



## **Brexit Could Succeed Where Germany Failed in Two Wars** **by Richard Peirce**

Twice in the last century the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland and its allies went to war with Germany and its allies. Twice Germany, the second time led by Hitler, failed to destroy the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland. Brexit now threatens to destroy the UK and succeed where Germany failed, and the spectre of a return to serious terrorism and violence looms over Ulster once again. Young British soldiers may again die within the British Isles because voters and politicians failed to take into account the issues that could arise with the return of a hard border across Ireland.

On several occasions since the referendum of 2016, I have heard people say, "I didn't vote for that, I only voted to leave the E.U." The 'that' referred to is actually many 'that's', which Brexit voters failed to take into account when casting what they saw as a simple in or out vote. To every action there is a reaction, to every event there is a consequence. Very often there is not simply one reaction to an action, but several. Brexit voters either ignored, or didn't bother to make themselves aware of, the various likely outcomes that would follow a Leave vote.

The day after the referendum I wrote an essay, in the form of an open letter which listed what I considered to be probable outcomes as a result of the Leave vote. It saddens me that almost all my predictions look likely to turn into reality. It saddens me even more that Brexit might succeed where Germany failed – it could destroy the United Kingdom.

The break-up of the UK will result in our nuclear deterrent diminishing or disappearing. As a smaller non-nuclear country, the remains of the UK will lose its permanent seat on the Security Council. Britain's soft power outside the EU has already been markedly reduced. If the Union breaks up there will be a huge further reduction in the soft power of what is left of Britain. Due to the lack of progress towards free trade and customs deals, and the increasing possibility of a crash out Brexit, factories have started closing with the consequent loss of jobs. The aerospace, steel, and automotive industries have already suffered gravely. On June 27<sup>th</sup> the owners of the Vauxhall plant in Ellesmere Port in Cheshire, made it clear that the new Astra would only be built there provided there was a satisfactory outcome to Brexit i.e. no hard Brexit crash out. Due to the lack of free trade and customs union arrangements, inward investment has shrunk, and been accompanied by large scale capital flight to the tune of trillions of pounds.

Racism, jingoism, xenophobia, homophobia and mean-minded narrow nationalism have all been increasingly evident since the referendum.

During the years of my education, British fair play, British justice and British tolerance etc. were all part of the culture of living in, and being a part of, Britain. I am no voter for yesterday, but do not think exchanging fair play and tolerance for xenophobia and racism is a desirable swap. Any student of elementary geopolitics understands that true national sovereignty is now largely an illusion for all but the world's very largest nations. That most British voters would have to reach for Google or a dictionary to find out what geopolitics means, never boded well for a sensible outcome of what was, in no small part, a geopolitical issue. What is even more depressing is that subsequent to the referendum parliamentarians have displayed similar ignorance. Far too many people voted for a return to their vision of yesterday, and ignored their children's tomorrow. This was not only selfish it was ill judged and ignorant.

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A Times opinion piece of June 21 2019 read “Next PM must choose between US and China”. This was in the period when Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt were contesting the leadership of the Tory party following the resignation of Theresa May. What a choice, and a choice that wouldn't have to be made to the degree it will need to be, had we stayed in Europe. Europe was, and still is, a third option. The writer of The Times piece was referring to trade and economics, and even the dimmest geopolitical observer will understand it will not end there or be that simple.

So bye, bye Europe and hello either Little England becoming the 54<sup>th</sup> State of the United States, or a little 'independent' third rate country being buffeted around on the oceans of world trade, having to suck up to any and everyone including China, while praying for a trade deal with Narnia!

I believe the irony will be that history will not show Brexit enhanced British independence. Brexit will end with Britain becoming either a U.S. vassal state, or a powerless global trade whore. How Hitler and Putin must be laughing their heads off. I don't share the joke.

At the time of writing towards the end of June 2019, forward looking thinkers around the world are debating how to legislate for the rights of future generations, while 140,000 – 160,000 ageing British Conservative Party members are getting ready to vote for yesterday. Another irony is that many of the silver haired hard Brexiters will not have to live very long with the consequences of their vote.

On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 on live television Chris Patten referred to the democratic travesty of the Conservative leadership election (Johnson versus Hunt). He was asked if he was going to leave the Conservative Party, and he said no, but the Conservative party had left him! His opinion was that the Conservative Party that he, Ken Clarke, Lord Heseltine, and many others had belonged, to was in danger of ceasing to exist. Clearly he is right, and clearly for 140,000 – 160,000 aging Conservative right wingers, to have such huge influence on the fate of 66 million people is indeed a democratic travesty. When polled, the majority of registered Conservatives put Brexit before the future of the Union, before the future of their own party, and before economic considerations. That they will vote for an illusion, turns poignancy into tragedy.

David Mellor was among the 51.9% of Britons who voted to 'Leave'. In a live TV interview in June 2019 he quite rightly pointed out that between the referendum vote and the time he was speaking (3 years), a lot had changed and he believed there was no longer a constitutional mandate for “Leaving”. I think most fair, unbiased, balanced observers would agree with him. There can be little doubt that when Farage, Rees-Mogg, and others continually bleat about the wishes of the 17.4 million who voted Leave, and how a second “People's vote” would betray democracy, what they are really worried about is that they would lose such a vote, and lose it decisively. If they were confident of their mandate, confident of their position, and confident of the result, they would not resist a “People's vote”. To a large degree, the Leave Campaign campaigned on the basis of getting a good deal with Europe, and the relative ease of doing so. This, not a hard Brexit, is what most Brexit voters thought they would get. There is simply no legitimacy in leaving without a deal, that would be a real betrayal of democracy, but seems to be where Johnson, Hunt, and many Conservative hard line yesterday's people seem to be heading.

If, during my lifetime, my fears prove unfounded, and my predictions incorrect, it will give me great pleasure to be able to say “I was wrong”. If however it goes the other way I wonder if Brexit voters will have the grace and manners to say “I am sorry”.

Brexit will almost certainly happen, and in a so-called democracy it should. However, the harder the Brexit the more chance there will be of serious economic consequences and the break-up and

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destruction of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, while conversely a good deal will lessen and reduce these risks.

Democracy is not really working, and the western capitalist model is outmoded, and not fit for purpose. Where next? I know, let's ignore the issues of mass migration, sustainability, global warming, ever increasing overpopulation, and global pollution, and let's stick our heads in the sand. Present day Britain has proved very good at sticking its head in the sand, so that's a way Britain could lead the world again! More seriously national governments failing to effectively tackle global issues is something we all see every day. If mankind is to survive, national governments will have to cede powers to new global organisations to manage global issues. Perhaps the current populist/nationalist wave sweeping through western democracies will be likened by history to a teenager continuing to rebel, rather than grow into adulthood.

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Views expressed in the article are the views of the author and do not necessary represent the views of the Conservative Group for Europe

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