



Clean Break, Bright Future:

Leaving the EU, rejoining the World

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Foreword

The historic vote on 23rd June 2016 - the largest democratic vote in the history of the United Kingdom - saw more than 17.4 million people vote for a brighter future. They voted to take back control. They wanted decisions affecting their lives taken here in these islands, not by remote control in Brussels by the anti-democratic European Union.

Sadly, Theresa May and most of her ministers regard Brexit as a damage limitation exercise. They do not see the opportunities Brexit presents. This lack of vision resulted in the crushing 230-vote defeat on 15th January.

These six essays present the positive benefits of Brexit - not just for the UK, but also for free trade across the Commonwealth and the world.

Andrew Allison

Head of Campaigns

The Freedom Association

For the economy's sake, we're Better Off Out

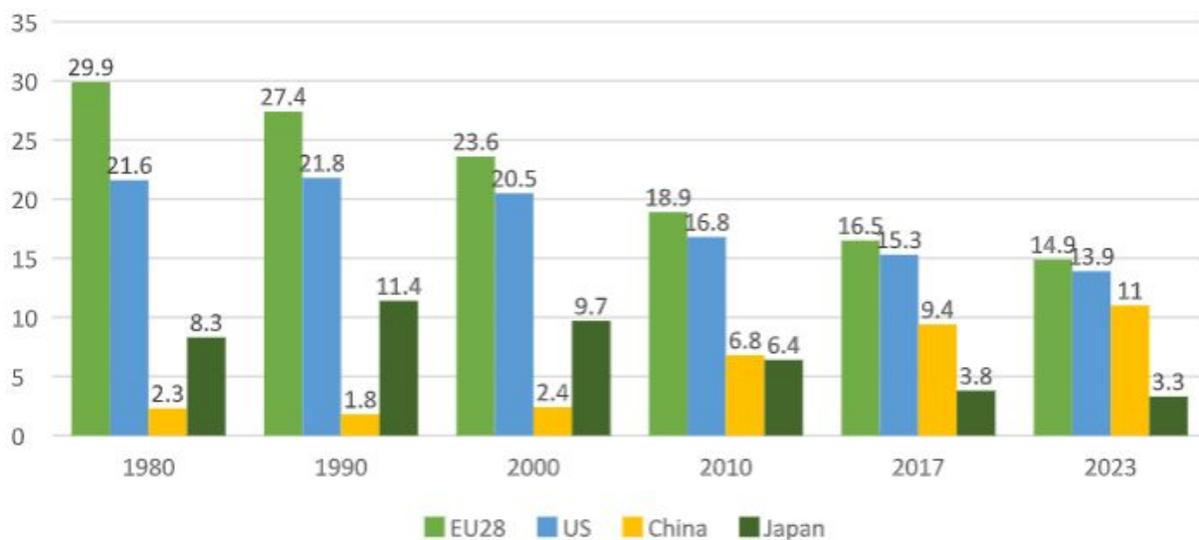
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Introduction

It has been apparent for many years that the European Union accounts for a diminishing part of the world economy. Its markets are relatively slow growing and its population is ageing. According to the IMF, the EU28 accounted for 30% of world output in 1980 (using market exchange rates conversions) but this had fallen to 16½% by 2017, as shown in chart 1. Moreover, the EU's share, along with its influence, will almost certainly continue falling.

Chart 1 Shares of world GDP (market exchange rate conversions), %



Source: *IMF, World Economic Outlook*, database, October 2018.

When we joined the EEC back in 1973 the mood music was so different. The bloc was thriving, apparently leaving the UK, the “sick man of Europe”, trailing in its wake. Putting aside the political considerations for joining the EEC, we were told the economic ones were truly advantageous. Join the EEC and, as if by osmosis, the British economy would be transformed by a new “dynamism”. Suffice to say, it did not quite work out like that and it took the truly transforming Thatcher government to tackle the economy's deep-seated problems.

This, however, is history. Fast-forwarding 45 years, we face a fundamentally changed global economy. It is all too apparent that the growth markets of the future will continue to be outside the EU. The EU may have been the future once, but it is not the future now. Under these circumstances, it seems to me to be a “no brainer” that it is economically sub-optimal to remain tied to the European Union, with its antiquated and limiting Customs Union and its regulation-heavy social market model.

Of course, business lobbying groups do not see the world this way, dominated as they are by the vested interests of their members. Their view is, however, a static one. They are overwhelmingly concerned with the status quo, rather than on where tomorrow’s businesses may be in a fluid, dynamic economy. We should focus on the future.

The necessity for a clean break

I have long believed that membership of the EU, tied to the EU’s Single Market, with its regulatory straightjacket, and tied to the Customs Union, with the inability to unilaterally negotiate free trade deals and modify tariffs, has been a drag on the UK economy, not an enabler. Crucially, Britain needs to be free of the Customs Union and the Single Market in order to have the necessary freedoms to deliver a potential post-Brexit competitiveness boost to the British economy. This is the true post-Brexit dividend. This paper assumes, as a working assumption, that there will be a clean break, out of the Single Market and out of the Customs Union. Anything else would be selling our economic prospects short, as well as being a political betrayal of the referendum result.

My preference until recently has been for a straightforward trade deal broadly based on the continuation of tariff-free trade for goods and a special arrangement for financial services. Both of these policies would be mutually beneficial. Indeed, arguably, tariff-free trade helps EU exporters to the UK more than UK exporters to the EU, given the EU’s enormous goods surplus with the UK - £95bn in 2017. Some claim there is a need for “regulatory alignment” and, of course, British exporters to the EU will have to conform to EU product standards after Brexit, as they have to conform to US product standards when they export to the US. But there is no need to conform to labour market regulations, for example. Post-Brexit we must be able to decide our own regulatory regime as befits the needs of the country. Concerning financial services, Bank Governor Mark Carney has been commendably robust in his assessment that the City, as Europe’s banker, provides considerable benefits for our EU partners as well as benefiting the UK. Some arrangement on financial services would, therefore, have made commercial sense.

I now take the view that such a vanilla, Canada-style free trade agreement is no longer on the cards. Our negotiators have gone for a BRINO-style Brexit instead, potentially tying the UK to the EU in many ways for years to come. Given these circumstances, a “no trade deal” outcome, trading under WTO rules, would be far preferable.

There are many misconceptions about the “WTO option”, some doubtless mischievously promoted. It has been variously dubbed as “falling off a cliff” and/or “crashing out”. But a sober analysis makes it perfectly clear that the WTO option is not just feasible but would provide this country with the economic freedom it needs to make the best of Brexit.

