



**Together UK Foundation**

**Symposium at Buckingham University 2024**

**The Strength of the Union**



Dear Supporters,

It gives me great pleasure to publish some of the speeches from our inaugural ‘Strength of the Union’ symposium at Buckingham University June 2024.

It was an honour to have such distinguished speakers lecture a packed audience of invited guests who had travelled from all four constituent parts of the UK to support the event.

My immense gratitude for the video contribution of Ambassador John Bolton: American attorney, diplomat, Republican consultant and political commentator.

I am indebted to Andrew Hale, Senior Policy Analyst in Trade Policy Heritage Foundation and Diana Furchtgott-Roth: Director, Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment Heritage Foundation, both of whom travelled over from Washington DC to speak at the symposium.

The other illustrious speakers who made up the symposium:

Shanker Singham: Former advisor UK Secretary of State for International Trade.

Professor Patrick Harkness: Space & Technology Glasgow University.

Professor Gwythian Prins: Emeritus Research Professor at the London School of Economics.

Cynthia Tooley MBE. Entrepreneur, mentor and food charity award winner.

Professor John Wilson Foster: Transatlantic Irish literary academic and cultural historian.

Dr David Starkey: The UK’s most eminent historian.

And special thanks goes to all the staff of Buckingham University who made the weekend conference such a huge success, to Tracey Gascoigne who arranged all the details and to the Vice Chancellor, James Tooley, who’s enthusiasm and support was above and beyond our wildest expectations.

Finally, from everyone connected to the weekend program, huge thanks goes to The Right Honourable The Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee DBE PC, Chair of the Together UK Foundation and inspiration behind the conference, without whom the symposium would not have happened.

“If you want to go far, go together”.

Yours sincerely,

**Andrew Grocock**  
**CEO**  
**Together UK Foundation**



**Mr Neil Lal**  
**Patron Together UK Foundation**  
**President of the India Council of Scotland and the UK.**

My fellow attendees, I was delighted to return to Buckingham University as a Patron of the Together UK Foundation after having enrolled as a student at Buckingham back in my youth. Walking round the grounds and showing my wife the various buildings brought back some wonderful memories and spending time discussing how the University has expanded and progressed with the Vice Chancellor James Tooley gave me a great sense of pride.

The symposium on ‘The Strength of the UK’ gave me the chance to participate on a panel dedicated to my homeland, Scotland. It was an opportunity for me to use the platform & speak about my area of expertise, that of International Trade and how Scotland and the UK as a whole must look to the East for future international trade relationships. The changing global trade architecture towards the BRICS countries, in particular Russia, India and China needs to be recognised and Brand UK should be looking to build relationships in these new powerhouses.

I was also greatly encouraged by the speeches I listened to throughout the three day conference, the people I met and engaged with from all four constituent parts of the United Kingdom and commend those who made such positive contributions to what was a most enjoyable and educational event.

## **Together UK Foundation Symposium** **Buckingham University 21st June, 2024**

### **Remarks by Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee, PC, DBE.**

It is so good to see you all here at this our first symposium on the Strength of the Union. They say timing is everything and little did the Chief Executive and Board know when we were planning this event that it would coincide with the General election. I know that has knocked out a few of our party-political attendees, but it is probably more important than ever that we have the discussion if we are to have a new political dynamic after 4th July. So, a huge thank you to those who have come to engage this weekend- I know some of you have travelled a long distance to be here and I really do appreciate that. We have a diverse mix of people here this weekend and that is one of the great strengths of our Union - the diversity of our people.

For my part I come from what some people call, the edge of the Union.

When I was appointed to the House of Lords at the end of 2022 there was never any doubt as to the title I would take. Aghadrumsee is a townland near the Fermanagh Monaghan border. In Irish it means field of the ridge of the tallows, but for me it was my whole world growing up. It was here that I was baptised into the Anglican faith at our small church called St. Marks. It was there I attended school at the little primary school. And it was there that I attended children’s parties at the orange hall. It is now 45 years since the IRA upset the tranquility when they came to murder my father at our home just a mile from Aghadrumsee. He was you see a legitimate





target to the IRA because he served as a police officer in the local RUC station in Rosslea. He survived, despite their best efforts, but as a result he was advised to move his family to a safer part of the country and so we moved. This was the strategy of the IRA to target the eyes and ears of the Brits and move them out of the area to create a buffer zone for their nefarious criminality.

My father lived for another 32 years, dying at the age of 81, and is now buried at Aghadrumsee parish graveyard. My sister and her family now live in our homestead. So, despite their intent, the republican terrorists did not succeed, and now the title of Aghadrumsee, - taken to honour my late father and to bring a little bit of South east Fermanagh to Parliament, -now that little townland near the border is seen frequently in the Hansard of the House of Lords. It is as much a part of the Union as it ever was.

The IRA did not succeed in their terrorist campaign to take us out of the Union, but despite this, republicans in Northern Ireland as in Scotland and even in Wales now tell us that the break-up of the United Kingdom is inevitable so we should all “get with the project.”

There is nothing inevitable about a united Ireland or an independent Scotland, but nationalists relentlessly push this narrative, just as they claim all the ills of society will be solved by independence

This is a comfortable belief for the followers of republicanism across the UK that allows each generation to think that with one last heave, or one last push that independence will happen. For us in Northern Ireland we have retained the UK against fierce opposition for over 100 years, so the historicism or inevitability argument hasn't worked.

In fact both of the assertions – that all problems will be solved and that it is coming around the next corner – are nonsenses, but they are allowed to gain traction and the narrative from the media is that we should engage with the conversation because change is coming. We should always push back against that negative narrative and instead move to the narrative of why the United Kingdom is good for all.

The opinion polls are strong for support for the Union especially in Northern Ireland so don't be fooled when the pro nationalist press try and push their agenda of a united Ireland or an independent Scotland.

Unionism for its part should not pretend to be simple but rather multi-faceted and addressing many questions. Unionism is not narrow or reductionist but broad and diverse and that is its strength.

It is true that the challenges which unionism faces will evolve with each generation. The benefits of the Union likewise will show themselves in different ways over the years. The Union is not static but evolving.

During the pandemic for example we saw the strength of the Union in a very practical way through the financial schemes and the roll out of the vaccinations. In Northern Ireland we also had the expertise and advice available to the devolved administrations from the centre, which was vital in moving ahead.

The Union and the United Kingdom is a rational political ideal and as such the majority of people in NI will continue to support it – yes for different reasons and that's ok – some are cultural and constitutional unionists, others are economic unionists, other just content with the status quo. As unionists we need to understand that not everyone will vote for the Union for the same reasons - the important thing is to get them to vote for the Union. For my part, I am hugely proud to be British.

But our Britishness is about much more than the passport we hold. It cannot and should not be reduced down to a name or a badge. It is about a shared history going back generations. Pride in a United Kingdom which ended the slave trade, was the home of the industrial revolution and which founded the welfare state. It is about the institutions we cherish which are the envy of others. Our allegiance to our shared institutions whether in the field of culture, our historic ties that bind or in wider society also give us a sense of togetherness that is important for our emotional connection to the UK.

The TogetherUK foundation was set up to illuminate the positive value of the four parts staying together and thriving together. As a foundation we want to advocate for the holistic view of the United Kingdom. This weekend we will look at the domestic benefits of the Union but we also reflect on the international importance of the UK.

Our place in the world is not just important for us from a defence, security and intelligence point of view. It is also important for countries like the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand – our allies in the Five eyes intelligence community. If the United Kingdom was broken up by separatists, then what would happen to our safety and security? And that of the wider western alliance?

Recently Policy Exchange published a paper called “Closing the back door” which looked at the strategic importance of NI to the defence of the UK and indeed wider Europe. It is an excellent paper and I recommend

it to you. It shines a light on the strategic importance of Northern Ireland and its assets, especially its ports. With Ireland as a neutral state it is important that NI is kept as a base when threats occur and this is the case made by the paper.

Tonight It is a great privilege to introduce a message from our friend Ambassador John Bolton – I hope it will set the scene for our discussions tomorrow about the international perspective on the importance of the Union.

Friends, what knits us together isn't a common political creed, one religion or the same skin colour. We are bound together by a set of common values, like democracy, freedom, respect for the rule of law and tolerance for others. For us these things do not need to be codified in a written constitution they are the beating heart of who we are as a society and what makes us British.

And what of those who have come to live in our country? There is no doubt that our country has been enhanced by the people who over decades have come to our shores. Many who choose to live in the UK are not embarrassed about their patriotism to the UK, in fact some of them cannot understand why some of us are so cautious about our great country. I look forward to building the widest coalition possible to advocate for the UK and I'm delighted that Cynthia Tooley MBE will speak to this aspect of Unionism tomorrow.

The Union has enabled people from all its parts to make a contribution in political, social and cultural life.

When the Acts of Union in Ireland came into being under the guardianship of the great Viscount Castlereagh as he then was, the main focus was on trade and the internal market of the kingdom. How telling that, that element, trade is still so important today. Great Britain is still by far the main market for our goods and our supply chains are inextricably linked to the rest of the UK. Before the Protocol took hold 72% of trade in and out of Belfast harbour is to GB compared to less than one fifth to the EU. There has now been some diversion of trade but even despite the protocol GB remains the main market for our goods and source of incoming goods.

As the incoming Chair of IntertradeUK I look forward to promoting internal trade with the UK, but I am delighted that our speaker tonight is going to speak about the importance of the Union for international trade. Shankar Singham is an international trade expert and former advisor to the Secretary of State for International

Trade and Shankar Thank you for coming and addressing us tonight.

Ladies and Gentlemen I hope you enjoy the discussion this weekend because, our safety, stability, security and success depend on the United Kingdom and therefore we must continue our work to safeguard the Union for future generations.



**Below is the transcript of the video speech given by Ambassador John Bolton to the 'Together UK Foundation' Symposium on 'The Strength of the UK' at Buckingham University, 21st June 2024.**

I'm very glad to be with you today virtually, I wish I was there in person to wish you all the best on this very important conference, especially the very important subject matter.

I thought I just say a few words about the importance of the UK / US special relationship and what it means in the world today where there are any number of threats from all over the world. You know, a lot of people have come to view the term 'Special Relationship' as sort of antiquated, that it was a fine idea back in its day but is now sort of outmoded in the contemporary world and I think that's very miss-guided and often a criticism levelled by people who don't really know how relations between the US and UK government work, particularly in crisis situations and work across party lines and government lines really deeply imbedded in society as a whole.

Obviously the foundation is the common history of language and culture that we have, the ties of personnel relations and friendships, the networks of commercial and political relationships are too deep, too broad to even begin to summarise and obviously they didn't start at one point and suddenly the word 'Special Relationship' arose from that, this has developed literally over centuries and it's why for the United States, especially looking at the wider world, why the relationship with the UK has been sustained and has been so special for such a long period of time and I think particularly given the history of the US post independence from the UK as we expanded westward it took a while to turn back and look at things

in Europe, although the economic relationships between the US and the UK over the entire period of the growth westward from being 13 isolated colonies all the way to the Pacific, the economic relationship was still the most important one that the US had and we would not have developed the economy we did without investment and trade with the UK. But in the twentieth century we saw the fruits really of the 150 years of closeness of economic and political relationships when the West as a whole was challenged mortally with the first world war, the second world war and then the cold war, all of which resulted ultimately in victories for the free nations of the West, but at a terrible cost and at huge risk throughout the entire period and it was really in these cauldrons in the twentieth century that the 'Special Relationship' became manifest in its strength and importance to both countries was tested in the harshest possible conditions and survived and flourished throughout.

So I won't go into a long history lesson here, I'll resist the temptation to quote Sir Winston Churchill at length but you could see in the twentieth century how the relationship did become embodied in relations between the leaders, between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill and between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, these were strong ties at a personnel level but stronger ties between the two countries and I can tell you from my own experience at different positions in the state department and most recently when I was National Security Advisor in the Trump administration in 2018 and 2019, the special relationship is not hypothetical, it works day by day in ways that its very hard to describe but I can tell you in my own cases as US Ambassador to the UN, I probably spoke more with my British counterpart in any given day than with any combination of any other two or three Ambassadors on the security council as we worked as permanent members on the issues that came before us.

When I was National Security Advisor there wasn't any other foreign official I spoke with more often than Mark Sedwill, who in that case was National Security Advisor in London. In my first week in office, I started on April 9th 2018 a Monday, by that Saturday the US, UK and France were attacking Syrian Government positions for the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons against their own people, so I probably spoke as much with Mark Sedwill that week as I spoke with any American official to make sure we were coordinated. That's what a Special Relationship is, its not an abstraction, its a very, very real way and process of working together and I can't think of any case in recent years that's been a more visible evidence of how the Special Relationship works than in the case of dealing



with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I should say the second Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. You know, I think that the statistics are pretty clear that the UK on a per capita or proportional basis has led NATO and its contribution to Ukrainian self defence and certainly the US has provided enormous amounts in military and economic aid and I think its been really a case of joint leadership within NATO to try and keep things moving along. If I were to criticise anyone for the way that assistance for Ukraine has been provided over the last two plus years I'd criticise the United States more for our lack of strategic approach in what the delivery is, but the UK has never hesitated and isn't hesitating now and I think its been an example to all NATO members and since were both having elections this year and at the time of speaking we don't know what the outcome will be, but whatever governments emerge, I certainly hope that they will continue the records of the two plus years and stay together and stay in very close contact and coordination because what Ukraine represents is obviously an enormous threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine but its a broader threat to the West, to NATO, the preeminent western alliance and it represents a global threat because our adversaries worldwide in Beijing and elsewhere are watching very carefully how the US and the UK and our other allies respond because if we don't respond appropriately and strongly enough in Ukraine they will draw the conclusion that they can act without worrying about a response from us elsewhere in the world and really the US / UK relationship remains a global 'Special Relationship', evident most recently in the pacific region by the ORCUS Project with Australia, the Australia UK US program to have joint production with Australia for nuclear powered submarines that will help all of us ensure peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. So the Special Relationship has a long and deservedly storied history but its history is still being written. Its being written in Ukraine, its being written in the Indo-Pacific and its written between the two peoples on a continuing basis so I think its very important that we don't forget the strength of the relationship which ends up strengthening both parties to it and strengthening the West around the world.

