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ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF BRITISH SOLITUDE: MAGICAL THINKING ABOUT BREXIT AND SECURITY

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SUMMARY

- Tomorrow's world will be tougher for Britain, as US hegemony ebbs, rival global power centres re-emerge, and international institutions stall. Leaving the EU would hurt Britain's ability to face these challenges, making it less secure and reducing its influence on global affairs.
- Britain gains key security benefits from EU membership. It is one of the top three countries shaping EU foreign policy, including sanctions – a key policy tool for the twenty-first century.
- Britain gains added clout from being part of the EU, making it a more attractive ally to others. All its major partners want it to remain, from China to the US and the Commonwealth. Crucially, a Brexit would weaken NATO, as highlighted by five ex-chiefs of the organisation.
- EU police cooperation has made Britain safer, allowing it to track down fraudsters, traffickers and sex criminals abroad. Intelligence sharing via Europe's databases is vital for countering terrorism.
- On migration, Britain has the best of both worlds, pushing its border controls to Calais and making big withdrawals from common EU funds, while escaping the costs of relocating refugees.

Britain is facing a decision about the role it will play in the twenty-first century – a choice between two radically different futures.

On the one hand, the Brexiteers promise that, outside the European Union, Britain's borders will be closed, but that it will forge a series of individual relationships to become a global trading power, its sovereignty uncompromised. They claim that the countries they admire the most – such as Australia, Dubai, and Singapore – have managed to carve out a global role without being hung up on trying to shape the world. They crave a “new Elizabethan age” where Britain retains a global outlook but refuses to be drawn into crises on Europe's periphery.

But to those who want to remain in the EU, the “Little Britain” credo that “small is beautiful” is a betrayal of Britain's historic role and a needless restriction of the influence that has been won back so painfully after the retreat from empire. They argue that the best way for Britain to preserve its sovereignty is to make common cause with other Europeans, uniting the world's biggest market and their political, diplomatic and military resources in a common voice. They argue that this is the best way – maybe the only way – to gain access to new markets and to play a part in shaping the rules of engagement in a multi-polar world.

This dossier examines these claims, and lays out the case for how Britain can be stronger, safer, and have greater influence in shaping the twenty-first century world. It is based on analysis by ECFR's 60-plus regional experts; a distillation of five years' worth of data from ECFR's Foreign Policy Scorecard; and interviews and discussions with experts from the realms of diplomacy, intelligence, defence, and policing.

A stronger Britain

Will Britain have more power in or out of the EU? To answer this question, this paper assesses the three dimensions of power – diplomatic, military, and economic.

It is especially important for Britain to be strong today. The world is becoming far more complex as United States hegemony declines and geopolitical competition returns in force. In the decades that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, geopolitics mostly played out on the small scale, within the context of a broad US hegemony. But now, whatever the outcome of the upcoming presidential election, the days of the US acting as global police officer are clearly over. Rivalries between global power centres are re-emerging, and new powers and restive populations are rising in every region of the world.

Brexiters have argued that leaving the EU will allow Britain to escape from the slow-paced world of Brussels decision-making and defend its bilateral interests more effectively. Of course, they are right that we would still be the world's fifth largest military spender and economic power, with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and NATO membership, and many bilateral defence and intelligence-sharing treaties. But they fail to point to any foreign policy areas where Britain has actually been held back by EU membership.

Diplomacy

In a world run by continent-sized powers and regions that are integrating, the EU has served as a force multiplier for Britain, allowing it to wield an influence out of proportion to its size (it makes up only 1 percent of the global population). For example, it was Britain's EU membership that gave it a seat at the negotiating table with Iran, and a voice in the Syria peace talks.

ECFR's annual Foreign Policy Scorecard – produced by a team of researchers each year since 2011 – assesses the role of each member state in influencing EU foreign policy. It has consistently found that the UK has an outsized influence, ranking as one of the top three member states. The UK has a record of shaping foreign policy decisions with key implications for security. For example, in 2015 the UK led Europe in areas including sanctions on Russia, and the humanitarian response to the refugee crisis in countries of origin. In 2014 it led on areas such as engagement in Libya's conflict, the political and military response to Islamic State (ISIS), and developing a European position on the crisis in Bosnia. In 2013, it led on areas such as supporting the Serbia-Kosovo negotiations; pushing for a coherent EU strategy on Iran, and tackling instability in Somalia.

