

In Europe, Britain Needs to Remain

Dr Burhan M. Al-Chalabi – FRSA,
Fellow of Royal Society of Arts and
Publisher of The London Magazine



The Centre for Issue & Crisis Management

118A Kensington Church St,
London W8 4BH, UK
T. +44 (0)207 221 3536
F. +44 (0)207 221 7243

johnd@issue-crisis.com
www.issue-crisis.com

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On the 23rd of June 2016, the British public are being asked, in the forthcoming referendum, 'To stay or to leave Europe?'. This is the wrong question, as membership of the EU reinforces a perceived disadvantage to Britain by the European sceptics. The right question should have been, 'Does Europe need Britain?'. This question embraces the economic and security advantages to all European countries in the single market union.

To date, no valid economic case, supported by facts and figures, has been made by European sceptics to justify exiting from Europe. Current British exports to the EU are worth £187billion per year. Therefore, some 3 million jobs are dependent on the EU. This export could rise to £277billion by 2030. European markets for transport, energy and digital services combined with global trade deals, could add £58billion a year. An increase of 2.8% to GDP. This increase in the GDP could deliver 300,000 additional jobs by 2020, rising to 790,000 by 2030**.

The current security of employment and the potential for job growth cannot be replaced overnight with trade deals with other nations. There is no political or economic justification for it. Also, neither Britain nor Europe has a coherent economic plan B for the partial or total break-up of the European Union.

The case to leave Europe promoted by the European sceptics has, so far, been entirely based on nostalgia. These emotions are completely irrelevant. Sovereignty is being wrongfully exploited to undermine British and EU interest and national security.

Britain today faces different challenges to those faced during the first and second world wars. Terrorism, the radicalization of young people turning to Al-Qaeda and religious extremist groups such as ISIS, are the pressing 21st Century challenges. Also, the influx of refugees from North Africa and the Middle East. These challenges can only be successfully confronted collectively with Britain as an integral part of Europe.

In this context, there is a strong case to coin the phrase "Britain's Special Relationship with Europe". This does not have to be at the expense of Britain's so-called special relationship with the US. Particularly as the rise of these threats have been caused by the consequences of American policy of military intervention and regime change in Iraq, Libya and currently in Syria. The US has been publically extremely supportive of Britain remaining as part of Europe. The US see no imminent threats to its relationship with Britain as a member of the EU, and it continues to participate in NATO.

The conflicts of the 20th Century led Britain to cultivate a special relationship with the US -- a relationship centred on shared histories and values as well as

common ancestral and religious roots. One that after two world wars has become the cornerstone of British foreign policy. But this relationship is fundamentally flawed, and it does not really serve Britain's interests as it once did. Britain continues to lose political credibility from being known in the councils of the world as Washington's Poodle. Therefore, if Britain reaffirms its European credentials, it would gain from a little more independence of mind and a greater readiness to "play its politics" as part of Europe.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Britain's only visible foreign policy has been to support US foreign policy. In the Middle East, in particular, the US continue to practice hostile foreign policy of destabilization of the region through intervention and regime change in pursuit of its objectives to create New Order, as part of the project for the New American Century.

As well as being detrimental to Arab interest and national security, US foreign policy has left the Middle East weak, divided sectarian and in danger of losing its Arabic identity. It has also created a neo-con political platform to relentlessly demonize Islam and associate the faith with terrorism. In all of this, Britain has been a complicit and unquestioning partner.

Whilst Britain might benefit from privileged access to US intelligence and to US weapons - it is a privilege that has certainly cost Britain much in terms of independence in foreign and defense policy.

Many suspect it has meant that Britain has failed to pursue its own interests effectively because of its allegiance to the US. In adhering to US policies around the globe Britain has forsaken old friends and old relationships. Therefore, at some stage Britain needs to assess the cost of maintaining such a relationship. There must be a threshold beyond which Britain cannot continue to sacrifice its national interest in pursuit of this special relationship. The choice becomes harder when an alternative option of being European will offer the same political and economic attractions.

This status quo is borne out in the Middle East where Britain has, in its uncritical deference to the US, sacrificed British trading, commercial and diplomatic benefits with countries like Libya, Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Afghanistan. Britain is not at war with these countries; and none have any quarrel with Britain. Yet Britain's support of US foreign policies still adds a veneer of prestige to American intervention. Thus, it is not unrealistic to assume that at some time American interests may become incompatible with those of the British.

In today's global political environment, the only sound case to protect Britain's interest and national security, is that Europe needs Britain as much as Britain needs Europe. At a time when Europe is facing mammoth political and economic

difficulties, the idea of one of the most successful economies leaving Europe will politically be judged as dishonourable as well as being economically disastrous for all concerned.

Liberated from its moral commitment to blindly supporting US foreign policy, Britain in Europe will have the opportunity to promote a common policy of political stability and trade. A policy based on the exchange of Energy-For-Technology for the mutual benefit of Europe as well as its rear neighbours Middle Eastern countries.

Europe was once united under the Roman Empire. It was very successful, with Northern Africa being part of the Empire, all be it ruled by non-democratic leadership. Perhaps this idea may, once again, serve Europe well in the future so that the Arabs and Europeans will cherish in peace and harmony.

The undoubted political and economic advantages of Britain remaining in Europe also ensures that Messianic, crusader fantasists will never again be able to wreak death and destruction on innocent people in the name of the British people.

**Source: Centre for Economic and Business Study titled 'The Impact of the UK Being in the Single Market', October 2015

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