So again, I'm sorry I'm not there with you but I know it will be an excellent event and I hope this makes a contribution to the further defence of the Ukrainian people, thank you again.

*Ambassador John Bolton.*



### **Speech by Shanker Singham.**

...Arlene, and a big Thank You for all that you have personally done and you will continue to do as the Chair of UK Trade, as one of the bodies that who will monitor the Windsor Framework and ensure that trade takes place within the UK are not disrupted and indeed expanded.

Ambassador John Bolton talked a lot about the geo-political and geo-strategic battleground if you will in the World and referenced the challenges that we have in particular with Iran, Russia, China and North Korea. What I am going to talk about to start with are the geo-economic challenges that we face in the World and the context for this and I will gradually bring this down to the level of trade within the UK and particularly with the recently negotiated Windsor Framework and Northern Ireland's role in the UK. But I want to start by talking about the real threat that we face in geo-economic terms which is a battle for the world's operating system - its economic operating system . What does that mean? It means there is a battle between countries that essentially run themselves based on government intervention, state owned companies, state distortion of the economy for where the commercial sector and the government sector are essentially fused, now that you will all recognise most probably that I am talking about China, but I am not only talking about China, there are many countries that operate in that way. If we are to have a world that continues to build on the successes of 1947 to 2000 and let's say 2006 period where we massively increased global GDP per capita, where we managed to reduce the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day to zero, it is actually climbing now. If we are able to generate and create wealth, if the world is able to create and generate

wealth in that way that is going to benefit obviously all of us. We have looked at, we have modelled in the Growth Commission which I co-chair the impact of distortion state-led distortions, government distortions, company distortions and interventions and all those things we found that if the UK were to improve by 15% the quality of its domestic competitive regulatory landscape ie: more competition, that would be by itself an injection of about 13% of GDP per capita into the UK economy by a state to state... It is not going to be in a year but as long as it takes to get that 15% increase, and it is similar for international trade, and it is similar for property rights protection.

Those three things, domestic competition, openness of your international trade regime and protection of property rights where they come from, many of the cultural aspects that Arlene talked about, they come from things like our common law, they come from our approach to the rule of law, they come from the fact that we regulate our approach to regulation, it is very much a competition based approach to regulation for the most part. So, there is a lot to play for, if you add this all up, there is a radically different and much richer country in the UK if we are able to to get this right and just to give you a negative context, last year was the first year where the State of Mississippi, which is the poorest US state became richer than the UK. So, if we were to be a state of the United States we would be the poorest state of the United States and that is with the City of London so, you can imagine without the City of London, where we will be, there has been a gradual 25 year erosion and stalling of our GDP per capita in the UK. So these are urgent issues, we need to address, we cannot afford to continue doing what we have done, we need to do more. And I am going to talk about three critical areas where if we get this right, we could get that in total if we look at these three areas, we are looking at a potential £20,000 more per UK household so this is a big prize, so if you are going to achieve this prize, if we are going to win this prize, there are certain things that we need to have to do. I was an advisor to the Secretary of State, I was also an advisor to USDR, and if I was advising the incoming government I would say "Prime Minister and Cabinet these are the three things that you need to do, to (a) close the gap with the US in terms of the GDP per capita, bearing in mind that that 25 years ago a British family visiting their American friends doing the same type of job, living the same type of life were roughly about the same wealth, the same GDP per capita. Now there are US States where that same family doing the same job, living the same life literally, the American family is 100% richer, and that is without even thinking about the decreased cost of living which is all about electricity costs which is \$0.18 per kWh, the electricity costs in the

UK being £0.51p, per kWh so very high cost of living with a very low income is what we need to change. And I think there are three things that we can do to change and I would recommend on the trade side and we have had some successes in the last few years. We have acceded to the CPTPP which is comprehensive and progressive transpacific partnership ...which is the most important regional trade agreement based on regulatory recognition and not regulatory harmonisation in the world, it is growing, its adding members, its a significant amount of global GDP and it is growing faster than other areas of the world.

If we are going to win this battle for the worlds operating system and by that I mean the coalition of allies that John Bolton adhered too, and it starts to the US and the UK, it starts with the Atlantic declaration, it builds in to ORCUS, including Australia and the Hiroshima accord with Japan. So that's the core group that has to win this, then we build more into regional agreements like the CPTPP and so on. So CPTPP is a good news story for the UK and thankfully I don't think there is any political party that would change that trajectory of our remaining part of the CPTPP. The second thing is again what John mentioned with relationship with the US and building on the Atlantic declaration and actually building an advanced liberalised trade agreement with the US. This is incredibly important and is a pivotal element of the UK strategy, for reasons that were not within our control, President Biden decided he didn't want to do a Trade Agreement, not with the UK, he didn't want to do a trade agreement with anybody, so trade policy in the US is stuck at the moment but there are still things we can do with the US, there are things we can build on.

We do need to improve the UK EU free trade agreement and we can, like a more mutual recognition agreements, building on the customs and trade facilitation parts of the agreement but there are some things I would advise the incoming prime minister and cabinet not to do.

The first thing I would say not to do and bear in mind the Labour Manifesto is no customs union and no internal market but I would say be very careful about any kind of dynamic alignment of regulation. It maybe very tempting and your private sector are all going to come to you and the big private companies are all going to say "just align us to European Regulation, we don't want to have all theses different regulations that we have to deal with". So first of all, your job as Prime Minister and cabinet is not to do what the one particular group of incumbents wants you to do, your job is to argue what is best for the UK economy as a whole and the problems with dynamic regulatory alignment, if we do that, we are no longer in control of



our regulatory system, we've seeded control to another party and another court system and it's very difficult to maintain our position in the CPTPP, for example, let alone a US deal or any other deal, if you are no longer in control of your regulatory environment. What most of our trading partners want from the UK and where when I spoke to ambassadors in Geneva when we had initially left the EU, they were very excited and said "so now we've got a big G7 country that's going to adopt pro competitive regulation & diverge from the EU system of regulation". They are now doubting which side of the table we are actually going to be on. And one of the most important things they want from the UK is our ability to improve our goods regulation, so it isn't a case of saying "goods can be aligned and we'll do lots of services agreements" That's not what people want. That's not what countries actually want. We may talk a lot, but we won't do any trade deals on that basis because we need to have our flexibility over our goods and regulations, but, what I would say to incumbent businesses that don't want to deal with multiple sets of regulation is there is no reason the UK can't unilaterally recognise EU standards & rules, it is very difficult to imagine the UK ever being more restrictive and more anti competitive than the EU's regulatory structure and therefore if we simply unilaterally recognise that if a UK firm wants to manufacture European standards for the internal UK market, that's fine, they can do that, it's up to the UK government to create a sufficiently pro competitive regulatory environment that business are motivated to satisfy that environment and when you negotiate with the US and other countries, when they want to export to your market, they will want to satisfy your better pro competitive regulation and ultimately, if your regulation and EU regulation is sufficiently different, sufficiently better, then what will happen, such as what happens in Australia in the beef sector for example where the Australians will have two separate lines, one for what they call the 'Closed Loop European Market' & one for 'Rest of World'. And it makes economic sense for them to do that. If you are not much different to Europe, it wouldn't make much sense but this will actually allow us to be pro competitive and reap some of those benefits. So it's very important and in fact regulatory reform is the biggest benefit, it is the biggest area of GDP per capita gain, roughly double the gains you can get from domestic regulation compared with international trade. Everyone thinks about trade as the big thing but its domestic regulation where your biggest economic gains actually come.

And then the third thing you have to do is manage the disruption. We have left the customs union, we have theft the internal market of the EU, there is inevitable disruption and in some places that I'll come on to there

is more strongly than others, but we can manage that disruption and I'm reminded of something the current chief trade advisor for the UK, permanent secretary, Sir Crawford Faulkner said early on in this process, he could not get his head around the fact that we would forgo all these important opportunities, not just opportunities for the UK on trade and domestic regulation but opportunities to be a major player, a major G7 nation effecting that regulatory battlefield that's going on in the world and therefor contributing to enhanced global GDP per capita, we'd forgo all of this because we're afraid of a customs form. He could not get his head around that! And we've spent the last eight years worrying how to make the customs process easier, which is a legitimate thing to want to worry about but we have to see it in the context that it falls into.

So, how do we manage disruption at the border?

I would say there are three things we need to focus on.

One is more mutual recognition with the EU. We don't have any mutual recognition with the EU at all, which is pretty extraordinary given our trade patters and considering where we start from in terms of the differences between our regulation and we haven't changed very much, they ironically have changed more than us. So there's a significant amount of mutual recognition that we need to get from the EU & UK trade and cooperation agreement. Where Europe subsidises or distorts its market & that damages our traders, far from the level playing fields of the agreement being a threat to the UK we should use them. I'm always amused by farmers in the UK who are worried about Australian exports under the Australia FTA, Beef and Lamb and so on from New Zealand and I would say, well OK so you've got Irish exports of beef coming into the UK tariff free, quota free, with no rules at all, in fact we don't even put SPS controls (sanitary and phytosanitary checks) on them, so why aren't you worried about that? That's 80% of the market and you're worried about 2% of Australian beef over here. So we need to insure that we get more mutual recognition, we use the customers simplifications that exist in the world to use more digitised trade. We're currently doing a project in Anglesea and the port of Holyhead, which is a 'Free Port', to produce a digital trade corridor as you want to reduce this customs process as close as you can to ordering stuff on Amazon, which can be done, though it requires a lot of work, but it can be done and can be agreed with the EU.

So things like digital trade corridors, these sorts of things, an trade facilitations are very very powerful tools that will make it much easier for traders to trade across borders.

And then finally, Northern Ireland.

I've spent probably the last eight years of my life, most of which has been spent dealing with the problem that is Northern Ireland because we knew that would be the most difficult challenge that the UK leaving the EU would present. And we have now got an agreement with the EU, the 'Windsor Framework', on trade between GB and Northern Ireland, but this can also be improved. And we have to remember with our trade negotiations with the EU with respect to Northern Ireland that for us, Northern Ireland is always going to be existential, for them it will become less and less important over time and things that we might not have been able to get a year ago, in three years we will be able to get, and now we have these bodies like the 'Implementation monitoring' or the 'UK Inter Trade' that can look at how the Windsor Framework is working. The EU is very good at saying "tell us if its not working" so we will be able to tell them where its not working, how it can be improved and having run the system that moves 50,000 traders between GB and Northern Ireland I can tell you that very small changes in the Windsor Framework can make very big effects in terms of making it easier and in terms of what we have to do, to give Northern Ireland the economic future that I think it can have and for it to become an economic generator for the UK we need to make sure that goods moving between GB and Northern Ireland that are staying in the internal market of the UK have a much, much smoother and easier ride than goods that are moving at risk of going into Ireland.

The Windsor Framework I would regard as the first step, only the first step in that process and there are many steps that we need to take to make it progressively easier and easier to do that because if we can do that then Northern Ireland is in a very extraordinary position, which no-one intended at the beginning of this process for it to be in, but it is in a position to be where if you are manufacturing anywhere in Europe or the UK and you want to reach the GB and Irish and European market, the best place to put your manufacturing facility is Northern Ireland. That becomes even more important if you are dealing with products where tariffs are high. So there's a whole range of manufacturing facilities that we are talking to about moving to Northern Ireland, to take advantage of this and in terms of the guarantee of Northern Ireland's place in the Union, there's nothing better than that kind of prosperity to guarantee its place in the Union. And the fact that it is also intimately connected through these trade routes to Scotland, through Northern Ireland to Ireland to GB through Wales, that connector between Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland of trucks that are constantly cycling back and forth is critical to trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain and so Northern Ireland benefits by all

of that but it also benefits from the UK trade agreements, so if all these things I've talked about - the US deals, the CTPPT, services agreements, all these things and I'm a financial services company in Belfast, I benefit from all of these things. Where as my goods manufacturer down the road benefits from having tariff free, process free access to the GB and to the EU, so we need to make the most of that.

*(The Full speech is available on the Together UK Foundation YouTube Channel.)*



### Speech by Patrick Harkness

As others have said before me, the facts on the ground are unionist. But the facts have always struggled to get their boots on. And in any referendum about the future of our country, a contest between truth and romance will not be easily won. Should our opponents secure their referendum they will deploy emotive words such as freedom and unity as thought-terminating cliches, while our argument is going to depend far more on making people actually think.

We need to express the positive value of our union, today, in a way that will resist the charisma of our opponents tomorrow. If we can lay that groundwork, I believe that our opponents will find it more difficult to galvanise public opinion and their divisive, literally divisive, referendum might well be avoided altogether.

So, I would like to discuss how to make that positive and universalist case for the United Kingdom, because many people, the growing centre ground, are simply not responsive to the quasi-tribalist arguments that appeared to dominate in the past. I think this is a good thing. I also think that, in a Northern Irish context, tribalism is not a fair characterisation of historical fact. There were very very sound reasons why decent, unbigoted people did not want to become known to their neighbours across the divide.

However, you do not have to be much younger than me to not remember how life used to be.

So new arguments are needed. Perhaps new is not the right word, because these arguments have always existed and I have always been persuaded by them. We all, I hope, are in the business of following arguments to their conclusion, not inventing new reasons to support

unfalsifiable beliefs. Perhaps, not new but asymmetric arguments is a better way of describing what we need. Arguments that our opponents cannot easily counter with a superficial fact and a slick soundbite.

You see, we all know how this goes. When compelled to deal with reality, as opposed to romance, our opponents will deflect. Cherry-pick data. They will say, look at the Republic's higher per-capita GDP, for example. We could counter that Dublin's GDP is inflated by corporate tax avoidance. We might even go on the offensive, and point to the UK's better success with decarbonisation. They would reply, of course, that the UK simply moved its carbon offshore, which is a debatable point. And so it would go on, and the centre ground – which we need to secure – would consider the whole thing to be a tedious draw, and tune out.

