get us where we now are, and how, if they are denied or ignored, they can control us still.

David Cameron was correct to observe in his Bloomberg speech in January 2013 that 'there is not, in my view, a single European demos'. In fact, Jean Monnet's expectation that generation by generation a new European identity would, like dye into wool, seep into people through force of historical inevitability has been inverted. An admittedly crude measure comes from Spinelli's European Parliament. Its elections document how, across the continent, the people have been drifting away for years. Participation levels only rose for the first time since its inception at the last election, which returned more eurosceptic Members of European Parliament than ever before.

To the July crisis: the hollowing out of European politics

Determinist Europeanism, the Monnet Method and fear of their ghosts mean that the European political elite neither values nor respects (nor fears) the concerns of the electorates. A decade ago, rulers and the ruled took different pathways that have collided in the July 2015 Greek crisis.¹⁹ Divergence began in 2005 with the French and Dutch referenda rejections of Giscard d'Estaing's self-amending European Constitution, which was the next planned milestone on the road to open federal union.²⁰ In the Dutch case, rejection

19 The origins and now realised potentialities of the euro were discussed at that time in Prins (2005) and placed in context by Leach (2004: 70–5).

20 The definitive insider account of how Giscard and his aide Sir John (now Lord) Kerr (formerly Permanent Secretary of the FCO) wrote this extraordinary document and attempted to foist it first on the Praesidium and then on electors is by Stuart (2003).





was by two-thirds of two-thirds of one of the most mature democracies on the continent, and the only well-functioning one to have signed the Treaty of Rome.²¹ Yet, recklessly, the verdicts were evaded by repackaging the constitution as the Lisbon Treaty.²² Then came the third 'no' – the Irish referendum of 12 June 2008 on the Lisbon Treaty. The Irish gave the 'wrong' answer, so they were obliged to correct their mistaken verdict in another referendum, as also happened to the Danes. These results already suggested that two internally consistent but mutually irreconcilable visions of Europe were in collision.²³

More recently, and in quick succession, opinion polls and political classes did not see three momentous results coming: the Scottish majority to remain in the UK in the 2014 referendum; the British General Election result of May 2015, which returned a majority Conservative government; and the 60 per cent Greek 'no' on 5 July 2015, which was instantly ignored. In these three cases, it is possible that electors simply lied about their intentions to the pollsters, which, if so, further etches the widening gulf between rulers and the ruled, and begs the question why.

The recent emergence of anti-austerity parties backed by younger, well-educated voters in Greece or Spain (Syriza and Podemos) may be especially evident in the southern European countries that are most grievously victims of the social mayhem

21 The Dutch association of inherent political freedom with skill in reclaiming land from water goes back to the thirteenth century (Pye 2014:172).

22 The definitive documentation of this deliberate deceit is Open Europe (2007). Of salutary shock are Annex 1, which lists areas where the national veto was lost, and Annex 3, which provides a concordance matching the Constitution with the Treaty clause by clause.

23 As a contribution to the same debate that this volume also seeks to enter, and inspired by the example of The Federalist Papers of 1787 written by 'Publius' (James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay) in order, as 'Publius' did in the American case, to force clarity and thereby assist informed discussion, Ms Möhring and I have placed the two contending views systematically in the mouths of two imaginary friends, 'Publia' and 'Lydia', using quotations from an extensive series of interviews that she conducted across the continent (Prins and Möhring 2008).





created by the euro; but it is in fact an aspect of a general hollowing of European politics that has been most fully documented by Peter Mair (2013).

Mair's data document a trend across all European democracies since 1990 for voters to cease to vote, or if they do vote to be increasingly likely to switch preferences from one election to the next. This, he argues, is because of growing public recognition of depoliticised, technocratic forms of decision-making. The response has been a politics of protest (fertile and familiar ground for the hard Left) via judicial or quasi-judicial methods; by media, especially modern social media campaigns; or in the streets, rather than by appeal at the redundant ballot box. Insofar as voting is popular, referenda are favoured, short-circuiting the untrusted political class.

Mair concludes that the modern state is viewed increasingly as regulatory and decreasingly as participatory. His fascinating finding that across all European democracies established political party membership has declined, on average, by 50 per cent, with a range from -66 to -27, since 1980, supports this (Mair 2013: Table 4). But what matters for present purposes is that Mair emphasises the role played by the character of the EU in the hollowing out of European democracy, which has caused it to construct '...a protected sphere in which policymaking can evade the constraints imposed by representative government' (ibid.: 99). He too believes that this has aggravated the general trend, because the EU elite's contempt for the electorate is reciprocated.