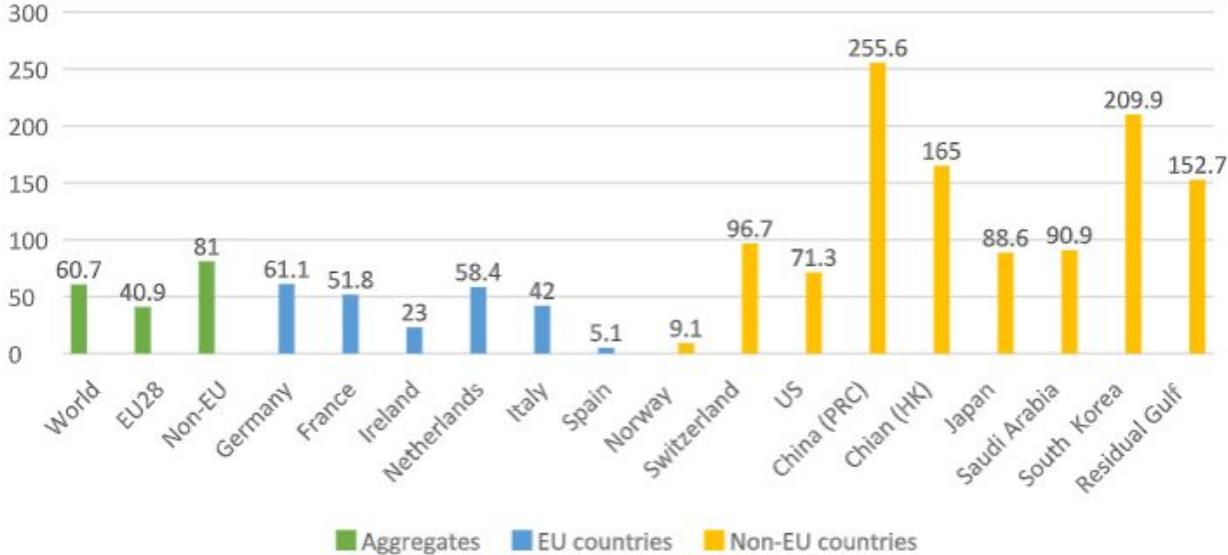
Some very basic points need emphasising. Firstly, we are already WTO members, have been since its inception and we will continue to be members. No lesser person than Roberto Azevêdo, the Director General of the WTO, made this very clear in October 2016. Secondly, disciplined rules based on the principle of non-discrimination are at the heart of the WTO’s trading regime. Specifically, once a “domestic” standard has been imposed, it must be generalised to foreign countries’ exporters. The EU cannot therefore discriminate against UK exporters assuming the latter comply with EU standards. Thirdly, the WTO has made huge strides in facilitating trade across customs borders in recent years. Under the landmark Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), developed countries with adequate resources are expected to install state-of-the-art border systems in order that trade should not be impeded. Streamlined, computerised borders are now the norm.

The WTO’s rule-based trading regime is comprehensive, tried and tested, and respected by the world’s trading nations. It is not some dreadful leap into the dark. Moreover, the UK already conducts over 55% of its exports trade with non-EU members, primarily under WTO rules. Even if allowance is made for those non-EU countries that have preferential trade deals with the EU, which may not immediately carry over on Brexit, about half of our exports go to the remaining non-EU countries. However, it makes sense for the current FTAs the EU has with Switzerland, Norway and Korea, in particular, to be grandfathered. They would be mutually beneficial.

Chart 2 shows the growth rates in British exports in goods and services between 2007 and 2017 for Britain’s key trading partners. The green bars, the key aggregates, show that total exports grew by over 60% over this period, whilst exports to the EU and the non-EU expanded by around 40% and 80% respectively. The blue bars show trade with selected EU partners, whilst the yellow bars show trade with selected non-EU countries. It is clear where the growth markets are. Unsurprisingly, the share of Britain’s exports going to EU markets is in inexorable secular decline, in spite of the avowed benefits of the Customs Union and the Single Market, reflecting the EU’s relatively slow growth.

Trade, therefore, can thrive under WTO rules, given favourable commercial circumstances, and there is little doubt that this would continue to be the case if the UK opted for the WTO option. Trade is overwhelmingly driven by commercial realities, irrespective of membership of the much vaunted single market – which, incidentally, we would still have access to under WTO rules, as a third country.

Chart 2 UK trade: exports of goods and services, growth 2007-2017 (%), main aggregates and selected countries



Source: ONS, *UK Balance of Payments, the Pink Book*, 2018 edition.

The British economy after a clean break

Assuming we are out of the Single Market and the Customs Union there are two main reasons for believing there is scope for a major competitiveness boost to the economy. But I must emphasise the word “scope”. How well or badly the economy does after Brexit will crucially depend on how any future government use these freedoms.

The first freedom, already alluded to, is the ability to negotiate our own trade deals with fast growing and friendly parts of the world economy, including the US, Japan and the Commonwealth. For all the EU’s size and “clout”, the trade deals it has negotiated have been disappointingly few. EFTA’s deals, arguably, have been more successful. Our trade is already shifting towards non-EU markets. Freedom to develop closer ties with buoyant non-EU countries, not already covered by EU agreements, can only accelerate this

re-balancing and boost trade. The Department of International Trade (DIT) is “on the case”.

The Commonwealth should be central to building links post-Brexit. Commonwealth countries are rarely considered together as an economic entity. Yet they are already economically significant and, given their relatively buoyant growth prospects, their share of world GDP will increase. They have, therefore, the potential to be significant growth markets for the UK’s exports. Reflecting our shared history and commonalities of language, law and business practice, it has been estimated that Commonwealth countries trading with one another experience business costs 10-15% lower than similar dealings with non-Commonwealth countries of comparable size and GDP. This has been called the “Commonwealth advantage”.

The second freedom, also already alluded to, would be the freedom to amend or even repeal business regulations, especially those businesses find the most irksome. A future British government should be able to be much more fleet-footed in modernising and updating the regulatory regime than the EU. But rather than just pick regulations at random, the Government should undertake a major consultation of business groups, and other interested parties, for their preferred deregulatory options and proceed from there. Governments should see regulatory reform, along with tax reform, as part of a package for improving the overall competitiveness of the British economy, post-Brexit. Incidentally, if there were to be some agreement on regulatory equivalence regimes for the City, which would mean keeping very close to EU regulations, it may only be a stop-gap. If the EU wishes to impose financial regulations inimical to London, the British government may decide to drop the notion of regulatory equivalence, lighten the regulatory burden and go its own way.

There are other potential benefits as well. Firstly, outside the Single Market, in place of the EU’s “freedom of movement” the UK should be in a position to develop a bespoke non-discriminatory immigration policy best suited to the economic and social needs of the country. Secondly, there will be freedom to modify our tariff regime to cut the cost of living, which should be a progressive policy, benefiting the relatively low earning disproportionately. This is especially relevant in the case of foodstuffs, which currently have quite high tariffs in order to protect EU agriculture.

Finally, there should be a Brexit financial dividend as the UK is currently a significant net contributor to the EU’s budget. At the minimum, this would be around £8-10bn a year, which is our current contribution net of rebate and refunds. The IFS has attempted to demolish the idea of a Brexit financial dividend, quoting an OBR estimate that the Brexit

vote had apparently meant the public finances would be £15 billion worse off in 2020-21 than if there had been no Brexit vote. The OBR calculated this estimate in November 2016 by comparing its forecast to what its forecast would have looked like if there had been no referendum. Given its forecasting record, this should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Conclusion

Assuming a clean break, the benefits of the new freedoms are obvious. Providing Governments are prepared to grasp the opportunities and adopt outward looking and competitiveness-enhancing policies, Britain's future, bright in any case, would be very bright.