That's all our opponents need to do, to win their referendum. Secure a draw on our turf, followed by a win on their own. How did they do it? Well, they managed to precipitate a superficial and introspective exchange, which suppressed both deeper and wider thought. And that exchange allowed the two options to appear broadly equal in scope, which was useful for those with a riskier option to sell. We did not cut through on specifics, but rather we simply completed the pointless, never-ending exchange our opponents wanted to have. What I recited a moment ago was thought-terminating, it raised the emotional salience, and it framed everything as their new offering versus our old one.

So, we should not play this game, at least not as a main strategy. We should not offer to complete the other side of nationalism's or-statement, by helpfully providing our past as a foil to its future. We should offer something far grander. We shouldn't offer an or-statement. We should offer an and-statement.

We should focus on how, as part of the UK, we can be anything any Ireland can be, and more besides. We can have something else, something additional, something that we could not have any other way.

We can do this because, as part of the UK, we have the critical mass required to aim higher than some local per-capita metric. We can consider the overall picture, on a global scale, and beyond. We were able to suppress the slave trade, in the nineteenth century, because we had access to the total GDP required. We were able to discover ozone depletion, in the twentieth century, because we had the scientific-logistical heft to do so. We were able to design a major vaccine for Covid, in the twenty-first century, because we had the infrastructure and ecosystem on standby.



These are things that can be done through the collective efforts of seventy million people, that cannot so easily be done through the collective efforts of five, regardless of the local analysis. Think of things that have changed the world. Think of progress. Steam engines, petrol engines, stirling engines, jet engines, rocket engines. Antibiotics, aeroplanes, automobiles, internet. Electricity and timekeeping. DNA, MRI, LEDs. Refrigeration. Pasteurisation. I could go on.

Where were these things created? I don't mean the nationality of the innovator, because human ingenuity is without borders. I mean, where did the conditions exist for anyone to create these things, regardless of who actually did?

Well, in that list, one tally would be: UK 7, USA 5, Germany 3, France 1. The precise count is debatable, but my point is that these are all larger economies, able to offer the support of a wider academic, economic, and industrial base. In many cases, they innovators left their home countries to access the resources they needed. Tesla was Serbian, but he made it happen, for everyone, in the United States of America.

Why does this tend to occur?

I think it is because smaller economies find it harder to justify strategic and ongoing investment in the most ambitious and long-term research.

This is because, with reduced resources, you can pursue fewer individual projects. And when each project is a salient investment, your appetite for risk in that project – and therefore in every project – has to go down. Your profile tends towards safer improvement and refinement, in selected areas, with an emphasis on foreseeable and bounded outcomes. This is entirely proper. The world becomes a better place, every single day, through incremental improvement, but the nature of the incremental journey means that we sometimes fail to notice that it works.

This is unfair, and I would like to take a moment to recognise that endeavour. However, I also feel that we, in the UK and countries like it, have a broader approach. We can do 'safe' incremental improvement, and we can afford to take the bigger risks as well, because not everything needs to work. We can 'dare mighty things', as Teddy Roosevelt had it. And it is only by daring mighty things that we can deliver transformational change. Let's consider MRI, for example. A remarkable achievement that saves lives, all over the world. It was enabled by nuclear physicists who did not set out to build a scanner. Their work might have led nowhere,

and many avenues of fundamental research lead precisely there. But this one, one among many, did not. This one led to a Nobel Prize.

Taking such risks on fundamental science, despite not knowing what the results might be, is something you can only do if your economy has the critical mass to take the probable loss. Don't fall for 'small is nimble'. You have to be able to afford to fail, time and time again, because if you cannot afford to fail then you cannot afford to try. And if you cannot try, you will find it much more difficult to uncover anything truly new. It is only the ability to pursue the truly new that can drive transformational added value, on a global scale.

Kathleen Lonsdale, for example, was from Kildare, but she unlocked crystallography in London.

Ernest Shackleton was also from Kildare, but he reached furthest south in a British expedition.

Ernest Walton was from Waterford, but he split the atom in the United Kingdom.

I can think of fewer counterexamples, fewer journeys to greatness, that run in the opposite direction. What we are doing, here, together, seems to work.

But don't take my word for it. Nullius in verba. Read the remit of SFI, which funds research in the Republic of Ireland; and STFC, its near-equivalent in the UK. These are partial quotes, but they are not mischaracterisations:

1. [SFI] research promotes and assists the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment in Ireland. [1]
2. [STFC] funds research in these core areas: astronomy, solar and planetary science, particle physics, particle astrophysics, nuclear physics, etc. It goes on. [2]

Do you see the difference? One is, broadly, about working towards a pre-recognised or expected purpose in a particular place, and the other is about looking into the wide unknown to see what happens. Both have value, but that unknown, that is where you find the MRI machines. I think we should maintain our greater ability and higher ambition to find more such transformational things, and I think that the reasonable centre ground would agree. Why would we abandon our fullest potential to drive global progress for all? Why would we resile from the honour of helping so many talented people attain their goals? What could new flags, and new songs, for the benefit of ourselves alone, ever do to compensate such a loss?

Our opponents, if we allow them, will paint their forced choice as a zero-sum, this-or-that proposal. It is nothing

of the kind. We, and the wider world, have a lot to lose, and even more not to never even find.

We move on. A better world can be better sought, but it must be better protected too.

We know this applies locally. The Republic of Ireland often calls upon the British Army to evacuate its citizens from places like Afghanistan and Sudan. It needs our aircraft to protect its transatlantic cables. It relies upon our warships to drive Russian submarines away from its ports. We should be doing this. As De Valera said, they are our people too. And yet, our nationalist opponents say that we, in Northern Ireland, doing all this, should simply down tools. I am not so sure. There is nobody else here.

But what about the wider world? I like Ukraine. I can speak a little Ukrainian. And I have been to Ukraine, in fact eastern Ukraine, many times, before the war. I imagine, I certainly hope, that it is not controversial to say that we all wish Ukraine to succeed in its efforts to repel the Russian invasion. How can we best make this happen?

Well, the Republic of Ireland offers safe haven to refugees, and Dublin's financial aid currently runs to about 135 million Euro. That is a significant contribution, but it is not unique: as part of the UK we do the same things. As it happens, the scale of the UK's support to Ukraine is around seven times greater, on a per capita basis [3], but that means little. A microstate could donate money at the same per capita rate, if it chose to do so.

No, the real added value is the and-statement again. It is the capability that we can only deliver as part of the UK – much of it actually built in Belfast – because that capability can only be created through large-scale strategic investment on a decadal scale. It is, again, a matter of critical mass. That critical mass is not coming from anywhere else. Surely we have a duty not to walk away from it. Surely we have a duty not to stop doing, and just keep paying, as our opponents are forced to argue.

Of course, our opponents would not pitch their arguments in this way. They would rather point out, say, that our voice in the UN General Assembly would be amplified, with one seat representing 7 million people instead of 70. But this would be more deflection. The part of the UN that really matters is the Security Council, and there, as part of the UK, we always have a seat, and we always have a veto. I cannot see how swapping those two 'always' for one 'sometimes, and one 'never', would be a step forward.

That UN veto, held by the US, France, Russia, and China, as well as ourselves, has interesting consequences. The law of the Republic holds that its soldiers may not be deployed overseas, in all but the smallest numbers, without the permission of the UN. In practical terms, then, that means that they may not be deployed without the permission of those five states.

When evil threatens, three of those five will agonise over the ethics of intervention. The other two, I assure you, will not. Never mind choosing to do nothing, they will demand that we do nothing, and as part of the Republic of Ireland we would be all-but duty bound to comply. You don't have to be Edmund Burke to know what comes next.

I am simply not up for this kind of future. We in Northern Ireland, as part of the UK, need never do nothing. From a practical standpoint we have the ability to act, and from an ethical standpoint, we have the freedom to act. These are not freedoms I would like to lose. Sometimes these interventions are lauded by the international community, and sometimes they are not. But surely either is better than being compelled, by the Kremlin, to do nothing at all.

What about soft power, then? The ability to influence others, rather than taking action yourself? Can that compensate?

Well, there is no doubt that the Republic holds considerable sway over Mr. Biden. There is also a certain dynamic with respect to the EU that must be acknowledged as having borne fruit, regardless of the ethics used to obtain it. But, Biden and Brexit will not last forever. There are four major rankings of soft power, and the UK's most common placement is second, globally [4]. We have very little to gain here, and much to lose. An example. Ten years ago the United States contemplated military action against Syria, or more accurately against the Syrian government. There was a vote in the UK House of Commons about whether or not to participate, and the decision was taken not to, on a majority of thirteen.

The New York Daily News ran the headline, "The British Aren't Coming", and the plan was shelved. And that was that. For good or ill, a global hyperpower decided not to go it alone, on the basis of thirteen votes in the House of Commons.

Northern Ireland has eighteen votes. I do not believe that we could have that kind of influence anywhere other than where we are. Of course, not all global issues are driven by bad actors. Sometimes bad things just happen. This is where international development and resilience

comes in. What constitutional position gives us the best foundation from which to help those most in need, through no fault of their own?

Well, naturally, both the Republic and the UK fund the World Health Organisation, with the UK's contribution this time running about five times higher on a per capita basis [5]. This number is, as before, simply a political decision. While I personally support our more generous stance, it is entirely possible to find either level of funding reasonable, and campaign to change that level, within the boundaries of either state.

However, it is only as part of the UK that we can additionally operate permanent medical research facilities in The Gambia, and deploy hydrographic survey ships to map African harbours. It is only our critical mass that allows us to respond in a heartbeat: after typhoon Haiyan, British ships, with desalination plants, went to the scene as we flew in forklifts, helicopters, and cleanup equipment. This is what Northern Ireland can do, as part – and only as part – of the UK.

There are perhaps three or four countries that could put a field hospital anywhere in the world, this time next week. This is one of them. A new Ireland, respectfully, would not be. This bothers me. Those in distress need such things, and I think we – we who are able – owe it to the world to provide them. Northern Ireland simply could not do this, if we chose to reduce our available budget by an order of magnitude. We could not do it if we chose to become a larger part of a smaller team. So, let's not be so selfish as to step away. In fact, let's aim higher again. Let's save the planet. Let's reach for the stars.

Did you know that Northern Ireland already protects 4 million square kilometres of the ocean, an area half the size of Brazil? Did you know that we drive the international effort to understand polar ice sheets and climatic tipping points? Did you know that we literally landed on Mars, the third nation to do so, in an attempt to better understand the conditions necessary for life itself? No signal was returned, sadly, but this is a task so complex that it can barely be put into words, and we were able to attempt it. We were able to dare mighty things, because we dared them together. Think of the inspiration value for our young people, and the potential for positive impact on a global scale. What would we gain, by giving this up, that we do not already have? I cannot help but feel that our opponents will struggle to answer.

This is my case. Genuinely, on progress, security, and the environment – and I have more – I have tried to put

our opponents' case at its highest, and yet I still cannot help but to come to the conclusion that our current status offers all the advantages of the Republic – which is a successful, modern, and prosperous state – and the advantages of the UK, which offers all of the above plus a global presence that ranks in the top five or six, worldwide, in almost any field of endeavour that you might consider to be important.

The next question, then, is how to ensure that this enormous added value might be best preserved for future generations. I come back to the and-statement. The Republic does not have a monopoly on Irishness. We can offer an Ireland, and a United Kingdom too. We can offer an Irish passport that lets us do some things in burgundy, and an Irish passport that lets us do the other thing, in blue. Everything we have discussed is only possible when we leverage the best of both Irelands. The soft power, and the hard. The incremental improvement, and the transformational change. The donation of funds, and the delivery of hardware. The doctors in the field, and the deployable hospital for them to work in. We need to start selling that. We need a decent, long-term integrationist vision, and we need to start working towards it.

There has not been an Irish Prime Minister since Wellington. We should be working towards the next one. We should be seeking zero-tolerance of terrorist-adjacent parades and the use of criminals' names in sport. We should be seeking an end to segregated education. This is not the old bothsidesism. Strategic normalisation doesn't entrench a divided society, it overcomes it. This is important because our long-term goal, and that is what we need to be aiming for, must be a Northern Ireland that is not defined by its divide. For as long as that divide exists, our future will always be precarious. Think again about that divide. Whom does it serve? It serves our opponents. It allows them to stoke grievances, and call our country unpleasant names. It is a necessary part of their emotional case, and fighting over it ultimately provides their only mechanism for moving their border northwards.

So, why not take unilateral action to eliminate the divide? Why not tear down this wall?

Think about it. Normal societies, the sort of societies to which we must aspire, do not have unionists. No-one calls themselves a French unionist. The United States stopped having unionists in the 1860s. Germany stopped having unionists in the 1990s. Nobody seeks the return of the Confederacy, or the DDR, because the unionists have gone. These societies worked to eliminate their divides, and they are more stable and more prosperous as a result.



They did what we need to do on a decadal scale. So, what if we just started? What if unionist representatives redesignated as ‘other’, with our unionism only implied, as is the case in every other normal society? This process is happening anyway, as the centre grows, so why not turn the crisis into an opportunity?

What could nationalism do, without its fault line and opponent beyond? And what would we have lost? Nothing. In fact, we would have made concrete progress towards our own strategic objectives.

Get asymmetric. This is basic Sun Tzu. This has worked for three thousand years.

Let’s get out of our comfort zone, and instead bring forward objective and generalised arguments that our opponents simply cannot counter.

Let’s set ourselves a generational objective of strategic normalisation that unifies our people around the idea of a new and pluralist Northern Ireland that can do everything the republic can do, and more besides. There is nothing wrong with being a unionist. To return my opening theme, it is a reflection of how things used to be, for reasons that you can only understand if you were there. I am enormously proud of our conduct, from my earliest memories to the present day. We faced down a cruel, criminal insurgency with a patient and courageous dignity that, to my mind, knows no equal. Our opponents still refuse to condemn the most unspeakable atrocities, and yet we do not repay their unhealing currency in kind. I would not have it any other way. But if we are going to secure that legacy, we can no longer be defined by it, as proud as it may be. We are going to have to aim even higher again. But the whole point of my argument this morning has been that, together, we can.