Military

A favourite Brexiteer trope is that the EU is irrelevant when it comes to defence: all that matters is membership of NATO. Again, this betrays a failure to understand how far the world has changed from even a decade ago.

This is not because the EU's common military efforts are impressive; they are not. Nor is it to deny that NATO remains the cornerstone of the UK's security. But nowadays NATO is increasingly dependent upon European efforts, often through the EU – both to combat threats which are no longer strictly military in nature, and to prove to an increasingly sceptical US that Europeans are worth defending.

The need for EU efforts to complement those of NATO will be a big theme of the upcoming NATO summit in July. As NATO's secretary-general has said, hard power is an incomplete answer to the threats posed by Russia, which is pursuing its campaign against the West as much through political subversion, disinformation and other forms of “hybrid warfare” as through conventional force – let alone Islamic extremism. In the words of one official, NATO has realised that “We only own part of the tool-box”.¹ The current secretary-general's views are backed by each of his five most recent predecessors.²

The US understands this well. A Norwegian minister recently complained to the present authors that, “whenever a US delegation comes to Brussels, they spend all their time talking to the EU and maybe stop by NATO on the way to the airport”. This is unsurprising: in today's world, economic means such as financial sanctions have taken the place of military tools. While the latter is in NATO's hands, the former squarely lies with the EU. Barack Obama, no particular fan of the EU in his early days as president, came to understand this as the EU “stepped up” in the crises over Ukraine and Iranian nuclear capacity. Hence his unprecedented intervention in the UK's Brexit debate: he knows that important a strong Britain in a strong EU is to a strong West.

Britons would do well to pay attention – especially given the signs of growing resentment in the US at European free-riding on defence. A Donald Trump presidency may seem inconceivable; but he is now the presumptive Republican candidate – and has called into question the value of NATO. To assert, with Brexiteers, that NATO is all you need, when the incumbent president is urging that it is not, and one of his two potential successors is questioning its utility, is to exist in a state of dangerous denial.

The British military has long been sceptical about the EU's military usefulness. Yet a dozen senior military figures have signed an open letter arguing that the UK is safer in the Un-

¹ “Buddy Cops”, the *Economist*, 7 May 2016, available at <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21698248-new-threats-are-forcing-nato-and-eu-work-together-buddy-cops>.

² Peter Dominiczak, “EU referendum: Nato chiefs warn Brexit will 'give succour to the West's enemies'”, the *Telegraph*, 9 May 2016, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/09/eu-referendum-nato-chiefs-warn-brexiteer-will-give-succour-to-the-w/>.

ion than out.³ They state that “Europe today is facing a series of grave security challenges, from instability in the Middle East and the rise of Daesh, to resurgent Russian nationalism and aggression. Britain will have to confront these challenges whether it is inside or outside the EU. But within the EU, we are stronger.”

Economic

Although fighting rages from Damascus to Donbas, the most important modern battlefields are economic rather than military⁴ – sanctions rather than military strikes, competing trade regimes rather than military alliances, currency wars rather than the occupation of territory, and the manipulation of resource prices rather than arms races. We are witnessing what Edward Luttwak called the rise of geo-economics: international competition defined by the “grammar of commerce but the logic of war”.

The growing role of economic statecraft has given new importance to the EU. In a post-Iraq War world of intervention fatigue, targeted economic sanctions have become one of the most effective tools of Western foreign policy. The EU currently has sanctions in place against 38 countries and entities.

The EU is the world’s largest trade bloc and the biggest global aid donor, while its member states collectively are in the world’s top three sources of foreign direct investment.⁵ Its sanctions have a big economic and diplomatic impact, and this has greatly increased the EU’s global standing as a foreign policy actor. The UK has been a leading advocate within the EU for their use – including on key cases such as Russia, Syria, and Iran.

A UK outside the EU could still take part in UN-level sanctions, and could cooperate with sanctions the EU imposes outside the UN. However, the UK would no longer have a say in whether to impose EU sanctions, or the ability to shape them. Unilateral British sanctions would have far less weight or impact. Without the economies of scale, the diplomatic and financial costs to the UK would be much higher, and the impact lower. The case for the UK applying this policy tool, in which it has invested heavily in recent years, would be hugely diminished.

