

# STRATEGIKA

CONFLICTS OF THE PAST AS LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT



## The Strategic Ramifications of a Fractured EU

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Andrew Roberts • Angelo M. Codevilla  
Josef Joffe



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# Brexit and the Defence of Europe

*Andrew Roberts*

Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU)—nicknamed “Brexit”—does not have anything like the security ramifications for the West that its opponents liked to pretend during the recent campaign. A central part of the pro-Remain campaign was to try to terrify voters into believing that Brexit entailed dire security implications, but the British public voted to leave anyhow, because they understood that far from guaranteeing peace and security on the European continent, the EU has been at best neutral in its effect, and it was always NATO that has been the bedrock.

So long as those EU members, if any, who choose to follow Britain out—and there has been talk of a Grexit (Greek exit) and even a Frexit (French)—remain in NATO, there will be no strategic ramifications for the West whatever. Since the country most likely to leave, Sweden, isn't even in NATO, that has none either. The fear-mongering that David Cameron indulged in—including some truly absurd prognostications about future conflict in Europe arising at least partly from Brexit—were so heavily discounted by the British electorate, only 18% of whom wound up trusting him on European issues by the end, that they had no effect on the outcome of the referendum.

In one area—the creation of a European Army—there could theoretically be some ramifications for security, not least if it was eventually to undermine or replace NATO, which was at least *sotto voce* the intention of some of the idea's originators. The concept of a European Army has been around since even before the formation of the EU's forerunner, the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Yet the United Kingdom dragged her feet over the idea for half a century, much preferring NATO as the pillar of its international security. In November 1951, Sir Winston Churchill told his Cabinet that his attitude towards further economic developments along pan-European lines “resembles that which we adopt about the European Army. We help, we dedicate, we play a part, but we are not merged with and do not forfeit our insular or commonwealth character... When plans for uniting Europe take a federal form that we ourselves cannot take part, because we cannot subordinate ourselves or the control of British policy to federal authorities.” (This key quote also ought to put paid to the absurd idea put about during the recent campaign that Churchill would have voted Remain were he alive today.)

Today, plans for a European Army are moribund, though a recent leak of Brussels documents to the *Sunday Times* imply that after Brexit they might be reintroduced.

Nonetheless, any serious threat to NATO is effectively removed, because the British armed forces can now never join, and they were central to the scheme. Apart from the French, the British have the only significant armed forces in Europe, at a time when the Germans do not want to spend the amounts of money necessary to make the European Army a reality, and are anyway concerned about doing anything further to antagonize Vladimir Putin.<sup>1</sup> Brexit might therefore have actually strengthened NATO: such is certainly the opinion of Americans like former US Ambassador to the UN John Bolton.

Britain's opposition to the European Army concept waned during Tony Blair's premiership. Since 2004, Britain had supported what are called European Security and Policy forces—in the opinion of some experts the nucleus of any such future Army, which were exercising in Britain even as late as in June 2016, when Britain assigned two European Battle Groups of 1,500 personnel each to be under EU command. There were previous deployments in the first six months of 2005, the last six months of 2008, and the first six months of 2010. Had any of these been activated by the EU, it would have prevented British support for NATO operations. Because of these suspected moves towards a European Army, no less a figure than Field Marshal Lord Guthrie actually switched his support from the Remain to the Leave side of the referendum debate.<sup>2</sup>

Guthrie has argued that any European defence force would just provide another cumbersome bureaucratic structure on which precious resources would be wasted during a time of defence cuts. Although there is a Franco-German Brigade in existence—known as the Eurocorps—it is not a serious precursor for a European Army now that Britain has left the EU, not least because it speaks different languages (although it now ironically enough seems to be settling on English as its lingua franca) and does not have troops stationed in each other's countries, partly for financial reasons. Underfunding, rather than battlefield prowess, is Germany's most pressing military problem.<sup>3</sup> But as Germany is unlikely to leave the EU, and the whole organization would collapse if it did, it can't be said that Brexit will have anything other than a positive effect on NATO, especially for the United States, which strategically does not want Britain sucked into the vortex of a European superstate.<sup>4</sup>

During the referendum campaign, General Sir Michael Rose, a former commander of the SAS, the UNPROFOR commander in Bosnia, and a commander of the UK Field Army, wrote a powerful article arguing that "The combat effectiveness of our Armed Forces has already been much damaged by European legislation that seems to regard soldiers merely as civilians in uniform. I believe that, in a time of great insecurity in Europe, it would be madness to become involved in what will only ever be a hollow force."<sup>5</sup>

NATO's continuing centrality to Europe's defence would be unaffected by more countries leaving the EU because of the reliance European soldiers have on the United States



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and NATO for Intelligence, for the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) of Europe, and for a large amount of equipment, particularly aircraft, helicopters, and airlift.<sup>6</sup> So even if the EU wished the European Army to become a counterpoint to NATO one day, it is hard to see how that could be achieved.