[1] <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

[2] <https://www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/remit-portfolio-and-priorities/>

[3] <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/>

[4].[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft\\_power#:~:text=The%20ranking%20is%20based%20on,digital%20engagement%20with%20the%20world.%22](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_power#:~:text=The%20ranking%20is%20based%20on,digital%20engagement%20with%20the%20world.%22)

[5] <https://open.who.int/2018-19/contributors/contributor>



### **John Wilson Foster Bucks Talk**

“If Way to the Better There Be”: Nationalism, Unionism and the United Kingdom

I’m delighted to be here at a campus of the University of Buckingham and I thank Dame Arlene, Andrew Grocock and the symposium’s organising committee for inviting me to speak and participate. Of course, ideally we wouldn’t need to be here - but here we are, trying in our own ways to help keep the United Kingdom a kingdom united. I’m taking the title of my own modest effort today from two lines from Thomas Hardy’s poem “In Tenebris II”:

. . . . if way to the Better there be,  
It exacts a full look at the Worst

And the Worst for me means the hostile forces now operating against the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

After thirteen years living in County Down, Northern Ireland, my wife and I returned to British Columbia, Canada in the autumn of 2021. I had lived in Vancouver since 1974 when I was appointed Assistant Professor of English while living in Dublin from 1972 and, before that, in Belfast from 1970, having returned in 1970 from Oregon where I finished my five years of doctoral studies at the University of Oregon. I was born, raised, and educated in Belfast where I lived until, aged twenty-three, I flew from Heathrow in a BOAC Super VC-10 to the end of the historic Oregon Trail - the Willamette Valley where the town of Eugene sits. I return to the UK, to Northern Ireland, often, carrying as I do two well-used passports.

Before returning to BC in 2021, a website for returning Canadian expatriates warned us that Canada had changed and so had we. The website was correct. I suspect the changes we found were most evident in the Lower Mainland and in southern Vancouver Island (where we now live) in British Columbia; in the city of Toronto; and by all accounts in the province of Quebec. The changes were to the physical and social worlds but also to the world of opinion and policy that helps shape the physical and social worlds. Through high-volume immigration Toronto had grown by one million residents since I taught a term at the University of Toronto in 2005. Vancouver too had grown, with huge gleaming cartons of offices and condos (forty, fifty or sixty storeys high) packed and stacked into the downtown, monuments to wealth and globalism. It is no longer the rather frayed and friendly large town on the edge of the Empire that it was when I arrived there in 1974, with old-world Greek and Italian quarters, and an old nationalist Chinese Chinatown, and a major street, Robson Street, then called Robsonstrasse.

The city of Richmond adjoining Vancouver to the south was even more Chinese with a significant degree of cultural, linguistic and even economic autonomy wielded by the newcomers. Surrey, adjoining Vancouver to the south-east, had now become the second largest city in BC, overtaking the capital Victoria on Vancouver Island, and characterised now by its huge Indo-Canadian population. And also, worryingly, by its vicious armed gangs, one of which rejoices, perhaps with ironic wit, in the name “United Nations”.

So population growth, global presence and accelerating ethnic and cultural diversification were some of the changes since I left in 2008. Here is not the time or place to ponder the effect of these on the future cohesion of Canadian society and of Canadian politics. Suffice it to say that so far these changes have been of scale, not of nature. The changes had been happening since the 1980s with the introduction of the federal policy of Multiculturalism, championed by Trudeau the Elder, and an immigrant investment program leading to early residence and citizenship for wealthy incomers from offshore, who proved at first to be mainly from British Hong Kong and latterly from mainland Communist China.

But in Quebec, scale had indeed shaded into nature. While the Rest of Canada (RoC) had grown markedly diverse through Multiculturalism, Quebec was doubling down on its historic identity and heritage. By 2022 when the Québec government passed Bill 96, an amendment to the Charter of the French Language, promoting the use of the French language in the province, it was also

referring to itself as “the Québec nation” (without, as far as I know, any federal objection). And a nation within a nation Quebec now is, in effect, as the late commentator Rex Murphy pointed out. And with some plausibility, since the province has its own immigration policy, its own official language policy and its own trade rules among its other enviable powers. A friend who teaches in the province tells me that one of the features of Quebec nationalism, its informal policy of de-Anglicisation, proceeds apace. This is what Douglas Hyde dreamed of when he announced “The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland” in 1892, though Hyde thought you could have de-Anglicisation and restrict it to culture, though he soon learned the political implications of linguistic and cultural engineering.

Despite the decline in the power of the Catholic Church from the 1960s (before which Catholicism was a chief contributor to provincial identity), despite the loss of two sovereignty referenda, in 1980 and 1995, Quebec nationalism has rolled on, with cultural and linguistic nationalism filling the void left by a depleted Church and defeated political separatism of an outright kind. It has been curbed as a sovereigntist movement, as Trudeau the Younger would no doubt claim and Trudeau the Elder intended, but only because another sovereignty referendum might not in fact be needed to satisfy Quebec nationalists (though recently the desire for definitive independence has again begun to rumble in the province); cultural attrition waged against Anglo-Quebec might over time get the job of splitting Confederation done.

Quebec nationalism is a political force pampered by a Liberal federal government that ought to be its enemy. Another pampered nationalism is Irish nationalism which is treated with similar lenience by our own central government. Another similarity is that Irish nationalism shares with Quebec nationalism a Catholic foundation inside a larger Protestant constitutional entity. Irish nationalism, too, has prospered and become emboldened in its secular form after the decline of the Irish Catholic church from the 1990s, despite the fact that Catholicism was for long regarded as one of the essential pillars of Irish national identity, alongside the Irish language and a republican form of self-government outside English jurisdiction. Successive British governments, Conservative or Labour, which one would have assumed would see Irish nationalism’s threat, certainly in Northern Ireland, to the existing federation (or Union), has seemed in the eyes of Northern Irish unionists to encourage it, even when it originates in another country, and at the worrying expense of those same unionists.

How to explain the survival of Quebec nationalism?

In the eyes of other Canadians it is not the charismatic movement or force it very briefly was in the 1970s. Indeed, recent Canadian immigrants from such quarters of the globe as India, Hong Kong, mainland China, and the Philippines would hardly care about the historic tension between the two founding nations or the possibility of Quebec secession. A growing indifference in the Rest of Canada to what had once been a national crisis has perhaps contributed to the quiet success of Quebec identitarianism. And would I be cynical or wrong to suggest that Trudeau the Elder, troubled by the simmering hostility between the Two Solitudes (as Hugh McLennan famously called them in his 1945 novel of that name), thought Multiculturalism the answer - diversify one of those Solitudes to make many solitudes (though he didn't out it like that) and the hostility is dampened? The power of Quebec nationalism became soft but more effective power. If Trudeau succeeded, it was at the expense of the identity of that entity called RoC, no longer just Anglophone or European but multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural.

But how to explain the even greater attraction of Irish nationalism to British governments, and even, it seems, to much of the opinion-makers of mainland UK? Or at least, to explain the failure to confront its threat to the Union even in periods of striking Anglophobia, for example during the protracted Brexit negotiations? Just read the Irish Times of the period or Fintan O'Toole's broadside *Heroic Failure: Brexit and the Politics of Pain* to get the picture. Extraordinarily, the British government took no serious umbrage. In 1945, George Orwell, reviewing a Sean O'Casey autobiography, explained the English failure to condemn the Anglophobia of Irish nationalism as England's colonial guilt. "Why is it", he asked, "that the worst extremes of jingoism and racialism have to be tolerated when they come from an Irishman?" "England's bad conscience" was his answer. "It is difficult to object to Irish nationalism without seeming to condone centuries of English tyranny and exploitation". No doubt that plays a role, and if so, Irish-America was, during the Troubles, a menacing oblique reminder. And if so, Ulster unionism is its collateral damage.

An English friend and university colleague in Vancouver, once gave me another explanation. Jack, he said, England only respects those who stand up to it. She respects the Americans but not the Canadians, the Australians but not the New Zealanders, the Indians but not (I forget his alternative in this case), Irish republicans but not Ulster loyalists. That may be fanciful, but whatever the reason, the negative image of Northern Irish unionists (offsetting the positive image of Irish nationalists) has driven me to mild despair. When did I last read a heartfelt defence and promotion of Northern

Ireland's place in the United Kingdom from Great Britain? All seems begrudgery and tokenism when it isn't distaste and a genuine desire for unionism to accept its inevitable fate to be erased during Irish unification. (It may be that on a larger and world-significant scale, Israel is about to occupy a comparably unenviable status.) Northern Ireland is something of a constitutional orphan and a grumbling appendix in the UK body politic.

How can we improve the image of Northern Irish unionists in Great Britain and by doing so generate serious support for Northern Irish unionism and indirectly (and ipso facto) for the whole Union? Well, one way is for unionist politicians urgently to re-imagine themselves, and then conduct themselves as, well, unionists: promoters and stewards of the whole Union. As long as I remember, unionist politicians have seemed minor provincial figures with a shrunken devolutionary worldview. By the time I had become politically half-aware, the aristocratic unionists had withdrawn (for example, Lord Londonderry along with his ahead-of-the-curve wish for integrated education) and likewise what's been called the "linenocracy" (broadly defined to include engineers of British stature). From the early 1970s, the IRA terrorists drove unionist business and manufacturing people underground and out of politics (that was surely the terrorists' plan, all pseudo-Marxist nonsense in the 1973 Sinn Fein/IRA manifesto to the contrary). And when the dust settled on the back streets and the town centres, the lower middle class and working class (those who had been closer to the ferocity and violence, to be fair) were largely in charge. Many of them brave but many of them unfit to govern beyond town council level. I myself derive from that stratum of Northern Irish - sceptical, cynical, reluctant to cooperate or share, pessimistic. Not a lovable population and unblessed by warm personalities, though I say it myself. Today, the pro-Union parties can't bring themselves to unite or even cooperate - a thran people, as we used to say in our Ulster Scots, and often our own worst enemies. But of inalienable British identity.

Whether or not a huge, expensive Public Relations exercise (which I've contemplated without of course the necessary wallet) could rescue the image of Northern Irish unionism, I don't know. But such an exercise oughtn't to be necessary. It might do wonders if the English, Scots and Welsh saw Ulster unionists pitching in to British issues and concerns and eloquently championing the ties that bind us all, as the Scots Neil Oliver has done in his short pro-Union manifesto. In my own small act of practical symbolism, I voted for Brexit because I voted as a citizen of the Kingdom; to leave the EU was, I decided, in the best interests of my country, the UK; to vote Leave was to vote to remand the UK



in the custody of a vast bureaucracy. (Had I voted in devolved garb as a resident of Northern Ireland I might have voted Remain, as I know some unionists did.) So the Protocol and Windsor Framework have been bitter pills for a UK Brexiteer to swallow.

I wonder, too, if a series of symposia like this one, but bilateral, between the nations and regions of the Union, would help? A series of cultural *têtes-a-têtes*, as it were. That would be six bilateral symposia in the first series, if my arithmetic is right. They could investigate and promote the historic and current cultural (rather than political) intimacies between the nations and provinces at the more intimate level of the bilateral. Although politicians could be invited as auditors and secondary participants, they would be there chiefly to learn from the cultural historians, writers and artists. The series could be called “Ties that Bind” after my friend and colleague Graham Walker’s recent book (co-written with James Greer) - *Ties that Bind: Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Union*. Worth a try perhaps; after all it is, I think, in the Northern Ireland case, the apparent and erroneous cultural foreignness of Ulster unionism (and the Northern Irish generally) that repels many in Britain, chiefly because the media, the politicians and the commentariat lazily equate historic loyalist display culture (parades, bonfires, sashes, flags and banners) with culture in Northern Ireland. But culture in Northern Ireland is chiefly the shared culture of the UK, from the national narratives down to the minutiae of daily life.. One lesson might be learned from such symposia - the central impact of English culture, in its widest sense, on the whole archipelago. The wealth and health of England and English culture and history are the mainstay of our Union.

But we must be realistic. Between Ulster unionists and the Rest of the UK (RoUK) stands the sleepless Irish nationalists. I don’t think turning Ulster unionists into less unattractive figures is enough, or even possible, without confronting and facing down aggressive Irish nationalism, the enemy not just of Northern unionists but also of British unionism. Irish nationalists see their enterprise as a zero-sum game, which is why they are entirely uninterested in what makes unionists tick and why their own idea of a “debate” about Irish unity is a one-way discussion of the nuts and bolts of a consummating inevitability. No Republic of Ireland political party or high profile political figure questions the national necessity of an impending united Ireland (or the fracturing of the UK, in other words). Speaking of big nuts and big bolts. The Trinity College Dublin economist John Fitzgerald recently annoyed unificationists by estimating the financial cost to the Republic of unifying North and South at 20 billion euro.

Now he has backtracked by looking again at the nuts and bolts. He has now told a Southern joint committee on the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement (now widely seen by nationalists as the imprimatur for unification) that if Northern Ireland was to reform its education system to make it more democratic, it would reduce the cost of a unification. That’s ok, then, John. We’ll do that for you. Anything to help our own extinction.

Unilateral detailed discussion at the Fitzgerald and Brendan O’Leary level is a way of gaslighting unionists. It has had some success. When a unionist Stormont minister says she doesn’t contemplate a united Ireland in her lifetime, she has been gaslit. To offer one’s lifetime at the age of forty-four as the possible life expectancy of the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland seems to me to accept the inevitability of the break-up of that Union.