Therefore, it is not surprising to see a two-pronged countervailing response. On the one hand, there is the current, rapid growth of 'anti-party' politics in most EU countries, especially core countries; on the other is the growth of fierce, romantic nationalist parties in Scotland, Catalonia, Northern Italy and elsewhere. The unpredicted enthusiasm for Jeremy Corbyn in the British Labour Party after its crushing defeat in May 2015 shows that starry-eyed young British voters, like young Greeks or





Spaniards, are not yet deterred by the trampling of Syriza. It may also show that the potential for a revival of anarcho-syndicalist street politics in Europe is greater than democrats credit.

On this evidence, it would be wise for the political and academic elites to acknowledge that deeply embedded and deeply felt but usually inchoate issues of personal and national culture are likely to be decisive in the forthcoming British referendum. That is why this chapter has attended mainly to them.

Gulliver and the balance of competences

It is notable that in the preferred metric of federalists, British self-interest increasingly favours resumption of sovereign independence in global markets. That is not simply because in quality, in match to British strengths or in size relative to growing markets the troubled EU market diminishes while the Commonwealth, the anglosphere and emerging markets increase, but because of the many regulatory cords with which the EU ties the British Gulliver down. Because of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) and the unidirectional *engrenage* of the *acquis communautaire*, they make a negotiated release on terms acceptable to the British electorate most unlikely.

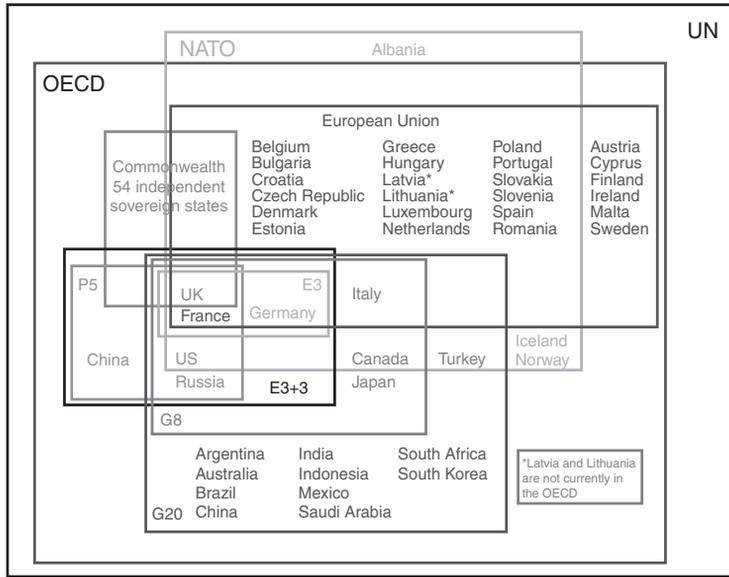
Therefore, turning to the practical mechanics of exerting worldwide diplomatic and especially 'soft power' influence, we may see that, for the same 'Gulliver' reasons, the balance of cost and benefit also tilts sharply against British participation in this part of a project of union, should we remain under the ever-expanding powers of the EU External Action Service, particularly if (when?) planned extensions of QMV occur.

In July 2013, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office published a report on the 'Balance of competences' between Britain and the EU. A Venn diagram (Figure 1) reminds us of the range of special British advantages compared with any other EU member, showing our many institutional memberships, especially the





Figure 1 UK membership of international bodies



Commonwealth. Alone in Europe, Britain holds a royal flush (HM Government (2013: Paragraph 1.4, Figure 1)).

The report is revealingly conflicted. The FCO authors gamely make as good a fist as they can of the standard Whitehall case. In a different context than the EU, it sounds reasonable: that, by being inside, we can shape and lead, that we gain ‘increased impact from acting in concert with 27 other countries’ and that outside we would be diminished. However, the evidence does not support this.

The record of Baroness Ashton, Mr Brown’s appointee as first High Representative, and the evidence within their report of dismal EU performance as a foreign policy actor, overwhelmingly run against this. Yet momentum increases. They admit frankly that the weight of money, posts and driving ambition to expand





the influence of the EEAS cannot but crowd out the underfunded and shrinking FCO. Much more deadly to the case for staying inside is the FCO's own assessment of how the ratchet works. It deserves full quotation:

when EU law gives the institutions power to act internally in order to attain EU objectives, the EU *implicitly* also has the power to enter into international obligations 'necessary' for the attainment of that objective, *even when there is no express provision allowing it to do so* [emphases added]. In construing 'necessary' in the case law, the [ECJ] only asks whether the external action in question pursues an objective of the Treaties, rather than whether external action is indispensable to the attainment of that objective. (HM Government 2013: 21)

The most thorough independent analysis of the 'Balance of competences' report has been published by Business for Britain in *Change or Go*, to which the reader is referred. It also quotes the passage above in arguing that 'representation creep' is insidious and quotes the FCO authors in further support: 'The EU has over many years sought, in one way or another, to increase its role and present itself as a "single voice" ... put simply, the UK sees a risk that representation comes to equate to competence.'²⁴ And Whitehall actually knows our strengths.