The specious argument one sometimes hears that the EU has kept the peace because nations that trade with each other seldom fight each other, flies in the face of thousands of years of history, when nations have both traded with and fought against their closest adjacent neighbours. In the modern world, one doesn't have to be adjacent; Britain's greatest export-import partner in the world in 1914 was Imperial Germany. Meanwhile one cannot envisage so sclerotic, corrupt, bureaucratic, and unwieldy an organization like the EU committing to anything like Article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty, which commits all signatories immediately to go to the aid of any one of them who's attacked. What guarantee is there that all EU member states would or could jointly support military action if attacked? Austria, for example, is fiercely proud of its neutrality, enabling Vienna to act as host capital for UN and international organizations. The fact that Eastern European states wish to join both NATO and the EU is an indicator that they believe in the security that NATO provides. Neutral Sweden is considering joining NATO, but voted against joining the euro. In practice, during Britain's war against Argentina in 1982, the French were obstructive, the Italians and Spanish positively hostile. The USA and Canada, by contrast, provided tangible support.

The capacity for the EU to keep the peace in Europe—for which it ludicrously won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012—was demonstrated during the Yugoslavian civil war in the 1990s, when over a quarter of a million Europeans were killed over several years—easily the worst bloodshed in Europe since World War Two—while the EU had minimum impact. Indeed several distinguished historians have plausibly argued that it made matters worse. By total contrast, when NATO was finally permitted to intervene, the war was over in a little over 24 hours after its jets bombed Serbia out of Kosovo. Withdrawal of countries from the EU will not have a positive or negative impact on Western security, for the simple reason that the EU itself doesn't have a positive or negative impact on Western security either.

After the recent fall of Fallujah, the *Telegraph's* defence correspondent Con Coughlin wrote, in an article entitled "Even if we leave Europe, we will still defend it—as we have always done,"<sup>7</sup> that "The EU per se has been totally irrelevant to the success of the coalition effort, which will continue irrespective of whether or not Britain maintains its membership." The same will be true for any future countries which choose to leave too. Coughlin went on: "It is Britain's willingness to deploy its Armed Forces in support of Nato operations such as [in the Baltic states], not its membership of the EU, that has

constrained the Kremlin's attempts to extend its sphere of influence through central Europe and the Baltics." That can only be achieved within the American-led military alliance, the most successful in keeping European peace in the history of the continent.

Remainers tried to make Leavers look like irresponsible warmongers for wanting to remove Britain from the EU, and will doubtless make the same argument for any other country that wants to escape its coils. Yet as time goes on and nothing happens, the argument will lose its potency, assuming of course that nothing is done to weaken the true organization which the continent needs to thank, the one that ought to have won the Nobel Peace Prize: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

1 See Justin Huggler, "German fighter jets unable to fly and mechanics forced to borrow spare parts, magazine claims," *The Telegraph* (August 26, 2014), [<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/11057330/German-fighter-jets-unable-to-fly-and-mechanics-forced-to-borrow-spare-parts-claims-magazine.html>] and Justin Huggler, "German army used broomsticks instead of guns during training," *The Telegraph* (February 18, 2015), [<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/11420627/German-army-used-broomsticks-instead-of-guns-during-training.html>]

2 See Charles Moore, "Field Marshal Lord Guthrie: Why I now back the Leave campaign," *The Telegraph* (June 17, 2016), [<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/17field-marshal-lord-guthrie-why-i-now-back-the-leave-campaign/>]

3 See Kyle Mizokami, "Is Germany's Military Dying?" *The National Interest* (September 1, 2015), [<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/germanys-military-dying-13748>]

4 (See: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/eureferendum/12193719/Ignore-Obama-Brexit-will-make-the-Special-Relationship-even-more-special.html>)

5 Michael Rose, "Our best defence is to stand apart and save Europe by our example," *The Telegraph* (June 20, 2016). [<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/20/our-best-defence-is-to-stand-apart-and-save-europe-by-our-exapl/>]

6 See the NATO Review magazine topical page on Missile Defense, [<http://www.nato.int/docu/ireview/topics/en/Missile-defence.html>]

7 Con Coughlin, "Even if we leave Europe, we will still defend it—as we have always done," *The Telegraph* (June 21, 2016), [<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/21/even-if-we-leave-europe-we-will-still-defend-it---as-we-have-alw/>]



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# Unity, Strategy, and Will

*Angelo M. Codevilla*

The meaning of any nation's membership in or departure from any "union" or alliance, especially with regard to geopolitical strategies, depends entirely on the nature and degree of that unity or alliance—in short, on the extent to which these represent a common will. History teaches that international organizations, ranging from formal "unions" to informal alliances, tend to obscure the members' differing wills, and to be hindrances to rational strategizing, individual and collective. Since few international organizations have obscured their members' different identities and perspectives to the degree that the European Union (EU) has, departures from it would only clarify the strategic choices of those who remain as well as of those who leave. Above all, the departure of member states from the EU would remind one and all of what Western elites have forgotten in recent decades—that the very existence of nations, never mind of coalitions, rests on bringing together the sentiments of millions of ordinary citizens.