The problem, as I see it, is this, and it is independent of Northern Ireland, though Northern Ireland is damaged by it - Irish nationalism exerts a power on Britain seemingly beyond policy or politics, in the realm of image, imagination, even unacknowledged desire. Perhaps one could trace its strange allure to the romanticism of mid- and late 19th-century English and Anglo-Irish novelists. That was followed by the decided attraction of that literary and cultural revival spearheaded by Yeats, Synge and others between the 1890s and 1920s. (A literary revival that ignored all Irish literature that depicted Irish-English intimacies - and there was a great deal of it, as I tried to show in my Oxford University Press book, *Irish Novels 1890-1940*.) The allure seems not to have really subsided or been tested beside reality. Indeed, as we Northern Irish unionists know to our cost, reality has so far been no match for Irish nationalism. British politicians seem to be believe, or affect to believe, or lead us to assume they believe, that there is something unreal, childlike or immaterial about Irish nationalism - despite those years of republican outrage on mainland soil and the deaths of British soldiers. Some odd cognitive dissonance is at work. Some peculiar combination of misguided liberalism and somnambulism, something at the very back of the mind, the power of what resides in the attic. How to de-mystify and de-charmatise (if I can invent a word) Irish nationalism is the challenge. Orwell did it effortlessly.

Its persistent spell allowed a Times journalist, for example, in a column last week to write a long, jokey, admiring profile of the Irish language rappers Kneecap, whose name is derived from the notorious IRA punishment to which the columnist even makes a jokey

reference without reminding his readers what happens when vigilantes put a bullet in their often underage abductees' kneecaps and sometimes their ankles as well to complete "a four-pack". Kneecap has painted a mural in west Belfast demanding "England get Out of Ireland", but it's just good fun even though all the Republic's political parties are indirectly saying the same thing and meaning it. (And make no mistake - we unionists are also England in this regard.) Their second mural depicts a police Land Rover on fire with "RUC Not Welcome" daubed underneath. They will shortly be performing at Glastonbury, Leeds and Reading and the English fans will lap them up. A Northern Irish columnist has written: "There'd be less romanticism around Kneecap if they were loyalists". Indeed. The columnist was Mairia Cahill, the Catholic woman who alleged she was raped as a teenager by a senior IRA member.

From 2016 the Republic gave Britain a very hard time over Brexit: the Republic was the EU's cat's paw, but the EU was also the Republic's cat's paw: the two were playing different if parallel games. The EU was concerned to punish the UK; the Republic was concerned to achieve a leap towards a united Ireland and thus a blow against the UK. Despite this, in 2019 Simon Coveney - the UK's chief bugbear during Brexit - the UK and Ireland reaffirmed the Common Travel Area by which, among other things, hundreds of thousands of southern Irish happily live, work and vote in the UK. I'm quite sure that the Republic envisages, in the event of a united Ireland (i.e. wresting Northern Ireland from the UK), the CTA continuing, Irish citizens gaily enjoying unfettered access to the UK while unionists are deprived of their British citizenship (though they might, I suppose, enjoy some British Overseas Citizenship sop status).

I wonder if mainland politicians assume even without thinking that Irish nationalism is no threat to them. That hurting the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland doesn't hurt the Union of Great Britain; it is something as innocuous as an appendectomy. Take the Protocol, for example, and its alias the Windsor Framework. Yet Orwell reminded us in 1945 that nationalism is inseparable from the desire for power, that it thinks in terms of competitive prestige. If so, Ireland's gain will be the UK's loss. When the Framework was announced, Tom McTague in *Unherd*, Mick Hume in *Spiked*, and Brendan O'Neill in *Spiked* all said it had negative ramifications for the whole UK. Fraser Myers in *Spiked* claimed that the Protocol "will do nothing to fulfil the Brexit promise of restoring the UK's sovereignty". But all have been ignored, the prevailing assumption being that what happens to Northern Ireland doesn't truly affect the Rest of the UK (RoUK). (And alas those mainland opponents seem to have fallen silent,

Ulster unionists once more alone.) Yet I found myself thinking, melodramatically, I agree, of Kipling's lines in his 1912 poem "Ulster", written at the time unionists feared they were being delivered into the hands of the Catholic Church and Irish republicanism - and time proved them utterly justified, by the way, though no one, least of all the southern Irish, have acknowledged they were absolutely correct; instead all we hear is about the iniquity of partition, a political solution at the time which saved my grandparents' bacon, and the bacon of all the Protestants, agnostics and atheists in the north of the island.

But back to Kipling's lines: these: "If England drive us forth/We shall not fall alone". Dorothy Sayers wrote a patriotically defiant poem in 1940 when things looked grim and she called it "The English War". It contains the premise-line: "The single island, like a tower/Ringed with an angry host". (Ignoring for reasons of a Shakespearian flourish and the drama of a nation at bay the fact that we in Northern Ireland were also fighting Hitler from our industrial arsenal. And likewise the Scots.) I can't help thinking that in the event of Irish republicanism succeeding in wresting Northern Ireland from the UK and achieving the final border down the Irish Sea, the single remaining island might suddenly seem a little shrunken and with an emboldened Republic to its west with its entirely different geopolitical view of the world, as the strenuously anti-Israel, pro-Palestine foreign policy of the Republic is exemplifying. In 1945 Orwell wrote: "Eire can only remain independent because of British protection". Recent commentators have said the same thing and the February 2024 Policy Exchange report by Hendriks and Halem, *Closing the Back Door: Northern Ireland's Role in British National Security*, analyses the Republic of Ireland's security negligence and costly dependence (costly to the British taxpayer, that is) on the UK and NATO for its defence, a kind of homology to the happy success of Southern Irish talent in Britain while home politicians equally happily design ways of reducing the UK to Sayers' "single island". Hendriks and Halem stress the importance of British Northern Ireland to the security of the UK and the defence integrity of the UK with Northern Ireland an integral portion of the kingdom.

For its whole existence since 1922, but particularly since the IRA terror campaign began in 1969, followed by the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 and further Declarations and Frameworks leading to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, followed by Brexit and the Protocol, Northern Ireland has been on the business end of a hostile Irish joint policy of what is now called in the "progressive" world Decolonisation and Indigenisation. That is, if we reduce Decolonisation to what is now called British

settler colonialism and Indigenisation to what is regarded (or rather, imagined) by nationalists as the natural and original state of Irish sovereignty, which included a ubiquitous fluency in the Irish language, which the recent Irish Language Act (NI) is attempting to simulate. After the failure of the terrorist campaign, and protracted political manoeuvrings, Irish republicans, including anti-IRA constitutional nationalists, have since Brexit chosen instead to obey, through an impressive suite of economic, cultural, professional and political mechanisms, Hyde's imperative to De-Anglicise Northern Ireland.

The Northern Irish poet Seamus Heaney once remarked that it seems like the whole world is becoming Ulsterised. When I returned to Canada I thought I saw, *mutatis mutandis*, what he meant. The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission published its findings in 2015 and proposed 94 calls to action. They can be broadly brought under the headings of what the Canadian government adopted as Decolonization and Indigenization. A year later, Justin Trudeau told the *New York Times* that Canada is a brand-new kind of country with no history in the ordinary sense (its colonial history to be erased) but rather a "pan-cultural heritage. . . . There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada".

So the real danger to RoC - or rather "this thing called Canada", as the progressive now say with smug scare quotes - is less Quebec nationalism (which Trudeau leaves untrammelled) than the new *Zeitgeist* being contrived in the Rest of Canada. Decolonisation, which essentially means the removal of salient traces of British "discovery", settlement and development, is now implemented with vigour by government departments, museums, galleries, schools and universities, particularly in British Columbia and Ontario. Likewise its partner Indigenisation which means much more than affirmative action in hiring. White educators mean by it nativising the whole curriculum, not just creating Indigenous syllabuses; it is less about inclusion than replacement. It means nativising pedagogy, educational missions, values and goals, redefining education and our very idea of a university, even of knowledge itself by which science is reduced to "western science" since Indigenous "knowledges" (all is plural in universities today) is equal to, indeed often superior to, western knowledge, culture, civilisation. Anyone who seriously objects, as the Indigenous Studies expert, Professor Frances Widdowson, did, is fired as she was from Mount Royal University and is now legally fighting back. The political and constitutional implications of all this are entirely unknown.

Decolonisation and Indigenisation are having very real consequences, among them censoring and cancellation.

Belfry Theatre in BC's capital Victoria recently cancelled performances of *The Runner*, a hitherto acclaimed and intense Canadian play by Christopher Morris about an Israeli first responder who tends to a wounded Arab girl instead of attending to the body of an Israeli soldier she's suspected of having killed. The play is about the protagonist's attempt to salvage humanity amidst warring tribal forces, but any such virtue was rejected by pro-Palestinian activists who refused to countenance any play from a, quote, "settler colonialist" perspective and that contained an iota of sympathy for an Israeli character. The activists daubed the theatre with graffiti, and in a petition demanded cancellation, with which the theatres in Victoria and Vancouver complied. This is at the behest of Decolonisation. Another award-winning play, *Sisters*, is by a Canadian playwright who ironically has devoted her dramatic career to staging every woke theme going. *Sisters* focuses on the journey of a young nun in an Indian Residential School from innocent surprise to complicity in the racist treatment of First Nations. But alas the play focuses on a white woman and the playwright herself is white, this disqualifying her from being allowed to stage her play. *Sisters* was promptly cancelled at the behest of Indigenisation.

The rejection of an overall European, primarily British cultural identity that gave the old Canadian mosaic and early Multiculturalism their coherence has encouraged what are emerging as diasporic nationalisms. They need not be nationalisms per se, though in the case of clashing Sikh nationalism and Hindu nationalism in Ontario recently, they are. They can be what in her book *Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations* Amy Chua calls tribalisms in the U.S. which also qualify as nationalisms in Orwell's "Notes on Nationalism" (1945). In any case, Indigenisation (whose proponents no longer wish to recognize the legitimacy of Canada) and tribalism seem to me a threat to the identity of Canada and thus to the Commonwealth. Similar radical patterns are emerging in Australia and New Zealand and, with different inflections, in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the Anglosphere, in short.

So to the threat to the Union of the nationalisms of the constituent nations and provinces - Welsh nationalism, Scottish nationalism, and Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland - can be added not only Irish republicanism based in the Republic but also the possible threat of imported diasporic nationalisms from far-flung regions of the world.

But what of the Republic of Ireland as the other English-speaking countries face troubling times? Irish diasporic nationalism in the UK is a curious phenomenon. It could be argued that Irish nationalists in Northern



Ireland are not diasporic nationalists inside the UK, except on a constitutional technicality, but are instead in their own homeland. But the thousands of Southern Irish in Great Britain are regarded by the Irish back home as a Diaspora; many of the recipients of the Irish Presidential Distinguished Service Awards are to those living, working, thriving, voting and serving society in Great Britain (but not, I assume, over the border in Northern Ireland).

But they don't conduct themselves as a Diaspora. I have done some preliminary research into the innumerable successful and high-profile Southern Irish in Great Britain, many of them in the public eye. What is apparent is the contentment of most of these figures living British lives. "No blacks, Irish or dogs" in To Let signs in the windows of logging houses is a legendary imperative belonging to some distant past. What is also apparent is their deafening silence on the success of their lives in Britain that for almost all of them would have been impossible back in Ireland. They don't break silence because I'm afraid for professional and reputational considerations they aren't brave enough to question the contemporary relevance of "The Story of Ireland" (a story of victimhood at the hands of perfidious Albion) to which all Irish politician still cleave and which prevents that reconciliation between Ireland and England that is a pre-requisite to peace and reconciliation on the island. The current President of the Republic is one of the chief purveyors of that Story. The positive experience of the Irish in England, if declared, could make nonsense of those explicit and implicit claims to victimhood still used to justify the campaign for a united Ireland; and the Irish Schadenfreude enjoyed when England's difficulty is once again Ireland's opportunity (to echo Daniel O'Connell and John Mitchel), as during the late Brexit negotiations.

If only those talented Irish in Britain could be recruited to sing the praises of England's endless opportunities for the Irish, to declare the intimacy of Britain and Ireland as something devoutly to be wished (as Liam Halligan the Telegraph's economist has done) - something that would severely reduce what is perceived by Irish republicans as the necessity of helping to break up the Union by its campaign to wrench Northern Ireland from the UK. But the Irish in Britain have so far declined to counter the Anglophobia back home. I've cudgelled my brains thinking how this liberating breakthrough could be begun. Certainly the republican orthodoxy which would have to be broken through is one maintained by a Dublin government, a set of Dublin political parties, and a Dublin commentariat in almost unanimous agreement. The result is the existence at the political level of two contradictory Irelands on the archipelago,

only one of which, alas, wields power. One lives happily inside Britain and eschews the politically declarative, the other keeps the old enmity alive on the island. The latter's relationship with England is long-standing and amounts to a complex of envy, prurience and hatred. (Many non-political Irish are less prurient about daily English culture than warmly curious and attentive: their favourite Radio-Telefis Eireann programme is Coronation Street!) I've come to believe that for many Irish political nationalists on the island Northern Ireland is a proxy issue, that Irish nationalism's issue at base is with England, a case of unfinished business that can't be put paid to because it can't be acknowledged. Northern Ireland (in whom most non-political Southern Irish are uninterested and know little about) can seem to me like pretext.

The jury, however, is out whether Irish nationalism's threat to the Union can survive two current international unfoldings - mass immigration and Gaza.

The Republic of Ireland appeared until recently to be immune from a threat to social cohesion caused by high-volume immigration and the official welcome to a torrent of asylum-seekers from unfamiliar countries of the world; it seemed to be odd man out among English-speaking nations. So it came as a surprise to many of us that this has had a destabilising impact on working-class Dublin and rural towns and villages that mirrors that impact in the UK but is more localised and eruptive. Both parts of Ireland have a long history of rioting and arson. The November 2023 riots and looting in central Dublin, propelled by working-class, north-side anti-immigrant anger inflamed by an acute housing crisis had echoes of the third act of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), set during the Easter 1916 rebellion. Then has come the burning down of hotels and halls earmarked for asylum-seekers, with its odd echoes of the burning down of the Anglo-Irish big houses, but this time the arson is by Myles na cGopaleen's (Flann O'Brien's) "Plain People of Ireland", not Sinn Fein against whom the Plain People have turned on the matter of immigration. Suddenly the people have voiced their disapproval of multiculturalism. Mind you, the Plain people on this issue are reacting as nationalists, outflanking the political parties and even Sinn Fein whom they regard as nationalist traitors. "Ireland is Full" and "No More Plantation" on the protestors' placards are nationalist catch-cries.