The authors of *Change or Go* realised that, under pressure from a different crisis, and one year after 'Balance of competences', Whitehall made a much more generous assessment of British power and potential. Therefore, they cite the analysis produced when it seemed that the Union was about to be lost. The Scotland analysis noted how little Britain requires the duplicating services of the EEAS 'to win new business, attract inward investment and

²⁴ Chapter 8, 'Foreign Policy,' in Elliott and Moynihan (2015). 'Representation creep' is discussed on pp. 278–9.





champion the reputation of the UK economy'. It enumerated the influence multipliers located in our network of Embassies and High Commissions and rightly presented Britain as a 'soft power superpower' (HM Government 2014: 41–49; Elliott and Moynihan 2015: 269–70).

Change or Go also highlights two other powerful but second-order technical reasons why Britain's national interest to engage its European neighbours effectively in alliance is blocked by our subordination to the Lisbon Treaty. The first is that, as a function of being crowded out in the international institutions, the EU constitutes 'a direct and growing threat to British influence' so that 'in these terms, the EU is not a force multiplier for British diplomacy but an inhibitor.' Like a mosquito, it also carries a hidden further risk. The more that the EEAS enters the career stream for high-flying British diplomats on secondment, the more personnel 'go native' and the fewer are left for national duties (Elliott and Moynihan 2015: 256; 280; 286).

The second is the danger to a vital national interest entangled in the EU's current attempt to switch from energy policies designed to support 'climate action' to policies designed to protect the more traditional and comprehensible goal of energy security. Energy is an 'EU competence', and, as *Change or Go* writes correctly, 'energy security is one of the weakest links in EU joint action'. The story is complex, intriguing and little known. It is told elsewhere in full, but, in brief, the arrival of the Juncker Commission led to some brutal internal power-politics in Brussels (ibid.: 273).²⁵

While preserving an appearance of continuity of commitment, during 2014–15 'climate action' rapidly dropped in importance as the resurgence of Putin's Russia in the context of the endless euro zone crisis prompted a strong initiative to proof the EU

25 The full story of the EU's ongoing attempt to switch from a 'climate action' to an energy security priority is given in Prins (2015).





gas supply system against Russian energy blackmail (which, of course, is what Helmut Schmidt's policy of pipeline entanglement with Russia was supposed to prevent). As with fisheries, Britain could find itself under pressure to provide access to national strategic reserves, as well as at a competitive disadvantage from its obedient gold-plated application of environmental energy measures that other less law-abiding countries ignore in this volatile context. It is all made more tense by the progressive poisoning of the German economy by very high electricity costs and loss of national reserve capacity resulting from the *energiewende* policy to prioritise high cost, subsidy-dependent and non-dispatchable generators.²⁶ Mr Obama has not helped. His windy rhetoric on 'climate action' via Executive Powers will in any event be snarled up in the courts and Congress. US shale gas has already materially reduced US carbon intensity, although Mr Obama's plan, if effected, will hobble it and, with it, current US economic vitality.

Successful negotiation requires informed statesmanship

These technical arguments from diplomacy for withdrawal from the power of the Lisbon Treaty are weighty in their own terms; but together they are more than the sum of the parts, as *Change or Go* crisply summarised:

The problem is circular from a UK perspective for as long as it remains joined to the CFSP. The European diplomatic cadre is a hindrance if it remains ineffective and dangerous if it becomes competent. Withdrawal from the CFSP removes both threats. (Elliott and Moynihan 2015: 265)

²⁶ Why the *energiewende* poisons the German economy is explained from first principles in Constable (2014).





Added to the deeper reasons analysed in this chapter, the removal of Britain from the spider's web of the *acquis communautaire* is the prerequisite for the reconstruction of mature and healthy relations with our neighbours and renovation of alliances of interests. It traps axiomatic issues of national identity, interests and security with peculiar tenacity. If this change cannot be achieved by negotiation and revision of the EU Treaties – and there is no historical evidence whatsoever to believe that an adequate renegotiation can be achieved, but rather the evidence of the July 2015 Greek crisis that is before our eyes – then in the forthcoming referendum the course of action for an electorate that speaks for Britain is quite clear.

Our worldwide interests steadily outweigh our continental ones. In pursuing both, our subordination to the instruments of the Lisbon Treaty does more harm than good. As Prime Minister Salisbury would remind us, only when we are no longer under their power can we work safely with our European allies once more. The wheels have finally come off the latest Project for European integration; so it is primarily important for the sake of our national interest to be liberated from that power. But it is also important for our friends. Once more, we may need to be found in our place to help when actual danger once more menaces the System of Europe as the EU, which is reaching the natural lifespan of any political apparatus without a 'demos', now does.

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