Moreover, ignore the assorted Cassandras prophesying gloom and mayhem if we leave under the "WTO option". This is a rerun of Project Fear. Let us remember what the Treasury said in May 2016. "A vote to leave would represent an immediate and profound shock to our economy. That shock would push our economy into a recession and lead to an increase in unemployment of around 500,000, GDP would be 3.6% smaller, average real wages would be lower, inflation higher, sterling weaker, house prices would be hit and public borrowing would rise compared with a vote to remain". An apology, or at least an explanation, would be appreciated.

The siege of London: a capital at odds with its country over Brexit

Daniel Moylan

Former advisor to Boris Johnson as Mayor of London

London has long shrugged off the brooding sense of resentment other parts of the country sometimes feel at its dominance of national political and economic life. After all, the capital, with over eight million people, is a social eco-system of its own, caught up in its own affairs and confident that its net contribution to the Government coffers (over £26 billion a year) is sufficient answer to any regional chippiness.

But London – or those who speak for it – is still in a state of denial about the great revolutionary insurgence that has for the first time in decades challenged its hold on the national narrative. Sadiq Khan, its Mayor and a good weathervane by which to judge the vagaries of metropolitan elite opinion, illustrates this well, first “accepting” the referendum result, then arguing against any form of implementation that would result in change (on immigration or trade), and now explicitly espousing the Remainer ruse of running a second referendum with a question rigged to maximise the chances of reversing the result. The steps the Mayor might have taken, of ensuring businesses had advice and support to prepare for No Deal, of offering encouragement, of travelling abroad to solicit investment in the capital and ensure the world knew of its innate strengths and the opportunities it offered after Brexit – these have all been neglected in favour of belittling a democratic process the result of which he doesn’t like.

It’s hard to find “out” Leave voters in London. From the dinner tables of Kensington to the common rooms of our schools and the trading floors of our banks, those who confess to having voted Leave continue to be given pariah status. Though over 40% of Londoners voted for Brexit, they have gone to ground, silenced now in the wake of the referendum by a prevailing metropolitan consensus that sees only good in our continued rule by foreign powers and that identifies support for Brexit with xenophobia, low intellect, poor education and “the North” (or, possibly worse, “the Midlands”). Hence the vital work done by the excellent Lucy Harris and her friends, the founders and sustainers of Leavers of London, a beacon and a haven for Brexit voters in the capital.

So we know London is not happy with the result of the June 2016 referendum. But London knows about referendums. There was one in 1998. 72% of Londoners (I admit I was not one of them, but I was wrong) voted to have a Greater London Authority consisting of a Mayor and Assembly. It has been a huge success. Few Londoners would doubt that.

Under two charismatic and capable Mayors (and their successor), the city has been transformed for the better – practically unrecognisable from twenty years ago.

And why did Londoners vote for devolved government? Why have new powers been granted to the Mayor since then? Why do people continue to call out for yet further powers to be handed down?

For the same reason the nation voted for Brexit: because people want decisions made as close to them as possible and under their control.

It is logically absurd and flies in the face of human nature to say that on the one hand London should have more powers to govern itself but on the other its air quality standards should be set in Brussels, the quality of the water in the Thames should be decided overseas, and the safety standards of its cyclist-killing lorries can only be changed at the behest of an EU committee. It is ridiculous to believe that devolution to London is good but that key aspects of its laws, from working time to habitats, should be set so as to be applicable with equal force and relevance to London as to the more pastoral quarters of Transylvania or the snow-encrusted fringes of the Gulf of Bothnia.

And when one digs into the practical challenges that Brexit might visit upon London, there is very little to point to.

We are told we are going to face a crisis of baristas. The metropolitan assumption appears to be that for decades to come Poland and Estonia are going to send us their young graduates, their nuclear scientists and their trainee surgeons to pull our coffees and beers for us, while incomes and opportunities continue to rise in those countries and well paid jobs start appearing for them at home. No: this was always a transient phenomenon. It is a “crisis” we are going to have to face some time and we might as well face it now.

Or consider the construction sector. There was a man on the BBC recently, boss of a construction company, who was bitterly complaining that even before Brexit he was having to pay higher wages for sub-contractors in London because of a shortage. Well that may have sounded to the BBC like another Brexit doom story, but it will have been music to the ears of the 40.1% of Londoners who voted Leave, many from the social groups that will benefit from higher wages.

In fact a ready supply of cheap labour has held back innovation and automation. Ask yourself why so few of the construction innovations generated by the Crossrail project have been directed at slimming down the workforce. All that money and only one new

machine aimed at saving labour: a tracked vehicle that trundles through the tunnels drilling the millions of screw-holes needed for the brackets that hold the miles of cables. Brilliant. But it is still followed by an army of labourers putting the brackets up, screwing them in and threading the cables. Brexit will change that. It will spur innovation and automation and create new world-leading goods, machinery and ideas for Britain to export to the world.

The harsh truth is that we have created an economy, not just in London, with an unhealthy dependency on a constant supply of cheap labour, regardless of the consequences for social services and social cohesion, and it is a habit we need to break, Brexit or no Brexit merely confronts us with the necessity.

Another manufactured London Brexit fear is its effect on the City, the great global centre of financial and allied services that generates a large part of our national exports and of the Government's tax receipts. Various lobby groups have made complete fools of themselves by predicting the loss of tens of thousands of jobs just as soon as we leave the EU. The numbers to be moved abroad now appear to be a fraction of that. And if even a small number seems bad, remember that banks in London have been shipping jobs to the rest of the world for years now, many of them facilitated by EU Freedom of Movement. When Morgan Stanley moved its back office to Hungary, was that a great Brexit disaster? No, because it happened ten years ago and was therefore to be praised as showing how the Single Market worked for our economy. The inconsistency is breath-taking.

In fact the truth about Brexit and financial services is that the City is quietly thrilled to be leaving a governing regime that has become increasingly inimical to what our European friends call Anglo-Saxon capitalism. And by "Anglo-Saxon", they mean only one thing: London. They are explicitly hostile to the City and yet there are many people, including our Mayor, who are desperate to see one of our major export industries regulated by them.

Then of course we have the big businesses, outside the City of London. And here it's impossible not to mention the doom-laden CBI, which is still regretting that we didn't follow its advice twenty years ago and join the euro. The truth is that CBI members have done well out of the EU. Not because it has made them more competitive, but because it has allowed them to participate in writing their own regulations, quietly, cosily, and with the help of an army of Brussels-based lobbyists – regulations that are always intended first and foremost to create barriers to entry and so limit upstart new competitors from disrupting the incumbents, regulations agreed in rooms from which the consumer is always absent. It is our own form of crony capitalism. It is well funded and has a loud voice – and it is not speaking for the country. It's simply not true that "what's good for General Motors is good for America" and it's absolutely not true that what's good for CBI members is good

for the rest of us. It is almost delightful to watch so many London Labour MPs line up with the bosses they would normally excoriate in order that both can argue for the status quo of cheap labour and easy, protected profits.