With Ireland newly receiving the disruptive imprint of what is happening in the big world, I was sure that the Republic would have its hands too full to worry about a united Ireland. After all, the united Ireland campaign is premised on a firmly cohesive Irish nation, so cohesive

it can absorb almost a million unionists loyal to the UK and keep its cohesion with just some shuffling of feet to accommodate the angry or anxious new citizens. Moreover, those Plain People are probably pretty anti-unionist and also tired of top-down government (be it from London and Rome before 1922 and now Brussels since 1973). But then simultaneously, events in Israel on October 7, 2023 and the ensuing Israeli response occurred, providing something of a distraction, one perhaps welcomed by the mainstream politicians. The government and political parties, losing ground and face during the anti-immigration uproar, have taken unanimous charge again with what Jake Wallis Simons in the Telegraph of May 26 calls Dublin's vindictive hostility to Jerusalem; this and the anti-Semitism in Irish society drive a wedge between nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland (unionists are pro-Israel) and more importantly between the foreign policies of the UK and the Republic.

Commentators seem agreed that the claim to victimhood is what draws Irish nationalists to the Palestinian cause though there is more to it than that. But whatever the cause, it has deep cultural roots that are not shared in Great Britain or unionist Northern Ireland. Since the memory of victimhood is a rationale for the united Ireland campaign, it perhaps oughtn't to be a surprise that the campaign is carrying on amidst popular anti-immigration unrest and party-political and government activism on behalf of Palestinian statehood. Both are twin fixations on the part of those who govern the Republic. On Saturday June 15 there was a provocative Ireland's Future rally in the SSE Arena in Belfast premised on the certainty that "A border poll on Irish unity is closer now than ever". Leo Varadkar, out of office, and apparently re-inventing himself as the unification statesman, spoke at the rally. A united Ireland must now become a political objective for all the Southern political parties and the people, he said, no longer just an aspiration. I think he must envision an historic role for himself in bringing to completion what one Ireland Future activist, standing at the border, called the 1916 Project. That Project augured ill for the UK in 1916 and does so today. TogetherUK will have to eliminate all daylight between "Together" and "UK" to defeat this Project. What I fear is that the various fronts of the united Ireland campaign including the economic fallout and expansion from the sea-border, the official spread of the Irish language for purely political and territorial purposes, and the Republic's own Belt & Road Initiative in Northern Ireland's infrastructure, might mean that virtual nationhood could come to the island over unionist objections and to the detriment of the integrity of the UK - unless we stay awake to all the threats to the United Kingdom we love.

*Postscript: Even after the UK General Election of July 4 in which the Scottish National Party collapsed, Mary Lou McDonald, President of Sinn Fein, declared that the issue of Irish reunification has "has never been more alive". She said she used her meeting with Sir Keir Starmer [July 7] to urge him not to "bury his head in the sand" on the question of Irish unity.*



## **THE STATE OF THE UNION**

### **Opening Address for the Buckingham Conference 22 June 2024**

Ladies and gentlemen. It is an honour to address so timely a conference in such precarious times. Here we are together, apprehensive climbers on a mountainside, who are hearing the rumbling of an approaching avalanche: not yet in sight, but not that far above.

My lecture touches a little on the avalanche but not the horrors coming our way, although I'm sure that we shall discuss them during the day. The state of the Union is my subject. My approach will be to take a step back and my optic historical, mainly; and cultural.

Today the Union is dilapidated. It may be disintegrating. It is certainly degenerate. Matters are worse than at any time during my now fairly long adult lifetime; but most of this un-making has occurred in one generation, since 1997. Accordingly, the structure of this lecture is simple. During the next forty minutes I will explore reasons why it has come to this; and how. That exploration carries within it a glimpse of how things might be reclaimed.

But first a necessary word on geopolitical context. With our citizens still largely unaware, we are currently engaged in a new Seven Years' War not of our choice - a war with CRINK (China, Russia, Iran & N Korea). It is going to settle geopolitics, and hence global hegemony, in their interests or in ours, just as the Franco-British world war did in Britain's favour between 1756-63. There is also similarity in conduct. Both wars were and are global simultaneously in several theatres with 'Cold' (economic), Grey (subversive) and 'Hot' (kinetic) forms of combat.

In short, we are at the end of the "end of history." The original "end of history" was interpreted as the final triumph of a 'liberal democratic' world order expressed in globalist managerialism, transcending the powers of nation-states through the agency of supranational bodies: the hunting country of David Goodhart's 'anywhere' people.

This forty-five year excursion (as we can now begin to see it to have been) began with the collapse of the USSR when - because we won - we, unlike the losers, did not feel much incentive for continuing hard thinking. We persuaded ourselves that the era of great wars was over forever. However, "...circumstances are like clouds continually gathering and bursting." So wrote John Keats to his brother and sister in February 1819 - the year of his Great Odes. His letter continued with words which are most apt for us today: "...while we are laughing, the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events. While we are laughing it sprouts, it grows and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck." What poison fruit might that be?

With all the usual caveats about polls, a Focaldata national opinion poll for D-Day reported that across all age groups and political alignments, 68% of parents would not wish their children to fight to defend Britain from invasion and, incrementally increasing, from 71% to 82% would not wish them to fight to defend our allies France, Poland, Ukraine, Taiwan or Israel in rising order. Would the Great Generation who landed on those brutal beaches recognise the country that they preserved at such cost and that we have now become: introspective, perniciously ignorant and unable to tell right from wrong?

The Union today is, politically and culturally, subject to accelerating centrifugal forces: forces that will only become stronger and less stoppable when the approaching avalanche leaps over the crags above us and smothers the Conservative and Unionist Party.

Therefore let us turn first to dilapidation and possible disintegration. Some General Election polling reported last week that, in this age where politicians of any stripe are distrusted with contempt - the lowest levels of trust ever recorded - and politics have become mean and vindictive, half of all voters and, within them, half of all Leave voters who gave or lent their votes to Boris Johnson in 2019, wish to see the oldest and until quite recently, the most successful democratic party in modern history, utterly erased. Not one seat. A Canadian-style wipe-out. Why? First and foremost because of an epic breach of trust and contract. By rights he should have picked up Cameron's petulantly discarded mantle. But in the single



most consequential political act of the last nine years, the serial political assassin Michael Gove metaphorically stabbed Boris Johnson in June 2016. From then to now, including under Johnson himself in his golden window of opportunity when, thanks to Corbyn and Nigel Farage, his 2019 victory with an 80 seat majority had given him full power, and before covid (when he nearly died), followed by a serious bout of discombobulating 'greenery,' a fatal slice of cake and defenestration by the Ethics Director in the Cabinet Office, Sue Gray (the very same woman now revealed as Starmer's Chief of Staff) ended his tenure as Prime Minister, no nominally conservative leader of said Conservative and Unionist Party obeyed the unprecedented mandate from 17.4 million usually silent people of England, who spoke then and instructed them to restore full sovereignty by leaving the now also fast disintegrating, time-expired EU.

Under the accidental and robotically hapless Mrs May, frustrating that referendum instruction was the main effort of her praetorian guard of Olly Robbins and the rest of the gruesome crew. After her damascene conversion, Liz Truss would have repaired this breach and much else; and she had a mandate. But she was expertly assassinated by the reflexively Blairite Whitehall nomenclatura and their media chorus, who she and her team had - amazingly - underestimated. And Sunak? Sunak has lost his 'a': he is sunk. He committed political suicide on the beaches of Normandy. Some actions in politics are simply unforgivable and irrevocable. His callow inability to understand his duty on 6th June, even to possess the self-knowledge to know what he did wrong, was one of those.

But the roots of anger go deeper. Well before the betrayal of Brexit, the Camerons had signally failed even to try to remove the toxic and carefully woven shirt of Nessus in which Blair had clothed our Kingdom. I mean by that to repeal, through conscious intent and with equal and opposite energy, the instruments of Blair's carefully executed capture of all the institutions of state, all designed to be interlocking and irrevocable. Unrepealed, these and the supporting quangocracy, will all shortly produce an orchard of poison fruit that we and the Union must eat, force-fed.

The Constitutional Reform Act 2005 created a Supreme Court that makes no sense in our constitutional settlement but does make sense if the plan was to make Common Law subordinate to EU law. Undeniably creating jobs for Matrix Chambers and their like, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 book-ended the Blair/Brown "Granita" time in overt power. The latter Act controversially so. Instead of being lost in the wash-up, it received Royal Assent on 8th April,

two days after out-going Brown (newly resurrected at the top of the King's Birthday Honours) had sought the dissolution that occurred on 12th; but it came into force under the CamClegg coalition that autumn. This was a sign of things to come, because the self-confessed 'heirs to Blair' since 2010 have not dismantled but have actively perpetuated Blair's legacy. They have not repealed his transformative acts because they do not wish to do so, any more than they wish to leave the European Convention on Human Rights.

In all of this they are supported by the effect of an axiomatic Blairite innovation: the politicisation of a merry-go-round of permanent secretaries which simultaneously disheartened and de-skilled an explosively expanding civil service. The 1854 Northcote-Trevelyan civil service of supreme merit and impartiality has long gone. A vindictive confirmation bias and mediocrity regress to the Lowest Common Denominator, entrenched by the shift to quota-driven, not ability only, appointment. And, then, of course, there are the grim instruments of Devolution.

Following Labour's 1997 manifesto promise to hold referendums, Scotland by a majority and Wales by a whisker voted for more devolution. The Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly were elected for the first time on 6 May 1999 and, later that year, unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland spatch-cocked together a 'power-sharing' coalition, following the 1998 Belfast Agreement.

Blair was an expert Gramscian operator and he 'bounced' the electorate around the squash court at speed in 1997-99.

Other examples were giving away Hong Kong on 30th June 1997 and thereafter decommissioning the Royal Yacht Britannia as a sop to his republican wing on 11th December, both for no good reason. The former was a massive moral betrayal of Hong Kong's democrats. The latter, unforgivably, caused her late Majesty to weep.

The political motivation was of course selfishly - and nervously -electoral: to gerrymander by all means Labour fiefdoms that would secure the Labour party constant majorities that in a naturally 'small 'c'' conservative country had eluded it since 1945. But once released from their lamps, the nationalist genies had other ideas as I've just mentioned; and the rest is recent history, although it was prefigured.

For it was Harold Wilson in 1969 who established the long-running Royal Commission on the Constitution which reported in 1972 (the Kilbrandon Report).

Although a minority report sought to go even further, Kilbrandon provided the skeleton for the Scottish and Welsh devolution settlements that Blair put into effect.

As critics feared at the time, be it ‘Devo Mini’ or ‘Devo Max,’ it would only feed the wreckers; and, as night follows day, demands for independence would follow. What could also be predicted - but neither in scale nor, frankly, weirdness - was that once they got going, these bodies would implode in an expensive welter of gross incompetence over devolved responsibilities (Police, Health, Education, ridiculous speed-restrictions) and petty corruption (luxury campervans, padded out expenses and so on). Deep mediocrity as well as avarice have become the hall-marks of the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales.

The psephological signs are, we are told, that the SNP may have cooked its own haggis: we shall shortly know. Likewise Welsh Labour its leek. But once established with lavish buildings and capacious bureaucracies and lucrative “Net Zero” boondoggles like Scottish wind-power, which is the modern version of distilling sunbeams from cucumbers, just as fundamental critics of the late twentieth century devolutions always warned and predicted would be the case, the momentum that has developed will prove hard to halt. Therefore the bedraggled state of the union, still cohering - just - and having seen off the SNP referendum on independence, does not mean that the threat of disintegration has been removed. This is not just for technical, procedural reasons but for others which are arguably more potent, as I will propose before I end.

Kilbrandon did not speak of Ireland - neither Province nor Republic - but I must, and I do so with due trepidation in the presence of deep experts here present. I was lucky enough to become friends with the late David Trimble, who was a member of my London Club, and so I confess to being both emboldened and influenced in my views by many conversations with him.

First, however, a reminder of a history that still burns bright, to illuminate the crisis of the Union today from several angles.

For much longer than is required for our present purposes and often laced with much blood (recall only the terrible massacre of Protestants in October 1641 and Cromwell’s of royalist garrisons at Drogheda and Wexford in autumn 1649), Ireland has been woven through and through the warp and weft of pan-British politics; and it still is today. It therefore repays - demands - study.

We take up the story with the agricultural depression of the 1870s.

Irish landlord/tenant relations were inflamed by hardships, which led to the Land League and then to Charles Stuart Parnell’s Home Rule demands.

After the November 1885 election, when Irish Home Rule MPs held the balance of power, Gladstone converted to the cause of Home Rule. But his Land Bill to buy out willing land-lords and his Government of Ireland Bill carefully furnished with protections for Ulster and for British unity, still split the political class. Gladstone proclaimed it a golden moment of the type which rarely returns. Yet Home Rule was twice defeated - with a majority of 30 in June 1886 by a broad coalition in-spanning John Bright’s nonconformists, Joseph Chamberlain’s radicals and the Marquess of Hartington’s Whigs; and then again in the Lords in 1892 where the Marquess of Salisbury declared that Gladstone had no mandate for so fundamental an action as touched the Irish Acts of Parliamentary Union of 1800. Having now become Duke of Devonshire, Hartington moved its rejection which was by a vote of 419 to 41.

The Duke had personal reason for his belief that force should first suppress rebellion, for Irish rebels had assassinated his younger brother Lord Frederick Cavendish in 1882. But the broad fear which drove those defeats is with us still: that devolution, even as controlled as Gladstone’s, might unravel Britain and the Empire. Bearing this in mind, I would like to mention one fact and one hypothetical.