A safer Britain

The most fundamental responsibility of any government is the safety of its citizens. With extremism and war re-emerging on the European continent, the vital question is whether Britons are safer inside or outside the EU. This section will consider three key aspects of security – terrorism and intelligence sharing, policing, and border control.

³ Peter Dominiczak, “Britain must stay in the EU to protect itself from Isis, former military chiefs say”, the *Telegraph*, 23 February 2016, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopping/eureferendum/12170890/Britain-must-stay-in-the-EU-to-protect-itself-from-Isis-former-military-chiefs-say.html>.

⁴ Mark Leonard, “Weaponising interdependence”, December 2015, available at <http://www.ecfr.eu/europeanpower/geoeconomics>.

⁵ Eurostat “Statistics explained: Flows of FDI 2013”, July 2015, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Flows_of_foreign_direct_investment_2013_\(%C2%B9\)_\(%25_of_GDP\)_EU_world15.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Flows_of_foreign_direct_investment_2013_(%C2%B9)_(%25_of_GDP)_EU_world15.png).

Terrorism and intelligence

Brexiters were quick to exploit the terror attacks in Brussels. Before the second attack had even taken place, *Telegraph* journalist Allison Pearson Tweeted that Brussels was the “jihadist capital of Europe” and called on people to vote for Brexit. UKIP spokesman Mike Hookem blamed the Schengen Agreement for the attacks – notwithstanding the fact that they were committed by Belgian citizens.

But the most powerful intervention came from Sir Richard Dearlove, who led MI6 between 1999 and 2004. He argued that Brexit’s security penalty for intelligence sharing would be low because most intelligence cooperation is based on bilateral agreements. Moreover, “Brexit would bring two potentially important security gains: the ability to dump the European Convention on Human Rights and greater control over immigration from the European Union.”⁶

Dearlove’s experience, however, is a dozen years out of date – and his intervention was trumped by that of the most recent ex-chiefs of MI6 (Sir John Sawers, 2009-2014) and MI5 (Lord Evans, 2007-2013):

“Intelligence work today relies on the lawful and accountable use of large data sets to reveal the associations and activities of terrorists and cyber-attackers. The terms on which we exchange data with other European countries are set by agreement within the EU. As an EU member, we shape the debate, we push for what we think is the right balance between security and privacy and we benefit from the data that flows as a result.”⁷

This argument has been made by other former intelligence chiefs – such as Sir David Omand, a former head of GCHQ and the UK’s first Security and Intelligence Coordinator. Responding to Dearlove, Omand said that the UK “would be the loser in security terms from Brexit, not the gainer”. He warned that leaving the EU would jeopardise intelligence sharing. If ISIS and other criminal groups operate across borders, the police and intelligence agencies should not be limited by national frontiers.

Brexiters argue that Britain is already well placed for intelligence sharing, thanks to its Five Eyes arrangement with Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the US. This cooperation is indeed invaluable. Tellingly, however, all the Five Eyes partners want Britain to stay in the EU. They know that the UK does not have to choose between this alliance and EU intelligence sharing, but can and should do both – not least because the other Five Eyes partners will benefit from it. And from the UK perspective, while EU intelligence sharing and security cooperation may leave a lot to be desired, much of the most vital information about terrorism, organised crime and trafficking networks comes from EU partners.

⁶ “MI6 ex-chief says Brexit could boost security” *Financial Times*, 24 March 2016, available at <https://next.ft.com/content/a2dadd06-f1a7-11e5-af15-19b4e253664a>.

⁷ “Spy chiefs say quitting EU is security risk” the *Sunday Times*, 8 May 2016, available at <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/spy-chiefs-say-quitting-eu-is-security-risk-fgzpgkkgk>.

But, Brexiteers counter, Europeans would continue sharing intelligence with us even if we left the EU. Dearlove argues that if, say, Germany had information about an imminent attack in London, it would not withhold that information because the UK was no longer an EU member.

