

How should the UK develop a European foreign policy?

The UK will need clear and well defined relationships with the EU and with Russia. All the time there are some powers for independent action, especially militarily, amongst the EU states, we will also need good links to Paris, Rome, Berlin and Madrid as well as to Brussels.

The aim of the relationship with the EU will be one of friendly collaboration. If we leave with a deal we will be continuing free trade with them as well as many close workings over Intelligence, defence, policing, trading standards and the like. If we leave without a deal and the EU decides to impose some barriers on our access to the EU markets, then the UK will have to retaliate with tariffs against their food, cars and other items attracting tariffs under WTO rules. This might then lead to a change of heart by the EU, who may wish to enter talks about how to remove those barriers again. The UK should be willing to do this, though there is no need for the UK to be desperate to do it or to give ground to secure such a change.

More difficult is our approach to Russia. I have no more time for Russia's military adventures in eastern Europe than the western governments or NATO. I do, however, think there is a chance that Russia could be a better world citizen if the west collaborated more and resorted to sanctions and condemnations less. The west should of course keep up its guard and be aware lest Russia does resort to aggressive and illegal actions, but should not go looking for trouble. The West through the EU and NATO intervened in Ukraine in ways which provokes a mixture of anxiety and aggression in Russia, fearing for the security of its warm water naval base. Whilst this did not justify the illegal annexation of Crimea, the west did not facilitate a peaceful solution to this problem by allowing a referendum, for example, to let the people decide where they wished to belong as the UK has recently done in Scotland.

The UK has intervened too much in past centuries in continental politics and wars. Whilst the West did have to engage to bring Hitler down, it is more difficult to see what national interest the UK pursued in the First World War. The main aim of our foreign policy should be to keep out of continental rows and conflicts. The UK has sold the pass on the old idea that we need to stop a single power dominating the continent. It is now Foreign Office policy to encourage and allow the consolidation of power on the continent under the EU. In that case we need to be global in reach, have partners around the world, and keep out of the EU's more contentious issues.

Inequality of power versus inequality of income

The left's analysis that says inequality is the key to understanding Brexit, Trump and much else needs to make a distinction between inequalities of power and inequalities of income. Many populist voters in the USA and Europe have cast their votes against concentrations of unaccountable or dogmatic political power in the elites that control their societies. That is different from an attack on those who have made lots of money from being good at sport, entertainment or business. Senior executives of large companies owned by other people are often seen in the same category as government politicians and officials, whereas entrepreneurs offering new goods and services are seen differently and usually more favourably.

In the USA the Trump voters rebelled against the political correctness of the Democrat regime, and condemned the big money politics and large salary government they are paying for through their taxes. In The Euro area voters rebel against the austerity politics of much of the zone, as it struggles to meet Germany's demands for lower wages and little borrowing to stay in a currency with competitive Germany. On both sides of the Atlantic populist voters are often critics of the prevailing climate change theory, disliking the way it results in dear energy and ever more regulations affecting how they live their lives. Populist voters also resent the way their thoughts and language are controlled, with many topics now subject to a politically correct mantra not shared in their hearts by these voters.

Brexit was a vote to take back control, with many people fed up with the laws, controls and spending plans of a Brussels government we cannot influence as we wish or throw out of office for failure. Brussels has still not apologised for the Exchange Rate Mechanism crash it caused which hit many families and businesses in the UK.

I welcome laws against racial and religious hate speech, as I do think stopping unpleasant words can create a better climate, making violent acts less likely. In other ways I am on the side of those who think these governing elites have too much power and use it in ways which damages people's freedoms and incomes unnecessarily. High taxes are not usually the poor person's ally, as they hit them as well as the rich. Some regulations designed to improve conditions for all succeed in blocking more jobs and enterprise. Allowing too many migrants in to a country to get jobs can make it more difficult for people already settled there, and does add to the resentments of those on low pay or no pay.