Back in recent history, the fact is that Northern Ireland, where Unionist sentiment has consistently been stronger than anywhere else in the Kingdom, was twice made victim to other people’s meddling grand designs. First, Blair’s. Unnecessary and unforced, his 1997 Belfast Agreement, like the simultaneous but different processes for Scotland and Wales, set a ball rolling which had wrecking potential. Likewise, weaponisation of the Province in efforts to obstruct Brexit overall began under May and were picked up under Sunak in his pleadingly named Windsor Framework. The common engine, however, was not as much political as it was administrative, fuelled after 2016 by the Blairite Civil Service’s cold fury at Brexit and its principled allegiance to higher authority than that of parliament, as witness the First Division Association’s current action for judicial review of the Rwanda policy, seeking a ruling that - incredibly - the Civil Service of the United Kingdom serves ‘international law’ above national law.

But invoking Good Friday or sounding a Monarchy dog-whistle does not conceal pernicious practical effects.

Blair's meddling emboldened the Sinn Fein cause of united Ireland and as well as doing that, May/Sunak's machinations sought to entrap the entire Kingdom in subordination to the spider's web of EU rules, regulations and structures by threatening to (and actually) dividing the Province from the rest of the Kingdom.

The historical hypothetical is about one of those inflection points when, historians tend to agree, things could have easily gone very differently. Yes, often and understandably, the winners strive to hold the pen for the first draft of history; and certainly that has been true in the construction of the foundation myths of the Irish Free State, freighted as they are with the sense that they owned the future of the island. But for De Valera, Michael Collins and their hard-line nationalist colleagues it was by no means preordained that the British would bungle militarily and then supply them with fifteen court-martialed and shot national martyrs as a bonus in their handling of the Easter Rising 1916.

The genius of Victorian Empire was the instinct to co-opt its subjects. From the late eighteenth century, a controlled devolution through land and tax reforms proceeded across the Raj. Actual land-users' land rights (ryotwari rights) in Madras in the south were strengthened in the Munro Permanent Settlement and serious powers were devolved to the Princely States of Rajasthan, with British 'advisers,' in the north. The lesson taken at the time from the Indian Mutiny of 1857 was 'don't push people culturally too far;' but the micro-historical studies of Eric Stokes and the school of Cambridge Indianists have shown that away from the military cantonments, unrest was more a demand for inclusion in than rejection of Imperial rule. This same lesson was, in turn, later applied by an old India hand, Sir Frederick Lugard, in Northern Nigeria and then across all direct administered British colonial Africa after the First World War through the practice of Indirect Rule. In the same way, the May 1940 Colonial Development & Welfare Act was passed during the Darkest Hour as a promise of 'welfare colonialism' to the African colonies after the Second. The aim throughout was to gain legitimacy by co-option and thereby to ward off rebellion.

After all the anguish of the Home Rule issue over the previous thirty years, in May 1914, Home Rule for Ireland within the United Kingdom was quietly passed into law. Implementation was to be held in abeyance until the end of the hostilities that were clearly coming, just like the CD&W Act was to be, in the next war.

With the Home Rule Act secured, John Redmond of the moderate Irish Parliamentary Party supported Home

Rule and the war effort (indeed, he lost a brother). By remarkable margins this position was widely supported in Ireland. However it was vehemently opposed by the radical nationalists. Poet and revolutionary Desmond Fitzgerald (the father of Garret Fitzgerald) wrote, "Home Rule was in the air. The overwhelming majority of the people supported Redmond... our dream castles toppled about us with a crash ...The Irish people had recognised themselves as part of England." 210,000 Irishmen of all persuasions had joined up for King and country. Something had to be done; and it was.

The radical nationalists sought material German support for their Rising - remember Roger Casement, arms supplies and the German submarine - that they might reap their reward after German victory. Remember too the closest analogue, during the next war with Germany. Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem was an enthusiastic supporter of everything that the Third Reich did. Indeed, he spent the war living in Berlin on a Nazi salary and helped to raise a Bosnian Muslim SS unit that they might reap their reward after Nazi victory. He and the Muslim Brotherhood founders (al-Banna and Qutub) were all visceral anti-Semites and sought Nazi help in future extermination of the Jews "from the river to the sea" after Nazi victory, which is why they refused the two state solution offered and rejected by the Mufti in 1947. Today the Irish Republic and the Sinn Feiners are among the leading enthusiasts for the Palestine liberation/anti-Israel narrative. I merely observe. And that there is dark history there.

Therefore although it was a reasonable legal response to armed insurrection in wartime, the execution of the Fifteen was a political disaster. Opinion in Ireland was shocked and began to move away from Redmond; and Sinn Fein began to win by-elections. Thus the third golden moment to secure all Ireland within the United Kingdom was lost. But what if?

What if the British had not fallen into the nationalist trap? What if with strong majority backing Redmond and the moderates had prevailed, and the Home Rule institutions had bedded in happily by 1921? No Civil War? No Black and Tans? No burning of the 76 Big Houses in the west of Ireland? No Free State? No SNP? Gladstone's Government of Ireland Bill rather than Kilbrandon as a devolution model if ever need arose which it might well not have done?

And even in 2024, when a Russian submarine skulks around Corrib, the Republic's only gas-field which keeps the lights on in foolishly fantasy Net Zero Ireland, it is the RAF and the Royal Navy, backed up by non-EU NATO allies, who come to protect the defenceless



Republic, almost as if Redmond did prevail. Is this not odd? But then - we are so very close, as would have been clear to anyone watching the Irish Guards Trooping the Colour last Saturday - and even more by listening to the all-Ireland mixture of the soldiers' accents.

Edith Somerville of Drishane House, West Cork, which was not burned down in 1920-21 and Martin (actually Violet) Ross, her second cousin, were two high-spirited and highly talented ladies of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. An author and a brilliant artist, Somerville was also the first lady MFH of an Irish pack of fox-hounds (the West Carbery); and Ross was not a woman who identified as a man. First published in 1899, their stories of the rollicking adventures of the Irish RM, a British Resident Magistrate in the rural west of Ireland, are not caricature anti-Irish tales. Major Yeates was usually the butt of the jokes. All the characters are lovingly observed, many originally drawn from life at Skibbereen magistrate's court; for these ladies were Irish to the bone.

In the film version, there is an exchange inserted into one tale which is not in the book, but which ought to be. It is between the Magistrate's wife, Mrs Philippa Yeates, and Slipper, the all-round fixer and whipper-in to Major Yeates's Irish foil, Master of Foxhounds Flurry Knox, as they dance together at the tenants' ball at Aussolas Castle. "So the English are the English, and the Irish are the Irish, and they know each other, so they do, like the fox and the hound," says Slipper. "Yes," replies Mrs Yeates, "but which is which?"

My third Capital D is for degeneracy. A strong word as we transfer our gaze to cultural rather than political processes. In the last part of this lecture, I shall suggest that the Union is in perhaps its greatest peril not from the obliterating avalanche (which is a consequence) but because Britain, and especially England, has lost its song (which is the cause) and the voices to sing it.

In the swinging sixties, few universities - not even Cambridge - escaped the shock of the new. Sir James Stirling landed his space-ship modernist creation on Sidgwick Avenue to be the new home of the Seeley Historical Library, where I used to work as an earnest undergraduate fifty five years ago. When years later I was on the Faculty Board, we had a special sub-committee devoted solely to the unremitting technical flaws in this monstrous building. In my day the building was called the Seeley Library. Today it is the Sterling Building containing the Seeley Library, because, in sensitive circles, Seeley's name has become 'problematic' of late. Yet it is the name of the library that carries us into our final topic.

Sir J.R. Seeley was Regius Professor of Modern History and a Fellow of Gonville & Caius. In 1883, he delivered two courses of lectures entitled *The Expansion of England*. His style was of his age- of course. But his insights remain fresh, and two in particular can serve us well.

He opens by asking a simple question that is central to our topic today: "What is the general drift or goal of English history?" He responds that "the words that jump to our lips in answer are Liberty, Democracy!" But these he immediately qualifies as "...not so much an end to which we have been tending as a possession which we have long enjoyed." So what has been the central trend?

Why surely, he replies, "...the simple, obvious fact of the extension of the English name into other countries of the globe, the foundation of Greater Britain." And this expansion which defined and dominated three centuries of English history was, Seeley suggested, accomplished with characteristic indifference. In his most enduring phrase he observed that, "...we seem, as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind."

In consequence thereof, England's story of expansion from no possessions outside Europe before the reign of Elizabeth I to the globe encircled by Victoria's reign had hardly changed a developing sense of continuous national identity to a degree unlike anywhere else in Europe. Sharply distinct too was how - quite differently from francophone empire - that continuity shaped how we thought about empire more as a mission than as an organic possession.

British singularity was best expressed in one of the most important documents in modern British history, written by Britain's most consequential foreign secretary. In his Great State Paper of 5th May 1820 Viscount Castlereagh provided both a blueprint for British conduct in European affairs which held its bearings from Canning to Lord Salisbury, but he also sang a song of coherent British identity which would still have been recognised by the Great Generation of D-Day, now passing, but which has been broken and forgotten today as the D-Day poll with which I opened, suggests.

"The fact is," Castlereagh wrote, "that we do not and cannot feel alike upon all subjects. Our position, our institutions, the habit of thinking and the prejudice of our people, render us essentially different.... We [meaning Great Britain] shall be found in our place when actual danger menaces the system of Europe; but this country cannot and will not act upon abstract and speculative principles of precaution." Climate catastrophists take

note.

To understand British politics, Seeley suggested, knowledge of its history was not optional: "Politics are vulgar", he said, "when they are not liberalised by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relation to practical politics." Expressing the same belief which shaped the first part of this lecture, he concluded with prescient words: "...when the crisis arrives, it will throw a wonderful light back upon our past history. All that amazing expansion which has taken place since the reign of George II...will then begin to impress us differently." Just this happened in both World Wars.

It has become a commonplace made common by the social theorist Benedict Anderson, that is nonetheless true, that the glue which sticks us together is shared memory and associated acts of imagination. The durability of society under the stress of crisis lies in the strength of its "imagined community" - which was J.R. Seeley's point too; and the strength of the Union always lay in its harnessing of multiple identities at different scales - like a set of matryoshka dolls - all different, but in mutually reinforcing common strength so that the whole is more than the sum of its parts; and intergenerational too: Burke's compact of the living, the dead and the unborn.

Many of the outward and visible signs which compose a semeiotic shorthand for the strength of common British identity are still there: ceremonial, visible, audible. Trooping the Colour; a monarch who has to be seen to be believed; the brass voice of England's song.

In my little west country village, the distinctive peal of English full-circle, change-rung bells serve as a living illustration. Starting before the Reformation, our two oldest bells were cast in 1450 and 1499, bracketing the War of the Roses. Two more in 1709, the year of the Great Frost, one each in 1853 - the start of the Crimean War - and 1952 - the year of the first British A-Bomb test at Montebello; and Dove's Guide to Bells will show that this is not atypical in towers across the land. Those bells "rang-in" the peace of VE day after wartime silence during which they were only to have been rung in the event of German invasion. They have been the accompaniment to every major national event - most recently the 80th anniversary of D-Day. In his England: An Elegy, the much-missed Sir Roger Scruton made many similar observations.

Yet it was our late Queen's shrewd comment that nails it. To be believed. Once there was a tripod foundation of shared belief that was normal and therefore unremarkable: God, King and Country. Knock one

out and the triangle contorts, crumbles or, worse, is reconstructed with new and strange beliefs which will soon change all the rest.

On "Dover Beach", Matthew Arnold had sensed that  
The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar

... And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Put simply, there is a god-shaped hole in all of us. Anthropologists of religion have long studied it systematically; and while it goes far beyond these remarks, the conclusion is that, the hole being there, it is simply a matter of what fills it.

Starting with the "Honest to God" debate in 1963, but rapidly accelerating to present pitch in Archbishop Welby's vinegary fixation with fashionable political false narratives (such as that the Church of England was implicated in the slave trade and therefore owes 'reparations,' neither of which is true), the established church has been steadily vacating its mission space with a melancholy, long withdrawing whimper. What has filled the God-shaped hole today are intemperate cult-like beliefs that are by definition exclusive and which brook no dissent.

Remember Seeley's first answer? Liberty was our enduring inheritance that made us so different for so long? Let us end with a quick dive into the philosophical origins of modern liberalism; for they are not what they seem. Far from barring the gates to the barbarians, they have let them in and with them, corrosive dogmatism that dissolves the imagined community that once we all shared. Where would an educated audience reflexively look to find conventional expression of that liberty of which Seeley spoke?

John Stuart Mill combined his loftier doctrinal ambitions with a general sentiment, which he believed was a new philosophy, expressing an Art of Life to be promulgated by a new clerisy of refined minds. These rare intellects were to be latter-day successors to Plato's Guardians: those who rose above what he called the 'collective mediocrity' that Mill both scorned and feared, subsisting in a conjunction between the essence of practice and of science that we now call Sociology.

From Comte, Mill took on a strong belief in three phases of historical progression distinguished by their prime

drivers: theological first, then metaphysical by reference to general laws and finally scientific. Of course he located his own general reasoning within the apex stage.

Sixty years ago, in his lapidary demolition both of Mill's claim to philosophical status and of a lax reading of *On Liberty* as tap-root for today's genial liberalism, Maurice Cowling showed that Mill's legacy was rather more one of moral totalitarianism than of individual freedom of choice - that as Mill construed it, the principle of individuality detracted from rather than maximised human freedom - and that his general reasoning was primarily a source of slogans ('virtue signals' in modern coinage) in the mouths of those who only deal in blocky, big ideas at the totemic level. "No-one knows less than someone who thinks his knowledge is greater than it is," Cowling wrote, his pen dipped in acid and prescient admonition: for, while ignorant of or disinterested in their origins, contemporary iterations of Mill's liberalism by modern clerisies are powerful sources of grave cultural weakness, as the hinge of history turns once more.