This is true, as far as it goes, but misses several key points. First, replacing European cooperation with a cat's cradle of bilateral arrangements, though theoretically possible, would be a huge administrative headache. Second, warnings of imminent attack are no substitute for "upstream" cooperation that allows dangers to be identified and monitored long before they become critical. Third, bilateral arrangements cannot compensate for access to EU assets such as information-sharing databases, and the European Arrest Warrant.

A last, dangerously overlooked effect of Brexit is on Britain's security concerns in Northern Ireland. Any attempt to impose a fully-controlled border between the UK and the Republic would not only be futile, as the years of terrorism demonstrated, but would undermine the foundation upon which the Good Friday peace process is built – namely cross-border cooperation in the context of shared EU membership. Brexit would also mean that the generous EU funding that has oiled the settlement would dry up. As a result, Brexit would further jeopardise the already-shaky power-sharing structure in Belfast, and significantly increase the risk of a return to sectarian violence in the North.

The cooperation between London and Dublin to bring peace to Northern Ireland is only one example of how shared EU membership has replaced the often-contentious bilateral relations between member states with the interaction of partners. Such interaction is not free of friction, and is often competitive. But it is always informed by the need to settle problems through negotiation and compromise, with a bias towards cooperative outcomes. If Britain chooses to terminate that relationship with the other EU members – to make itself a "foreign country" – what incentive would Spain have to moderate its campaign to recover Gibraltar, or France to allow the British to continue to operate border controls on French soil?

Policing

EU membership not only facilitates intelligence sharing, but is now almost indispensable for the sort of continuous, everyday cooperation that effective policing requires in the modern world.

Simon Foy, former head of the Metropolitan Police's Homicide and Serious Crimes Command, has explained how EU membership helps Britain: "For police work to function, we need information, intelligence, the ability to investigate, and the ability to prosecute and convict people. All this is provided by the EU". Foy highlighted several key aspects of EU cooperation: "The new European DNA database will be an enormous step forward, helping us in our investigations and our ability to prosecute. Through the European Arrest War-

rant, we can get hold of people that we want. EU membership also allows for joint investigations and to hold trials in several countries, which enormously speeds up conviction". Europol, the EU's law enforcement agency, is key to sharing information and intelligence in the fight against international organised crime, drugs, and cybercrime. European police forces use it to share fingerprints, DNA markers, vehicle registrations, and criminal records. Agency head Rob Wainwright has said that "the scale and level of the integration the UK now has with its EU partners in this domain is considerable. I see the benefits of that for British police authorities every day." He highlighted the UK police's access to a European database with details of 300,000 wanted criminals and missing people.⁸

The European Arrest Warrant is a particularly important instrument. In the last five years alone, European Arrest Warrants have allowed Britain to bring 650 people to justice, including tax evaders, fraudsters, drug traffickers, human traffickers, a child abusing priest and a bus stop rapist.⁹ It has helped capture several terrorist suspects: Hussain Osman, who attempted to carry out a terror attack in London soon after the 7/7 bombings, was apprehended in Rome and sentenced to 40 years in the UK under the EAW.

These warrants have speeded up extradition: from an average of one year to 48 days, or 16 if the suspect agrees to surrender. In the same period, several thousand people have been extradited from the UK and tried in other European countries.

Key data systems that the UK can access via the EU:

- **Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA):** A tool for quickly and securely sharing information between Europol, member states, and third parties. In 2014, 34,000 new cases were opened using this system.
- **Europol Information System:** Europol's main database, which contains information on serious crimes, suspects, convicts, criminal groups, and other related data. It is used by member states and Europol's partners. It currently contains information about 87,000 suspected or convicted criminals.
- **Eurodac:** The centralised EU database for the fingerprints of asylum seekers. In 2015, the UK submitted some 25,000 sets of fingerprints and a total of 1.25 million were shared across Europe.
- **Schengen Information System (SIS):** A database that allows information exchange between national border controls, customs, and police authorities, and sends real-time alerts on wanted criminals. In 2015, the system contained details of some 250,000 missing or wanted people, 1,500 of whom were thought to pose a serious national security risk.

⁸ "EU referendum: Brussels attacks spark UK security debate", *BBC News*, 24 March 2016, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35889584>.

⁹ See the Crown Prosecution Service, at <http://cps.gov.uk/>.