But the key to that of course is the trades unions. While a handful, like the RMT, continue the leftist tradition of opposition to EU rule, those affiliated to the Labour Party (unlike the RMT), have been wooed and won over by the Brussels machine, which developed a new theology of the “social Europe” in the 1990s precisely to subdue this source of opposition. Since then, the trades unions have been the staunchest supporters of EU rules and regulations – to the point that they claim that the EU, not domestic law, is the source and bastion of workers’ rights. Given the constitution of the Labour Party, it’s more “moderate” MPs, in flight from Momentum, have only the dubious safe harbour of trades unions to turn to if they are to save their seats – and that means espousing the EU even if their voters supported Leave.

In fact the more one dwells on the upsides of Brexit, the opportunities it gives to London for beneficial change, the more one regrets the government’s short-sighted policy of seeking to negotiate a deal that will lock us into European law with no say, and deny us those opportunities. All the more so after the President of the Commission declared in his 2018 annual report to the European Parliament his ambition for a totally sovereign EU, no more pooled sovereignty but a sovereignty fully transferred to a super-state. This made it absolutely clear that there is no status quo in Remain. If we go back now, cap-in-hand, humiliated, we would inevitably be sucked into a project that has shown over forty years that it doesn’t work for us and over which what moderating influence we had exercised in the past would be gone.

London, with its eight million brilliant people, a hinterland that brings that to fifteen million, an economy so powerful that it contributes over £26 billion a year net to the rest of the country, has withstood real challenges and survived. Brexit is not even a real challenge. It is a change and an opportunity.

Just as Londoners took a risk in 1998 and voted for devolution, so the British people showed immense courage and confidence in 2016 in voting for change and the return of their democracy. It is an enormous pity that complacency and timidity meant that on that occasion the capital was found on the wrong side of history. But its resilience and inventiveness mean that it can recover quickly from that. We should set to work to help it do so.

Global Britain: Anglosphere and the Commonwealth

Chloe Westley

Campaign Manager, TaxPayers' Alliance

The British people were told during the EU Referendum that a vote to leave would be a move towards isolationism, that the EU was Britain's gateway to prosperity and that we should not turn our backs on the rest of the world. Given Britain's proud history as a seafaring nation and commitment to global trade prior to the establishment of any European Community or Union, this argument fell on deaf ears.

In fact, it was joining the European Union that closed Britain off from the world in many respects, and cut ties with allies around the world. With a renewed independence and freed from the shackles of one of the largest bureaucracies on Earth, Britain can embrace the wider world.

The Commonwealth of Nations

Advocates of closer ties with Commonwealth countries are often disregarded as nostalgic for the British Empire. Whilst it is true that the vast majority of member countries were former colonies or dominions of the Empire, the Commonwealth today is a modern and flexible gathering of 53 countries with significant cultural, diplomatic and historic bonds. This community of nations now represent a third of the world's entire population, with some of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Where the Commonwealth differs significantly from the European Union is that, despite the impression that having a monarch at the head of the organisation may give, there is nothing authoritarian about the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth lacks the rigid structures of the EU and instead is valued by members because membership invites, and does not force closer ties.

Commonwealth countries are respected as autonomous; sovereign nations voluntarily agree to work together on various areas of policy. These policies are discussed at the annual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which have thus far focussed on shared goals on climate change, human rights and the promotion of peace and democracy.

Britain's membership of the EU has overshadowed its commitment to collaborating with Commonwealth nations. With such a strong emphasis placed on diplomatic relations with

the European Union in recent decades, many young Britons are unaware of the UK's leading role in the modern Commonwealth.

Trade with Australia, CANZUK and the Commonwealth

Before joining the European Economic Community in 1973, Britain enjoyed a close trading relationship with Commonwealth countries, as natural allies and partners. When the news reached Australia that Britain was turning its back on the Commonwealth in favour of the EEC, there was a strong backlash and sentiment of betrayal. In the decades since, both of our countries have changed. Britain has become eurocentric in its thinking and trade, and has allowed the European Union to take decisions on her behalf. Australia has turned to Asia, with over 66% of our exports going to the region. Given that so much has changed for both of our countries, can Brexit restore the friendship that once was? Can Britain now re-engage with Australia, and with the wider Commonwealth? The answer, I hope, is yes.

The UK is right to prioritise trade negotiations with the EU at this early stage, but once that arrangement is settled, there will be a huge opportunity for Britain to pursue free trade agreements with countries with whom Brussels has failed to negotiate a deal. Trade negotiations don't need to take as long as EU talks traditionally do, because most agreements don't require the approval of 27 nation states. In fact, The US-Australia FTA, for example, was concluded in less than two years.

A free trade agreement with Australia isn't just a possibility, but something that our governments are working towards. On a visit in London, Former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop declared that both the British and Australian "*governments stand ready to agree a free trade agreement as soon as circumstances allow.*"

Other Commonwealth countries such as Canada and New Zealand have also expressed an interest in a Free Trade Agreement with the United Kingdom, and there have been proposals for a free trade area or zone between the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Unlike a customs union, a free trade area between CANZUK countries would remove trade barriers internally without binding the four nations into a collective external tariff or customs policy. Britain would still be allowed to negotiate its own trade deals with other countries, whilst improving trade relations with its closest allies.

Whilst negotiating deals with Australia, Canada and New Zealand would be the obvious starting point, because of the political goodwill shared between nations, there are also longer term opportunities for agreements to be made with other Commonwealth countries with fast growing economies, such as India and Singapore. Although many of these

countries are at a distance geographically, some researchers have noted a 'Commonwealth Effect', which is a phenomenon describing the uniquely strong trading relationship that exists between member countries. A report by the Royal Commonwealth Society concluded that:

“the value of trade is likely to be a third to a half more between Commonwealth member states compared to pairs of countries where one or both are not Commonwealth members. This effect can be seen even after controlling for a range of other factors that might also explain trade patterns.”

It's important to point out that advocating a closer trading relationship with Commonwealth countries doesn't imply that these trade agreements would act as a replacement for Britain's important trading relationship with Europe. Britain can and should aim to continue a close trading relationship with the EU, whilst also seeking opportunities elsewhere. In the long term it must be considered that growth forecasts for EU economies are in many cases quite dire, whereas the majority of Commonwealth countries are set to see their GDP ranking rise.

It's also crucial to recognise that these opportunities are only possible if Britain leaves the EU's Customs Union. An ideal arrangement would be a Canada plus model, whereby the UK Government leaves the EU with a similar Free Trade Agreement to the Canada-EU FTA, but maintains Britain's independence from the EU's Single Market and Customs Union.