Liberal language, abused and hi-jacked, has undone us. It has sapped self-confidence and our ability to say what we stand for as we once again square up to totalitarian creeds. Its bossiness and arrogance have facilitated rather than resisted the seepage of new cults of poison into our children's minds through their smart-phones.

In a strange and bitter twist, the three-beat historical progression of Comte and Mill has shown itself to be not linear but circular. It is a salamander that bites its own tail; for the positivist scientific phase - in which explanation arises from hypotheses formed by creative doubt and the application of specific laws to explain specific data - has halted and arced back into the theological.

Today, a caustic epistemological relativism has combined with those totalitarian reflexes always latent in elite liberalism to form intractable belief clusters. These confirmation biases are super-stimulated by silo-knowledge from narrow-cast media; and they are protected and projected by clerisies who seek, with laws, to put their cults beyond debate. Thereby "The Science" etc is made impervious to falsification in the eye of the believer; and sceptics already risk bankruptcy and will soon risk jail for questioning it. This is how freedom of speech and thought die, as George Orwell predicted with chilling precision.

The contamination of two areas of complex science have been at the leading edge of this process, each of which could be the subject of full separate lectures.

The study of global climate systems since the turn of the century - in which I have been engaged at high level since 1998 - is one; and virology and vaccinology, likewise but faster, since the wilfully misdiagnosed and mismanaged Covid pandemic, is the other. Then add in ideological trashing and deletion of our history, the inverted anti-white racism of BLM and the whole nine yards of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 'wokery' - all actively promoted by subversive 'grey war' acts of our enemies.

Applied psychology led by the Intelligence Services has found that the 'dwell time' for a normal mind in such cults is no more than a couple of years: hence the sequential pattern. But since 7/10, these previously sequential cults in the West have fused, which is something new. They have poured into the crucible of anti-Semitism, the oldest hatred, to create a veritable witches' brew which contains madnesses such as "Queers for Palestine" and "No climate justice on Israeli occupied lands" - this from Greta Thunberg in her keffiyeh.

Against this, for both practical, political reasons of the gross breaches of trust now driving electoral fury and because of the flaws inbuilt in a Mill-derived elite vision of liberalism, the Union and those who cherish it stand, today, vulnerable but not defenceless.

I hope that you can glimpse the escape route? It is the reversal of all that I have described that has brought us to our knees and will shortly rub our faces in the dust. Both politically and culturally - and we start with the latter - we have to find ways to give the Union back its voice; and who will sing with human voices, not only called by bells? At the epicentre of recovery is what Roger Scruton called oecophilia - love of home.

The only chance we have to rebuild the Union is to fight, policy by policy, those forces that are devastating that other union that underlies everything: the little platoons of men and women raising their families. It is the coerced inability of couples to sustain family traditions of custom and wealth that creates the vacuum, of which the god-shaped hole is a part. It goes without saying that recreating the conditions for robust family life is difficult. The restitution will not be unopposed. But the family is dying through a thousand wounds, all of which must be 'searched', as Medieval surgeons would said, searched to remove foreign bodies and dressed before they can be heal. The fight will be vigorous, and the reward for victory will be slow in coming; but this alone will permit the re-emergence of that quasi-mystical bond of common interest that we call nationhood.

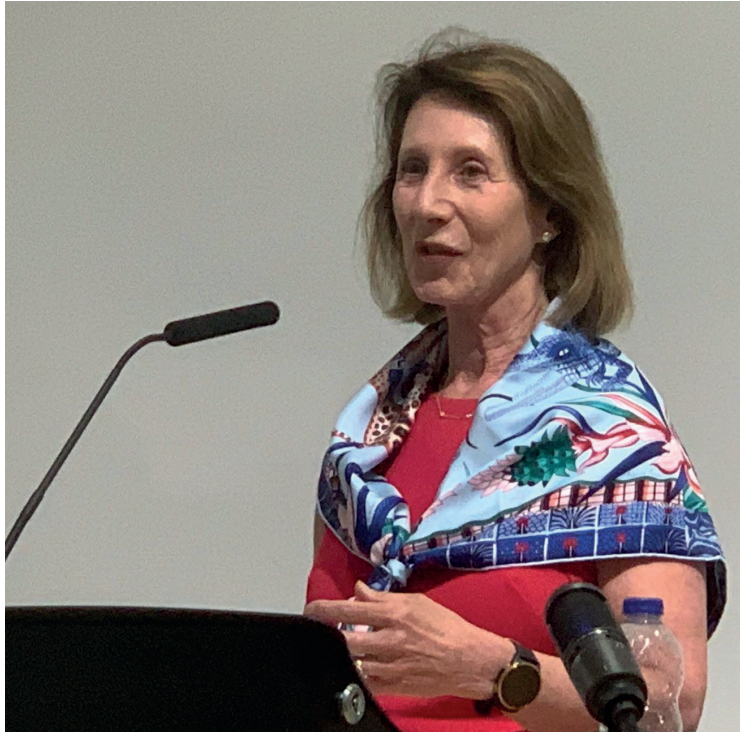
It will be a work of many hands and minds. I do not



expect to live to see it achieved; but the D-Day peal in our local church and the crowds on the Mall at Trooping the Colour last week and conversations with my farming and hunting neighbours at home give me confidence (as similar conversations once heartened Roger Scruton) that - I quote it once more - "...when the crisis arrives, it will throw a wonderful light back upon our past history..." prerequisite to remaking our Union anew, under fire.

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**NetZero and TogetherUK Remarks  
Delivered at TogetherUK Conference,  
Buckingham University  
Diana Furchtgott-Roth, June 22, 2024**

It used to be said that the UK and the United States were divided by a common language. Now the UK and UK are joined together because they are afflicted by a common medicine. On both sides of the Atlantic, doctors are prescribing the same misguided medicine—Net Zero, with a large dose of electrification and decarbonization—for a nonexistent problem. The nonexistent problem is based on myths of climate change, that CO<sub>2</sub> must cause harmful warming. But as Professor Steve Koonin has written, the science is “unsettled.” Unsettled is the name of his book discussing the subject. Steve Koonin is a physicist who taught for 30 years at the California Institute of Technology, who got his PhD at MIT, and who served in the U.S. Department of Energy as Under Secretary for Science in President Obama’s administration.

It’s not only Steve Koonin who has written about myths

of climate change.

Dr. Roy Spencer has recently written a paper documenting that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change models overpredict global warming. And Dr. Willie Soon has shown that thermostats to measure warming are primarily in urban areas, which have got warmer over time, as cities have grown. Thermostats in rural areas show a slower increase in warming.

Dr. David Legates in another recent paper has exploded the myth that human activity is causing sea levels to rise—it has been rising for 20,000 years, and in some cases the land is subsiding, making it seem as though sea levels are rising.

Joe D’Aleo’s work shows that hurricanes and tornadoes are not becoming more severe. Yes, damages from hurricanes and tornadoes are rising, because people are building \$5 million homes today instead of \$50,000 homes as they were 40 years ago, but the storms themselves have not increased in frequency or intensity. Another myth is that climate change causes more deaths. But Dr. John Dunn has analyzed records of deaths and shown conclusively that there are more deaths from cold than from heat. More people die in winter months than summer months because cold negatively affects many parts of the body.

Another myth is that “the social cost of carbon” is high and so we should use less carbon dioxide. Moreover, as Dr. Kevin Dayaratna has written, for people with no electricity and running water, using more CO<sub>2</sub> to provide these facilities dramatically improves health—and saves lives.

But as we have heard today, if countries want to progress, they have to get richer. Poverty is with us now, while climate change is a future risk that has to be managed. The green policies that doctors are prescribing make us poorer, not richer. At the same time that these green policies are impoverishing us, they are making China and Russia stronger. A rich TogetherUK will be easier than a poor TogetherUK.

People know about poverty and they know better than the doctors. That’s why, all over the world, they’re throwing out the politicians who are making electricity more expensive, replacing valued cars with Chinese-made electric versions, and telling farmers what to do. Farmers are rioting in many European countries as governments are taking their land for solar panels and forced reforestation; as governments are dictating how many animals they can have per acre or hectare; as

governments are making diesel more expensive; and as governments are outlawing chemical fertilizers. From the European Union, to South Africa, to Sri Lanka, normal people are tired of being impoverished for no good reason and are voting these governments out of office. Everyone wants cleaner air and a clean, healthy planet, but moving energy-intensive industry from the UK, Europe, and the United States to China increases global emissions, because the same products are made with dirtier coal-fired power plants. China is building more wind and solar, but it is also building two coal-fired power plants a week, and the share of its electricity generated by wind and solar is about the same.

The goal of NetZero 2035 or 2050 is decarbonization through electrification. But this results in lower GDP growth, deindustrialization, and higher unemployment. Jobs leave the UK, Europe, and the United States and move to China and elsewhere. People say NetZero helps the planet, and they mean well, but NetZero isn't practical or desirable. Nor would it help the planet by reducing global temperatures.

### **Let's start with the practical.**

1. It's impossible to get rid of fossil fuels and nuclear power. Even if the whole of the country were covered by wind turbines and solar panels, their construction requires fossil fuels. Turbines are immense towers of steel, and these can't be made without coal-fired or nuclear power plants to heat the steel to a high temperature. We will need fossil fuels or nuclear power as far as the eye can see.
2. The world faces a growing demand for energy that cannot be met with renewables alone. New technologies such as data centers, AI, crypto, and bitcoin require massive amounts of energy. A Google search using AI uses more energy than a Google search without it. As global incomes rise, more people in emerging economies want air conditioning, just as Americans look on air conditioning as routine. The 3 to 6 billion people without running water and electricity need energy for that, as well as for air conditioning in the future.
3. Young people are fans of reducing carbon dioxide, but they want to be able to charge their phones and they don't want to give up heating and air conditioning or hot water. In the US, they don't want to use inexpensive solar energy to dry their clothes on a clothes line.
4. Wind and solar power take more capital for less generation. It's not practical to increase wind and

solar to produce all the new needed electricity—or to replace the fossil fuel generated energy that we have now.

5. Subsidies for wind and solar are driving out construction of new natural gas and clean coal power plants. Investors are being told that fossil fuels are transition fuels, so they aren't investing in them.
6. The sun shines free of charge and the wind blows free of charge but it is harder to run an electricity grid on intermittent energy. Wind and solar need backup plants or batteries to store the energy.
7. The interaction between wind, solar, and fossil fuels in a power system relies on a sophisticated timing system that depends on GPS satellites. This is more open to hacking than energy that just relies on fossil fuels.
8. Solar and wind are less resilient, so there is a greater chance of blackouts. More power lines are needed to connect solar and wind to the grid, and these can be costly, cause wildfires, or get damaged in storms.
9. Batteries to back up renewables and for electric cars depend on critical minerals, and China has 80% of these critical minerals.

### **This brings us to why NetZero isn't desirable, even if it were practical (which it isn't). First, NetZero requires dependence on China.**

1. The use of electric batteries and associated components that is an integral part of NetZero makes the UK, Europe and the United States dangerously dependent on China. China makes 80% of the world's batteries.
2. China is home to 7 out of 10 of the world's largest solar panel manufacturers, and 7 out of 10 of the world's largest wind turbine manufacturers.
3. China dominates the critical minerals such as lithium and cobalt required for these products, through its own mines and by purchasing mines in Africa and Latin America. In contrast, the Biden administration has not approved applications to mine critical minerals in the United States. In addition, just recently, the Ambler Road project in Alaska was blocked, ending the opportunity to access vital copper and zinc deposits in the Ambler mining district in Northwest Alaska.

4. Trade with China isn't free or fair. China can produce lower-cost goods because it subsidizes labor, capital, and energy. It uses forced labor from Xinjiang; gives low-interest rate loans to favored companies; and isn't bound by the clean energy regulations of the West.
5. The Chinese Communist Party has a stake in all major Chinese companies, including electric vehicle companies such as BYD. Chinese EVs are undercutting vehicles in the UK and Europe. For instance, BYD's Seagull is selling for \$11,500 in Germany and has received favorable reviews when tested in the United States.
6. If Americans are concerned about a Chinese spy balloon overhead, they should also be concerned about signals that these Chinese vehicles can send back to the Chinese Communist Party, including information about military bases, power plants, and other sensitive infrastructure.
7. If people buy the cars using a car loan, as is common in the US, the Chinese Communist Party would have access to people's financial information that is provided as a condition of getting the loan. This includes Social Security numbers, mortgage and banking information, and credit card information.
8. Car companies can already stop cars from remote if they are reported stolen, and the West does not want to give China the power to stop cars in case of some military confrontation. In addition, software is updated via remote, and China could interfere with the navigation or braking systems.
9. The Biden administration is requiring that 70% of new cars sold be electric by 2032, up from about 8% today, or else car companies face fines and must buy credits. Many people find these cars costly, inconvenient to charge, and not suited to cold climates. The high share of required EVs will force some purchases from China.

## **Second, NetZero hurts the poor.**

1. NetZero policies drive up prices for electricity and cars, which take away poor people's livelihoods.
2. These policies drive up the cost of food.
3. NetZero prevents people in emerging economies to get to Western standards of living, or even having b

asic running water and electricity.

4. Because of this, NetZero increases migration from fossil fuel poor areas to fossil fuel rich areas. If the West won't lend or support fossil fuel projects in Africa and Latin America, reducing opportunities in emerging economies, people will leave and find opportunity in the West.

## **Third, NetZero won't help the planet.**

1. Eliminating all fossil fuels from Europe and the United States would only make a difference of 0.3 degrees Celsius by 2100, according to government models. That's 0.2 degrees for the US and 0.1 degree for Europe.
2. This is because other parts of the world—Asia, Latin America, Africa—are not cutting back on emissions, and their current and expected emissions are going to dwarf Western emissions.
3. The West is being destroyed from inside—at tremendous cost—with no gain to the planet.

Better solutions are to produce more electricity from low emission, dense fuel, such as nuclear and natural gas, and invest in mitigation and adaptation solutions, such as air conditioners for the summer. That would give relief now at a fraction of the cost of renewable and EV subsidies.

Now, I'd be glad to take questions.