Border control

Through the EU's turbulent last few years, immigration has become inextricably entwined with the debate on security. One of the key assertions of the Leave Campaign is that quitting the EU would give the UK control of its borders. But this argument is based on a false premise: that the UK does not have border controls to prevent people from entering from the EU.

EU freedom of movement does not prevent us checking every EU citizen coming to the UK – and refusing them entry if there are grounds for doing so. As Pauline Neville-Jones, former chair of the British Joint Intelligence Committee and former security and counter-terrorism minister, has emphasised, if a dangerous criminal or terrorist gets into Britain this is a failure of British intelligence or controls, not something imposed on us by the EU.¹⁰

She adds: “Pulling up the drawbridge means bringing the frontier control right to our doorstep – but we want to push it away”. Being in the EU allows the UK to extend its frontiers into the jurisdiction of other member states, and to instruct foreign border authorities to stop people without appropriate visas getting on planes and trains in the first place.

A Brexit would also present the UK with the problem of policing land borders. The land border with the EU – i.e. Ireland – would be 499 km, and if Brexit was followed by Scottish independence, the land border would be 653 km.

As for controlling entry by non-EU nationals, the past year's refugee crisis in Europe has shown how well-placed the UK is to close its doors. For better or worse, the UK has been able to refuse to relocate any of the refugees who have reached Europe from Greece and Italy during the crisis – and in 2015 received only 3 percent of the EU's first-time asylum applications. Yet the UK is set to receive some €40 million a year from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund; its allocation in 2014-2020 is the sixth highest in the EU. It is hard to see how this might be called a bad deal or how it could be improved by going it alone.

Indeed, as the EU has grappled to cope with the refugee crisis, it has gradually come closer to the UK's vision of managing migration. UK asylum policy has focused for the past decade on discouraging the “wrong sort” of asylum seekers. To keep arrival numbers down, the UK government tries to discourage refugees travelling to make a claim on UK soil – with harsh reception conditions, and strict rejections and returns of those who do not qualify. Other EU leaders now appear to have bought into the UK's logic – with the focus on returns and resettlement, the “one in, one out” policy in the March EU-Turkey deal, and the reliance on strengthened partnerships with third countries to discourage arrivals. This demonstrates the UK's influence on this crucial dossier, and also gives the lie to the idea that the EU does not work for the UK on immigration. As so often in the EU, we have the best of both worlds; out

10 “Brexit and Britain's Security: The Operational Perspective”, ECFR event, 20 April 2016, audio available at http://www.ecfr.eu/events/event/brexit_and_britains_security_the_operational_perspective.

of Schengen, yet permitted by France to operate our border controls on French territory, and benefitting from the Dublin arrangements that allow us to return non-EU migrants to the country where they entered the Union. Since 2003, Britain has returned some 12,000 asylum-seekers to other EU member states in this way. All that leaving the EU would achieve would be the likelihood of having to pull our border controls back from Calais to Dover.¹¹

A louder British voice

Brexiters argue that globalisation and the internet have abolished the constraints of history and geography, leaving us free to select our allies and economic partners from the entire global community without the need for the EU. But the reality is that the transaction costs of a do-it-yourself foreign policy are very high, which is why all countries have sought to embed themselves in a network of agreements with other states that govern their trade, diplomacy, and military actions.

Every generation of Eurosceptics has presented its own alternative to the EU: in the 1970s it was the Commonwealth, in the 1980s and 1990s they aimed to become the 51st US state, and in the twenty-first century they are talking about becoming a global trading nation with links with China.

But in the run-up to 23 June, each of these groups has been advising Britain to stay in the EU. Obama travelled to London to warn the country he described as the US's closest ally not to consign itself to the fringes. The Commonwealth is lining up behind the same message: India's Narendra Modi,¹² Canada's Justin Trudeau, and Australia's Tony Abbott have all spoken out against Brexit. New Zealand's John Key even argues that if Europe was on its doorstep, the country “would be looking to join, we certainly wouldn't be looking to leave it.”¹³ Meanwhile, ex-Commonwealth official Ronald Sanders argues that “Increased trade with Commonwealth countries is perfectly possible for Britain. It does not have to shed itself of Europe for that to happen”.¹⁴

China, Britain's favoured future trading partner, seems just as keen to keep Britain in the EU. President Xi Jinping made this explicit on his state visit to London, and his Foreign Ministry stated that China “hopes Britain, as an important member of the EU, can play an even more positive and constructive role in promoting the deepening development of China-EU ties.”¹⁵ Chinese billionaire Wang Jianlin, who has invested extensively in British businesses, has said that Brexit “would not be a smart choice” for the UK, and “would create more obstacles” for investors.¹⁶

11 As Nick Witney argued in his paper “Brexit to nowhere: The foreign policy consequences of ‘out’” available at http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary/Brexit_to_nowhere_4094.