Uniting the Anglosphere to fight terrorism

It is often forgotten, and somewhat ignored by history lessons in Britain which now prefer a more European centric version of events, that in two world wars Commonwealth soldiers - including thousands from my home country of Australia - crossed the seas to come to Britain's defence. The established peace in Europe rests on the shoulders of many of those soldiers, whose stories have been left out of the European Union's propaganda about being the sole custodians of the peace in Europe.

The European Union, which was formed many years after this peace was secured, did have a role to play in establishing a good trading relationship between countries on the continent. But it was not a trading arrangement that defeated the Nazis. For a period of time Britain and her Commonwealth allies stood alone to face down Germany, with the help of the United States and Russia. When the threat of the Soviet Union seized the

continent, it was the United States, Canada, and individual Western European nations that established the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation - not the European Union.

Those who attempt to position the EU as the sole defender of peace in Europe are disingenuous historical revisionists. In fact, there is an argument to be made that moves towards federalisation and the encouragement of mass immigration has fueled divisions within European countries. There is a growing dissatisfaction and anger amongst citizens on the continent, and increasing civil unrest, in response to the EU's handling of the migrant crisis and on the further centralisation of democratic powers. Far right parties are gaining traction in countries such as Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Poland and Italy. Mainstream political parties are losing the faith of voters because they are invariably pro EU and refusing to address concerns about immigration. These mainstream politicians can't advocate EU membership without a recognition that there is nothing a national government can do to change its immigration policy, which is fuelling the popularity of extreme far right political parties. The EU parades as the saviour of Europe but contributed nothing to peace settlements or NATO, and is in fact fostering divisions and tensions in member countries by asserting dominance over national governments.

However, the greater concern to Britain is the establishment of a European Defence Force.

Britain has signed up to several agreements with the EU which would obligate the UK to pool defence resources with EU countries after Brexit, and even if withdrawn from these agreements, it is still of great concern to the Anglosphere that the EU are persisting with a defence union that would duplicate, and essentially undermine, NATO.

It appears that in response to the United States urging European countries to meet their NATO spending requirements, the EU has decided instead to divert funds into a defence union excluding America. Britain must be resolved to separate itself from this vanity project, and encourage the EU to instead call on member countries to meet NATO spending requirements.

Of course, Britain's closest and longest lasting security partnerships have been with Commonwealth and Anglosphere nations. The Five Eyes Alliance - one of the most comprehensive alliances of its kind - is an intelligence sharing network bringing together security agencies from the UK, US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, who together represent over 40% of global defence spending.

This high level of trust and co-operation on intelligence matters is reliant on an incredibly close cultural bond and commitment to a set of shared values. At a speaking engagement

in London on the future of the Five Eyes Alliance, Former Prime Minister of Australia John Howard said:

“It’s hard for me to think of five countries in the world that comfortably relate to each other, when it comes to fundamental democratic values...There is something about the intimacy of the relationship and it rests on the fact that when the chips are down, the Five Eyes participants trust each other on a political and cultural level. Beyond the level of trust that is found with other countries.”

Leaving the EU is an opportunity to strengthen this important partnership without interference from European partners. Former head of the CIA, General Michael Hayden noted in 2016 that the EU often ‘*gets in the way*’ and the UK must be mindful that any commitment or obligation to collaborate on intelligence or with the European Defence Force could jeopardise the exclusive and restricted nature of the Five Eyes relationship.

When it comes to tackling extremism, The Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings have discussed further collaboration; the 2018 April CHOGM Communique encouraged member countries to “*actively share expertise and best practice*” in countering violent extremism, which is certainly a welcome start. But with Brexit bringing into focus Britain’s role as a global power and leading voice in the Commonwealth, these annual meetings could be an opportunity to set clearer and more ambitious goals for defence and security co-operation.

Conclusion

The vote to leave the EU wasn’t about turning inwards, but a decision taken about who is in charge of Britain’s destiny. Outside the EU’s Customs Union, it will be up to elected British politicians to decide which countries to pursue free trade agreements with, and provided the UK is not tied to the new European Defence Force, it will be Britain - not the European Union - that decides which allies to collaborate with on matters of defence and security. These opportunities are within reach, if only those who believe in an empowered Commonwealth and an empowered Anglosphere continue to advocate them.

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A Britain that is global, ambitious, outward looking, and free trading

**Andrea Jenkyns MP
Conservative, Morley and Outwood**

Almost daily, we are treated to stories and predictions of the future laced with fear and designed to intimidate the British people. We are told, on news programmes, in the papers, and by certain political figures that sandwiches could be unavailable, that's if we don't run out of food entirely, that there could be civil unrest, and that super-gonorrhoea will plague the nation. It is clear that project fear has returned, and is attempting to scare the British people into submission.

The last time project fear was in full swing, the British people were subjected to the same treatment. We were told a vote to leave will, immediately after the referendum, push our economy into recession making our GDP at least 3% smaller. We were told that a direct consequence of a vote to leave would be 820,000 jobs lost, and that Government borrowing will go up... In reality, the unemployment rate has not been lower since the mid 1970's, GDP has grown by 3.2%, and Government borrowing has fallen to a 13 year low.

The people of Britain know when they are being lied to. They didn't believe the scare stories in 2016, and they have been proved right. They will not believe the wild claims being made now and they will be proven right again. The people of the United Kingdom will never be bullied into submission, not by the media and political elite, and certainly not by political bodies on the continent.

I want to contrast the above with the positive vision I have for Brexit Britain, one that I believe is shared by the majority of people in this great country of ours. A vision that in some way has been imbedded in our national consciousness for generations, but also one that can become reality through new and exciting policy directions that will bring prosperity to people here at home.

The British live on a geographically small island on the North West of the European continent, but over centuries turned this island home of ours into a powerhouse of the globe. We sparked the industrial revolution and exported parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, railways, television, computers, and the World Wide Web to the rest of the world. We make up just 1% of the human population, yet our language is the most widely spoken on the planet. It is the language of entertainment and of business. We have one of the most highly performing economies in the world, we are one of the five permanent

members of the UN Security Council, and we sit at the centre of the Commonwealth, made up of 53 countries and 2.4 billion people across the world. We are the country that initially stood alone against tyranny and fought on through impossible odds to free the people of Europe.

We built this country we love through the virtue of being an island nation, protective of our shores, but entirely global in outlook. So in many ways, the Brexit dream has always been a part of our national history, and our national destiny.

However, Brexit is not simply rooted in our history, grand and full of pride though we should be about it. Brexit is an opportunity to utilise this British state of mind that has brought us so much success to improve our country further. We need to implement bold, exciting policies that seize the opportunities Brexit provides to benefit the people of Britain.