One of the things the elite finds most difficult to understand about the Trump phenomenon is how he can make more and more outrageous statements as the elite see it but not suffer with his core voters. That is to miss the main point. Mr Trump is seen by many of his voters as someone outside the governing elite trying to get it to respond and think more like the people he represents. When he makes a statement no normal politician would make because

it is offensive to us or because we see it is not politically correct so carries political risk, many in his base cheer him on for breaking the conventions. They realise tweets do not in themselves achieve anything, but they also expect Mr Trump to try to find ways of cutting taxes, removing barriers to enterprise, to police the borders better and do all the things that constitute Trumponomics. "Making America great again" was about boosting the growth rate, having more jobs at home, raising living standards.

What we don't yet know is whether Trump supporters will be tolerant if he carries on speaking out without winning more of the battles he needs to win to grow the economy. In Greece where Syriza was elected to bust Euro austerity policies they failed but retained considerable support for trying. Mr Trump will probably do better than them, as he goes about deal making for a more prosperous USA. Carrying a major tax reduction for all later this year will be an important moment for this Presidency. If he does the UK will need to make sure it remains competitive on tax.

[Visit to TIM Befriending service in Burghfield](#)

I visited the Tim fourth anniversary celebration today in Burghfield. Since its foundation it has recruited many volunteers to provide friendship, help and support to those in the community who need it. It now covers Mortimer, Wokefield, Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet as well as Burghfield where it started.

I congratulated Bev French and her team, thanked the volunteers and wished them well in helping more people in the community. I had attended one of their early meetings and was pleased to see the expansion and progress of the group.

Anyone wishing to volunteer or needing help can contact them on 07778 911183 or email bev@togetherinmission.org.uk. It is part of registered charity no 1135307.

[Understanding the Trump phenomenon](#)

Listening to the "liberal left" trying to explain the Trump phenomenon is a frustrating experience. Of course I agree with them that all elected politicians should condemn any efforts to whip up racial hatred. What

interests me is they say that the big Trump vote was only possible because of the large inequalities they see today. These must be inequalities thrown up by the last eight years of Democrat rule, as there was no Trump insurgence eight years ago. Presumably they would argue that today's inequalities build on inequalities in earlier decades which were not large enough or obvious enough to produce a Trump. They see the Trump phenomenon as a protest vote against these inequalities.

There is a germ of truth in what they are saying. Many people who were fed up with low wages or no wages voted for Mr Trump. They did not however vote for him to protest against inequality. They voted for him to cut their taxes and fire up America's economy so they can get a bit richer. They voted for him in the full knowledge that he is a very rich man, was going to be surrounded by many other rich men, and favoured cutting the taxes the rich pay as well as the taxes lower paid people pay. They were not jealous of Mr Trump's riches. They want some of them to rub off on them.

The germ of truth comes in these voters attitudes towards Mrs Clinton. There were two types of privilege and wealth on offer in the two contrasting Presidential candidates. Mr Trump offered the version of entrepreneurial riches, acquired by himself or some would say with help from his father's business acumen. This is completely acceptable to most Trump voters. They do not mind if an entrepreneur makes large sums and pays himself fabulous money. Nor do they balk at soccer or baseball stars, singers or actors earning great money either. They willingly pay for their services, and have the choice not to.

The type of privilege they object to is privilege that comes through political office and big budget politics. The lurid rhetoric of Trump supporters, often going beyond the tough language of the campaign proper, concentrated on "the swamp" of Washington, seeing it as a source of corruption. Mrs Clinton herself faced endless disobliging chants and allegations, as she was the perfect representative of those with families that draw big salaries from the state and live in a world of big budgets from party financing. Voters thought big politics had let them down, was syphoning off too much of their money through taxes they had to pay, and was rewarding for those in it, not for those it should seek to serve.

Trump voters worried about easy migration because they think wages have been depressed too much. They worried about trade systems which allow so many foreign imports, because they want to help make those things at home. They worried about just how much they have to pay to Washington in taxes when they need to spend more on their own needs. They will not mind if Mr Trump allows rich people to become richer, as long as they become richer too.

Well done to Wokingham A level students

Wokingham Borough schools report a 99.1% pass rate this year at A level, above the national average. Well done to all involved. I hope it means many of you can go on the courses and futures you have planned.

I also congratulate all in West Berkshire that have done well in the exams.