12 Ian Silvera, “Narendra Modi UK visit: Indian prime minister calls UK ‘entry point’ to Europe ahead of Brexit vote”, 12 November 2015, *International Business Times*, available at <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/narendra-modi-uk-visit-indian-prime-minister-calls-uk-entry-point-europe-ahead-brexit-vote-1528441>.

13 “UK stronger in EU, says New Zealand PM”, BBC News, 1 April 2016, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35943388>.

14 Ronald Sanders “Commonwealth or Europe? Why a choice?” *Jamaica Observer*, 6 January 2013, available at: <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/columns/Commonwealth-or-Europe--Why-a-choice-13313896>.

15 Andrew Bounds, “China's Xi Jinping urges UK to stay in EU”, *Financial Times*, 23 October 2015, <https://next.ft.com/content/d678cae4-797e-11e5-933d-efdc3c11e89>.

16 “China's richest man warns Brexit vote could spark exodus” the *Sunday Times*, 28 February 2016, available at <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/business/Economy/article1672897.ece>.

One of the reasons for this near-universal international wish that Britain remain in the EU (the prominent dissenting voices are French nationalist Marine Le Pen, the Russians, and Trump) is that, in an increasingly multipolar world, regional dynamics are replacing global ones. The global institutions – the UN, G20, G7, G8, and the World Trade Organization – suffer from a lack of legitimacy; they are ineffective and are often reduced to the lowest common denominator.

In many part of the world, countries are instead coming together to create their own regional groupings. In Latin America, the Pacific powers of Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile are getting together to balance Brazil. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is emerging as a counter-revolutionary force in the Middle East. And in Asia, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) countries are trying to balance between China and the US. In this environment it would be perverse for the UK to take a step away from its own neighbourhood coalition.

The debate about alliances and international institutions goes to the essence of sovereignty – which is, as Theresa May put it, “the control we have over our own affairs”. This has never been absolute. No power in history has ever achieved complete freedom of action, or avoided the need to compromise with others. In the modern world, national interests are often best secured through accepting the mutual constraints of multinational institutions.

In fact, the point of international commitments is to constrain your own national freedom of action – because that is the best way to constrain others. The FCO database lists an amazing 13,000+ treaties that the UK has signed in the last two centuries, each one of which binds the British state. EU membership is far from a unique impairment of British sovereignty; it is a time-honoured means of maximising our chances of remaining masters of our national destiny.

Conclusion

The Western liberal order is under increasing threat. Rivalries between competing global power centres are re-emerging. Ukraine is at the epicentre of a crisis of European order that has seen Russia and the West use financial markets, energy, and the control of the internet in their efforts to prevail. In Asia, competition between a rising China and its neighbours has spawned naval disputes, the use of sanctions, and restrictions on access to natural resources. In the Middle East, the rise of ISIS is playing into a wider sectarian conflict stoked by Iran and Saudi Arabia. In every region of the world, new powers and restive populations are rising.

Most attention has focused on whether the liberal order can survive the dismantling of US hegemony. But it was the EU, not the US, that gave this order its legitimacy. A Brexit would accelerate its erosion, accompanied by a turn back to aggressive nationalism and resort to force – including within Europe’s borders.

The coming world of renewed great power competition and new security challenges will put an ever-greater premium on Britain’s ability to influence and lead its allies and partners. The choice is clear: Britain can help to write the rules of the twenty-first century as an engaged and leading force in the European pole of an increasingly multipolar world. Or it can aspire to a future as a global outrider that seeks to take advantage of openings in a global system run by others. The latter is certainly a viable option. Whether it best serves the national interest, or is compatible with our conception of ourselves and of our country, is something the British people will shortly have to decide.

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