An obvious benefit for Britain going forward is the revival and renewal of our fishing and farming industries. There are few other countries with so many coastal communities, many of whom relied on fishing as their primary source of jobs and prosperity for generations. My grandfather was a fisherman in Hull, so this is a matter close to my heart. Currently, due to the principle of equal access to Britain's rich fishing grounds with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), trawlers from other EU member states catch 60% of the fish caught in our Exclusive Economic Zone, this has led to 60% of the UK fishing fleet being scrapped due to lack of resources and the destruction of our fishing communities. Not only this, but despite the CFP intending to protect fish stocks, the EU actually forces fishermen to dump billions of dead fish back into the sea due to EU quotas. This absurd waste of fish, that cannot be considered part of fish stocks, but could be a perfectly good meal, only drives up the cost of food whilst simultaneously damaging the marine eco-system. Following Brexit, Britain should leave the CFP, take back control of her territorial waters and fish them responsibly. This would revitalise coastal communities, reduce waste, and enable Britain to protect the fish stocks for future generations.

Similarly, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) causes untold damage. By ignoring the free market indicators of supply and demand, the CAP leads to wasteful overproduction that leads to mountains of surplus food being destroyed. Furthermore, the CAP defends farmers from competition, at great expense to hardworking people who not only pay for the CAP subsidies, but also have to fork out inflated food prices due to a lack of competition. I see a future for Britain where we are free to trade with the world, growing our own food but also importing food from across the world, taking advantage of efficient producers from across the planet and helping to lower prices for the hardworking taxpayer at the

supermarket. A Britain in which wages go further, inflation is lower and the least well off in society don't need to worry about grocery bills is a Britain we should all strive for.

Not only will this benefit people here at home, it has the potential to benefit the developing world also. In Africa, roughly 60% of people live in rural areas and are inherently dependent on agriculture. By being global in outlook and becoming a free trading nation once again, Britain can buy more from Africa's harvests, pumping money into the least developed regions of the world. In many ways this will be more beneficial than foreign aid, as much of the money will go directly into the hands of hardworking families in Africa, rather than through Governments and other large bodies. Free trade will bring lower food prices, and help to enrich people across the developing world. I think that is a benefit of Brexit we can all get behind.

Domestically, another exciting idea open to post-Brexit Britain is that of Free Ports. The House of Commons library defines these as "areas inside a country geographically, but outside of that country's established customs area, thus allowing components and goods to be imported, manufactured and exported without being subject to the host country's standard tariffs and export/import procedures." The establishment of Free Ports across the country can bring huge benefits, including an increase of manufacturing output, increasing employment for our coastal regions, and promoting trade across the world. In Britain we already have world class infrastructure at our ports, capable of capitalising on the Free Port opportunities. Free Ports offer both economic growth and prosperity for people here at home, and will also reconnect Britain with its proud history as a maritime trading nation.

Free ports can also help to rebalance the economy, as an island nation Britain is fortunate to have ports right across our country, rather than one super port like many other countries. The North of England in particular punches above its weight in this sector and would benefit disproportionately from these proposals, helping to make the 'Northern Powerhouse' a genuine success.

Old friends and new partners are already eager to establish new trade deals with the UK. Australia, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, the UAE, and more have indicated strongly that they want to strike new trade deals with an independent United Kingdom, and increase trade with us. Not being able to do so would not only let our friends and partners across the world down, but also prevent Britain from seizing one of the chief benefits that Brexit provides. Last year, our exports reached a record high of £616 billion, just imagine what can be achieved with increased and enhanced trading arrangements across the globe. It is unthinkable that we should not rise to the task of obtaining the ability

to strike exciting new trade deals across the world, given the obvious and immediate benefits to the UK economy, and jobs market.

Finally, there will be substantial and very real savings made by not sending huge sums of money each year to the European Union. A key part of the Brexit message was 'Take Back Control', and as we take back control of our money we can spend it on our priorities here in the UK. We could invest in the front line services of our NHS, in the military and defence technologies, in our fishing and farming industries, in our transport infrastructure, or give tax cuts to working people and enable them to spend their money in any way they choose. These are just the first ideas that sprang to mind, the possibilities really are endless and we should seize them with open arms.

Brexit's benefits are numerous and must be reported. The British people chose to leave the European Union and know in their hearts that the better Britain I believe in is possible if we take back control of our money, borders, and laws. If we leave the Single Market and Customs Union, if we are able to strike bold free trade deals to the benefit of both Britain and her allies, we island people will have fuelled our next golden age by making that bold step forward in June 2016; forward into the world free from the shackles of bureaucratic institutions and unelected commissioners. If we seize the opportunities available to us, we cannot fail, and others will follow us into the new prosperous free trading era of growth. It falls to us, our great country and its island people, as it has so many times in history, to show Europe that there is another way.

We want to see a Britain that is global, ambitious, outward looking, and free trading. A Britain that supports business, jobs and prosperity for its people. A Britain that is in control of its destiny, able to grasp opportunities, and offers the chance for every one of its island people to succeed and flourish. This is the Brexit vision for Britain that I believe we should be striving towards, and one that we can achieve.

To quote Sir Winston Churchill: "Now we are the masters of our fate; the task which has been set us is not above our strength; its pangs and toils are not beyond our endurance."

The opportunities for Scotland are endless in a global and free Britain

**Ross Thomson MP
Conservative, Aberdeen South**

On the morning of 24th June, before all the votes were even in, before anyone had absorbed the historic result of the EU referendum, Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, was all over our television screens. Standing in front of cameras at her official residence in Bute House she seized the opportunity, as a nationalist to her core, to crowbar another referendum on Scottish Independence onto our political agenda.

For Sturgeon and her nationalist supporters, the pursuit of independence "transcends" all else. No matter the devastation. No matter the destruction. It transcends Brexit, it transcends the economy, it transcends education, it transcends the health of this nation and it transcends the opportunities for the next generation.

The SNP go to argument is that, "Scotland voted to Remain". Or if you are the SNP's Brexit Minister, Mike Russell, all 5 million Scots voted to Remain as he reportedly told a meeting in Brussels last year.

This narrative side-steps the reality that this was a UK wide vote and that Scotland did vote to remain part of the United Kingdom in 2014. Subsequently in 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU.

True to her divisive nationalist politics, Sturgeon hailed the Remain votes of 1.6million Scots as representing "Scotland's voice". Airbrushing out the over 1 million Scots who voted to Leave altogether. Sturgeon did not even stop to consider that among the Leave voters who were now being obliterated from Scotland's national story were 400,000 of her own SNP supporters.

The average Scottish nationalist does not want important Scottish issues, such as fishing, being sold down the river to Brussels. For them, an independent Scotland with EU membership is not independence.

The SNP siren calls of a power grab from Westminster are a fallacy. Leaving the EU will make the Scottish Parliament more powerful. Yet, the SNP have done everything in their power to bring us to the precipice of another independence referendum, to ensure that decisions are taken by Eurocrats in Brussels rather than at Holyrood.

The SNP may shriek about sovereignty, but where was their belief in sovereignty over the last 40 years? Where were they, when laws were imposed on the people of Scotland by the EU? Where was the SNP's concern for sovereignty then? The SNP do not want these new powers, they care about grievance and would much prefer to see Brussels maintain control.