To draw power out of economic substance, to make and execute strategy to weigh in the councils of nations, requires marshaling diverse popular sentiments and interests into common purpose and will. Countries involve others in their own strategic planning in order to increase their own capacity to do that, and the impact of what they might do. But taking account of another's interests often results in the opposite. As Charles De Gaulle noted of the Franco-British informal alliance of the 1930s, these partners found "in each other excuses for their own reticence." Supranational

organizations that supersede alliances tend to dilute whatever commonality of purpose their members might've had insofar as they are valued for themselves rather than for what they might accomplish. "Collective security" depends—as Woodrow Wilson made clear—on the existence of "a community of power." Said Wilson: "When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose all act in the common interest..." But on planet Earth, such things do not exist.

Nevertheless, the impression has fastened on the US foreign policy community that international organizations, especially supranational ones—the United Nations, the EU, NATO, etc.—are so inherently valuable that actions undertaken by their members either unilaterally or as part of ad-hoc "coalitions of the willing" are less solidly based, or even less legitimate. The opposite is the truth, because any attempt to make or execute international strategy that is not based on wills that are concurrent (if not exactly common) is foredoomed to divided councils, unfulfilled pledges, withdrawals of support, and separate dealings with adversaries. One need not delve into how the differences between the EU's members on vital issues (Poland and the Baltics vs. the rest regarding relations with Russia, France vs. Germany on the Middle East, Britain vs. the rest on relations with the United States) have well-nigh nullified Europe's power in these matters to grasp the problem.

The issue of the European Union's inherent worth to the West is subject to examination by a kindred logic. In fact, the EU has been as deleterious to the





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coherence of popular will within the member states, that is, to their viability, as it has to Europe's weight in the world. What would be the effect of a reduction in the number of the EU's members on their viability as polities?

In the 1970s, when European statesmen decided to depart from the goal of "Europe des Patries" that had animated Konrad Adenauer, Charles De Gaulle, and Alcide De Gasperi, they chose a model of governance that displaced decisions—wholesale and retail—about how to live life, from governments elected by each nation's people to unelected bureaucrats in Brussels. The EU's ensuing "democratic deficit" has done nothing but grow. It has deprived of legitimacy not just the EU but the member states as well. The EU has compounded the sense of Europeans that they are governed by a complex of bureaucrats and big businessmen as corrupt as they are incompetent and partial. Each of its member peoples now is less cohesive within itself, feels more helpless than ever in the face of its problems, and trusts less in its neighbors' capacity or good will in solving them.

The EU's "democratic deficit" is not wholly to blame for turning its member peoples into entitled and resentful consumers of government services with an ever less clear sense of their own responsibilities. Nor would devolving responsibility to each of the states resolve all problems. In fact, although the several member states work under very different economic, cultural, indeed geographic circumstances (vide the problem of migration), all need substantial cooperation with one another. But the departure of a number of states from the EU would focus the minds of all Westerners on the essential questions of politics, domestic as well as international: what people want, what they will or will not do, will or will not sacrifice, to get it.

The British people's decision to leave the EU is sure to increase the already lively sentiments among the French, the Dutch, and others to follow, and may administer a much needed dose of responsibility to Western politics.



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# Brexit: How Much Contagion, How Many Strategic Consequences?

*Josef Joffe*

Will Britain's departure from the EU set off a stampede, prompting other members to bolt? The probability ranges from "very low" to "nil." Like Tolstoy's oft-invoked unhappy family, every EU member is unhappy in his own way, but none will take the plunge.

For one, everyone is feeling in his own body politic Britain's buyer's remorse on the day thereafter. The pound took the largest hit in more than thirty years. The Royal Bank of Scotland and Barclays lost almost 30 percent of share value. Britain's domestic politics imploded, with its prime minister David Cameron slated to step down and the leader of Labour, Jeremy Corbyn, suffering a stinging no-confidence vote. Down the line lurks recession for a country that, alone in Europe, has been enjoying sustained growth since the Crash.

