

How should the UK change its foreign policy once out of the EU?

Once we are out of the EU the UK regains its vote and voice in world bodies. The UK is ready to take a global perspective and will be able to pursue our national interests and our global values more successfully once we no longer have to broker an agreed line with 27 other EU states.

Some fear the UK will be isolated or is in some way too small to survive in the turbulent waters of world diplomacy once independent. This is an absurd notion. The UK will proceed with shifting coalitions of interests issue by issue, based on long term alliances and community of interests with various friendly countries. The US/Canada/New Zealand/UK/Australia Intelligence group will remain important to our intelligence and security. NATO will continue to be our central defence alliance. In the WTO we will emerge as one of the leaders of the free trade group pushing for fewer barriers and lower tariffs worldwide. We can form our own view on environmental issues and form alliances as needed. There will be times when we do wish to make a common front with France and Germany as we do today.

One of the dangers of being in the EU is the way the UK is drawn into rows and conflicts in Eastern Europe where EU intervention may not be helpful and where UK interests may diverge from apparent EU interests. The UK increasingly has split loyalties with the divergence in approach to the Middle East and elsewhere between the USA and the EU. Where these two fall out the UK needs to be able to make its own judgement about which side to belong to, or to offer a third way which could reconstruct a wider alliance between the democracies on the two sides of the Atlantic. The EU has not been helpful to the UK over Gibraltar, and has also been negative over aspects of the Channel islands independence.

The pull of the world is towards the east with the rise of China and India. The UK will need to look increasingly to Asia for growth in trade. Japan is keen to encourage stronger links with the UK, two island nations that value their independence, both offshore from large power blocs. The USA is increasingly pulled towards China as it seeks to manage a complex relationship with an emerging super power. The UK needs its independence and flexibility to handle its own interests as this development advances. The UK is rightly seen as a crucial financial marketplace and services innovator. China wishes to develop more joint working in these areas, where EU regulation and approaches might impede progress.