The SNP have been undone by their arrogant dismissal of Brexit. This was evident in the last General Election where the SNP lost 21 seats. We unseated their big beasts, Angus Robertson and Alex Salmond. Long may Brexit continue to undo them. In 2021 a new dawn is awaiting, a new First Minister, a new Government, Scotland's first Scottish Conservative Government.

Whilst the SNP dismiss Brexit, in Scotland Brexit can be a great success.

The great Brexit prize will be regaining our ability to strike new free trade deals across the globe and seize the opportunity to lead the world as a free-trading nation, championing trade liberalisation and directly taking on those who advocate protectionism.

By leaving the Customs Union, the UK will regain its ability to set its own independent trade policy. Our trade with the EU is in deficit and declining. In 2006 it was 56% of our trade, today it is 43%. Meanwhile our trade with the rest of the world is in surplus and rising. We must be able to orientate ourselves towards the thriving economies in the rest of the world such as those in South and East Asia and their growing demand for goods and services.

International demands for British goods is growing and Aberdeen (which I represent in Parliament) is well placed to take advantage of this given that currently 90% of manufacturing in the city gets exported, mainly in oil and gas and environmental engineering.

Aberdeen is home to a truly global oil and gas industry. To quote the oil and gas UK blueprint for Government, it is "a global energy industry, anchored in the UK, powering the nation and exporting to the world". This is demonstrated in current industry exports which account for 43% of the UK supply chain turnover in 2017, up from 41% in 2016. And Oil

and Gas UK's Vision 2030 has the ambitious aim of doubling the supply chain's share of the global market from 3.7% to 7.4% by 2035.

Balmoral Group, based in my constituency of Aberdeen South, was established in 1980 and specialises in subsea buoyancy, renewable energy products and engineering solutions. They employ 500 people and they are highly dependent on the export markets they are focusing on of West Africa, South America and the Gulf of Mexico. They are clear that their only opportunity for growth is in the export market.

The oil and gas industry is one of the true global industrial success stories the UK has and with its truly global reputation, it is a shining example of the role Britain can play on the world stage outside of the EU.

Scotland is also home to a thriving food and drink industry and is especially known for its truly exceptional whisky exports. The Scottish whisky industry is a great British success story that is crucial to supporting the economy.

The Scotch Whisky industry supports more than 40,000 jobs across the UK. The growth of the Scotch Whisky industry provides career options and job opportunities for young people in both distilleries and across the supply chain, with distilleries opening and being expanded through continuing capital investment.

Scotch Whisky producers have invested more than £500m in capital projects over the last five years, with a record 1.9m visitors to visitor centres at distilleries in 2017.

The Scotch Whisky industry is an export powerhouse with £4.3 billion in exports last year alone. Incredibly the industry exports approximately 39 bottles of Scotch Whisky per second to more than 180 markets worldwide. The industry is fundamental to our long-term economic success.

As we leave the EU there is a huge export opportunity for the Scottish Whisky Industry with its status as a national flagship industry. Having free trade arrangements in place with both the EU and key global markets such as China, India and Brazil will support the continued export growth of this industry. Post Brexit Scottish Whisky can thrive.

Fishing is a vital totemic industry for the whole of the UK, and for Scotland in particular. Scottish fishermen voted overwhelmingly to leave the EU, ditch the hated Common Fisheries Policy and take back control over our waters out to 200 nautical miles.

We must seize the huge sea of opportunity afforded by Brexit to revitalise the Scottish and UK fishing industry. Something that the Scottish Fisherman's Federation have dubbed the "Sea of Opportunity".

By taking back control of our natural resources we have an opportunity to nearly double the size of our fishing industry. The Scottish Fishing Federation, for example, predict a fishing boom that could be worth £2.7bn to the economy and 30,000 jobs.

As an independent coastal state, British fishermen will operate within much fairer quota shares. After Brexit, we will stop giving away 60 per cent of our natural fish resources. Rebalancing of quotas will help to revive coastal communities and provide the conditions to sustainably grow the industry for future generations. Scottish fishermen are strongly committed to sustainable and well-managed fishing activities, and leaving the European Union means we can go further in innovative, responsive and adaptive fisheries management.

Freed from the Common Fisheries Policy, we as a nation will be able to conduct our own fisheries policy, on our own terms. That means stopping free access to our waters for European boats. It means sustainable fisheries, and having plenty of fish for our fishermen to catch.

We'll also be free from EU regulations, decided by the unelected and the unaccountable, that only serve to put additional burdens on our fishermen.

Take the discard ban, which is due to come into full force next year. Nobody wants discards, but the EU ban just forces fishermen to land unwanted fish that contribute to, or exceed, these strict quotas – it'll do far less to preserve fish stocks, and far more to make life difficult for our fishermen.

Repealing these unworkable regulations, and bringing in smarter solutions, must be at the top of our post-Brexit agenda for reviving the fishing industry.

Because reviving the fishing industry is not only good for the fishermen themselves. It's good for our coastal communities as a whole, it's good for seafood processing, it's good for the food and drink sector, and it's good for our entire economy.

Our waters – our fisheries – are one of our great national resources. It's time, after 45 years, for us to take pride in them, take control of them, and let our coastal economy truly flourish and reach their full potential.

Frankly, I think British fishing has suffered under EU rule for long enough, and I'm disappointed that our exit from the CFP is being delayed until the end of 2020.

And I fear for what the EU having carte blanche to dictate our fisheries policy for 2020 could do to the industry. It's only one year, yes, but we've seen in the last two years just how vindictive that organisation can be.

There must be no compromise on control of our waters after 2020

However, it's not just Scotland's food and drink industry that can benefit from Brexit but Scotland's world class higher education sector too.

Currently in Scotland, due to the SNP policy of free tuition for Scottish students, there is a cap put in place for the numbers of Scots who can attend university. Controversially, and wrongly, in my view, this also means that EU students studying at Scottish Universities receive free tuition whilst students from the rest of the UK have to pay fees of up to £9,000 per year.

The cost of providing free tuition at Scottish Universities for EU nationals costs taxpayers £90 million. Brexit gives us the opportunity to not only invest that money back into our institutions in order to allow more Scottish domiciled students to attend the university of their choice, it also enables the Scottish Government to charge EU nationals tuition fees which can be used to prevent our higher education institutions from falling over the financial precipice and to put in place bursary support to help ensure that those from the poorest communities in Scotland can be supported with the cost of living to attend university.

These are just some example of the real opportunities for Scotland from Brexit - something the SNP will never acknowledge as they only seek to weaponise Brexit in order to further their independence agenda. Their entire approach to Brexit has been nothing more than selfish and shameless. For the SNP, it's always about undermining the United Kingdom.

As I have set out, if the Government hold true to what the people of this great nation voted for; if the Government holds to the promises it has made to deliver Brexit, then by being unshackled from the EU, taking our place as a world-leading as a Global and free Britain, then the opportunities for Scotland are endless.

Brexit presents opportunities for our relationship with Africa & the Caribbean

Chloe Schendel-Wilson

Former Parliamentary researcher and Conservative campaigner

Legally British subjects until January 1983, we must never forget our African and Caribbean friends from the Commonwealth who stepped up in Britain's time of need. Those who came over in their vast numbers to help us fight the Nazis and those who boarded HMT Empire Windrush in 1948 to come and rebuild this country after the war.

From the British West Indies Regiment, to the Royal West African Frontier Force, over half a million volunteers from both Africa and the West Indies joined the British Army and served in the RAF, fighting to defend "King and Empire" during Britain's Darkest Hour. 10,000 Africans were killed, with 166 receiving medals for bravery. By the end of the war, 11 battalions from the Caribbean, comprising of 15,000 soldiers, had seen action.

Fast-forward the clock to 1948, and HMT Empire Windrush was heading from Australia to England, due to dock at Kingston, Jamaica, to pick up servicemen from leave. An advert had been placed in a Jamaican Newspaper, offering cheap transport to those who wanted to come and work. It was from the British Government, inviting people to come and help rebuild the "mother country" in a time when it was most in need.

Of the 800 that boarded that ship that day, some came in the hope of re-joining the forces. Others made the most of the opportunity just to take the trip to England. But many stayed and settled, as under the British Nationality Act of 1948, they were legally British citizens. They filled important labour shortages, sometimes almost solely so, from working in British Rail to the NHS. They formed new communities, had children and grandchildren - and like many of us in this country who have heritage from around the world, they added a chapter to the pages of the British story. They formed an integral part of the modern, diverse and tolerant nation that we are today. A country that so many of us are proud to call home.

From Ghana in 1957, to Antigua and Bermuda in 1981, the majority of Commonwealth countries in Africa and the West Indies fought for their independence from Britain over the years to follow. British Citizenship for those coming from the Commonwealth came to an

end in 1962, and as they were going out on their own, we were getting closer and closer to our European neighbours.

Although certain privileges have remained, such as the ability to vote in our elections, the more integrated that we have become with our European neighbours, we have drifted further and further apart from our Commonwealth friends. Brexit provides us the opportunity to change that - to develop those long standing relationships once more.

When it comes to trade, the EU does have its own trade deals with both the Caribbean and several African countries, but they are less than perfect and not necessarily how we might choose to do things going forward. There is some degree of relief from EU tariffs for the poorest countries, but this does not apply to farm produce, where the trade is largely in the EU's favour. This protectionist nature is often seasonal, for example higher tariffs are applied to oranges when EU crop is available, and the price of sugar is guaranteed for Europe at three times the world average.

The Common Agricultural Policy, with the subsidies that it provides European land owners, makes it almost impossible for African farmers to be able to compete. Thousands of tonnes of subsidised food from large transnationals are able to be dumped into Africa at low prices, and tariffs applied the other way mean that German manufacturers can make double their profit on re-exporting raw goods from the continent. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari earlier last year refused to sign an EU-West African trade deal, in order to protect Nigeria's economy, her industries and her small businesses. In Buhari's own words, jobs needed protecting to keep her "youthful population busy".

Now that we are going out on our own, we have the opportunity to move away from this model of protecting when it suits and charity when we wish. Should we so choose, we can trade freely and open up our markets. Fast growing economies like Nigeria will have the opportunity to be rewarded for their entrepreneurship, and places like Zimbabwe will be free to trade with us outside of the EU's embargo.

In leaving the European Union, we can trade with countries on the African continent once and for all as equals. And in doing so, we are presented with an opportunity to re-balance the global stage.

Better trade relationships also mean that in the long term, we can move away from this old, somewhat colonial model of giving vast amounts of aid, simply for the sake of patting ourselves on the back and meeting an arbitrary target. We can be proud of the role that we play on the global stage in delivering aid when it is needed, such as the £427 million direct

support package that Britain gave during the Ebola crisis of 2014, or the £15 million sent to the Caribbean after hurricane season. Nobody can doubt that spending this kind of money is the right and the noble thing to do. We will always be on hand where we can to assist countries in need.

This is vastly different, however, to perpetuating a culture where teenagers from the West now think that they are more qualified to build a school than a local, or working in an orphanage unqualified is a gap year 'adventure'. The time surely has come to question this attitude that we have had for so long, to be honest in how this behaviour might skew our lens and mindset when we compare ourselves to certain cultures around the world.

We have an opportunity now to rethink our aid budget and how it can be put to better use. To find small and local organisations to fund, harness skills to pass on and move into a model of empowerment, instead of seeing ourselves as perpetual rescuers, hopefully re-balancing our relationships in the long term. The Ghanaian President, Nana Akufo-Addo, elected in 2016, has had the consistent message of his vision for a "Ghana beyond aid". He is committed to growth in the private sector, and said that "we have to take our own destiny into our own hands". From Gambia to Zimbabwe, slow and steady progress for democracy is being made in Africa, and with it a new generation determined to take their nations forward to standing on their own two feet.

Britain herself now has a unique opportunity to stand with them side by side, and do what we can along the way.

As Nelson Mandela said, "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world", and many can argue that it is the best tool a government can ever provide in order for its people to lift themselves out of poverty. Our membership of the European Union has brought us so many benefits in terms science and research, data sharing and forming collaborative working in our universities. Now we have the opportunity to use all of that and go further, opening up our world-leading higher education sector and forming new partnerships around the world. In Africa and the Caribbean, particularly, this is a key moment to use education for the greatest possible good.

From water sanitation to wildlife conservation, committing to working together through new collaborations and ways of doing things, could transform so many lives, whilst solving crucial global challenges in the process. We can build on the outstanding work done by so many in the third sector, through the frameworks used during our years of EU membership, to think innovatively about how we can work together in the future. From exchange programmes to more formalised training, the possibility of opportunities that we

can offer both those in Britain and abroad, to share their knowledge, have new experiences, and make a real difference in the process, is endless.

For our universities at home, up until now, EU students have enjoyed the same tuition fees as home students, whilst those from outside pay almost triple. From visa applications to finding a home to rent, financial barriers hit non-EU international students the hardest. Upon graduation, they have to jump through the most hoops if they wish to stay here and work. The opportunity to devise a new system now lies in our hands, to attract the best and the brightest to study here. Free to stay and form part of Britain's story, or to head home with a life-long connection, and skills and an education that they can really put to use.

Back to our African and Caribbean friends, who have helped us so much in days gone by. Now is the perfect time to say thank you. Time for Britain herself to renew her relationships with each nation, to tailor our immigration policies to ensure that we treat each nation as fairly as every other, or to give special preferences to the Commonwealth should we so wish. Whether that be in education or work, an opportunity arises now to show each nation how much they are valued to us.

Brexit gives us the opportunity to trade with them as equal partners, opening up the market for fair competition. The opportunity to rethink the way that we deliver aid - to not perpetuate patronising viewpoints, but to move towards real empowerment, trusting in each other's ability to stand on our own two feet, never putting ourselves above or below each nation, but simply standing side by side during potentially turbulent times.

For our African and Caribbean friends, it's time for us to remember the realities of our past, plan optimistically for our shared future, and to become the equal partners in a post-Brexit world.

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