Second, the countries fingered as exit-prone, especially the new members in Eastern Europe, draw far too many benefits from the EU—notably an excess of subsidies over membership dues—to take the British road. Nor do the most exposed members in the East want to face Russia's expansionism on their own. In all countries, the neo-populist parties are not strong enough to force an exit. This holds true even for France, where the National Front regularly scores around 30 percent of the vote, but Marine Le Pen makes triumphs only in regional elections and in the first round of presidential balloting. In the second round, the established parties have always carried the day, and they are highly likely to do so again in 2017.

Post-Brexit, the UK will not serve as a shiny example of independence regained. Britain will not be able, as Brexiteers have trumpeted, to have its cake and eat it, that is, enjoy access to the Single Market while shedding the burden of free immigration. On that, even Angela Merkel, London's best friend in the EU, is adamant. Britain will also lose its enormous surplus in the trade of services. The key driver has been the towering position of the City, which it may lose out to Frankfurt. Exiteers elsewhere will also note the historical advantage the UK has drawn from membership. Before joining, it grew more slowly than the EU's Big Three, Germany, France, and Italy. Thereafter, it was the other way round.

The EU will have a big problem not so much in the economic as in the strategic arena. To begin, the EU will have to fend without Britain's nuclear panoply. Left with nuclear France, Europe will have to do with one-half of its deterrent power. But nuclear forces, being the weapon of the very, very last resort, are not the most critical issue, which is the loss of conventional clout in a world where power politics is back.

Minus Britain, Europe will have to live without the one nation, with France as quirky second, that can and will act strategically. The British retain at least remnants of warrior culture, which the Continentals have shed in favor of pacifism and international norms. They have severed the "Clausewitzian Continuity" that joins policy and force in a seamless web. Some of them did fight in Afghanistan and Iraq, but with miserly or merely



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symbolic contingents. The British, though, were for real. Nor did they hesitate to take back the Falklands from Argentina in 1982, though they had to cross half the world to dislodge them.

Britain's army is smaller than France's or Germany's. But it makes up for limited mass with readiness, training, and the ability to project military force. The German army that once went to the gates of Cairo and Moscow was practically overextended in the Naughts, when it fielded about 8,000 troops abroad. The British, second only to the United States, deployed 10,000 in Afghanistan and 46,000 in Iraq II.

Just as critical as the numbers has always been Britain's role as "interface" between the United States and the EU—Washington, please take note. Ever since Britain and the United States fought against each other in the War of 1812, the relationship between the two "cousins" has grown in intimacy. Chalk it up to a common language and a common history as naval powers with global outlooks. If there was ever a "special relationship," then it is in the military arena, where the two have fought side by side in two world wars, in Korea and Vietnam, in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the last seventy years, this permanent alliance *à deux* has been enlarged to NATO, now numbering twenty-eight members. But neither the United States nor Britain are as close to any of them as they are to each other. Pull Britain out of the EU, and the Continental bloc will be diminished. Just take Big Data cyber-surveillance. Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) is a little cousin to America's NSA, but better at least by a magnitude than France's Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE), let alone the German Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND). The NSA also shares more generously with the GCHQ, which is part of the "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance (encompassing Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in addition to the UK and

United States). France and Germany will be a lot poorer in their ability to combat worldwide Islamist terror.

Can the EU make up for the loss of Britain as Atlantic interface, intelligence hub, and engine of intervention? After the Brexit vote, agitation in favor of a European force is back. Lots of such ventures are already in play, such as bilateral corps and multinational battle groups. Yet they are small, and none has as yet seen military action. In a time when the EU's supranational institutions—the Eurozone, "Schengenland"—are under assault, the largest leap into unification—a European army—remains in the realm of fantasy. All these projects have regularly foundered against the reality of an American-led NATO. With Russia on the march again, the Europeans will not tinker with the tried and true, the Atlantic Alliance.

The UK and the EU will be net losers if Brexit is actually consummated. If so, here will be only one winner: Vladimir Putin. Without little effort of his own he can look forward to Britain adrift and Europe in the worst crisis since integration began in the 1950s. Never in history have so few (36 percent of the British electorate) done so much damage to so many nations in such a short time—as the British have done during the Brexit vote of June 23.



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# Brexit: Isolationism or Atlanticism?

by Max Boot

Britons might never have voted to leave the European Union had it not been for the refugee crisis that hit Europe as a result of the Syrian civil war. Even though Britain has accepted only some 5,000 Syrian refugees, German premier Angela Merkel agreed to take in 800,000, thus fueling fears across the continent of an influx of possible terrorists. Those fears were exploited by elements of the “Leave” campaign, principally Nigel Farage and the UK Independence Party, and no doubt contributed crucial momentum to the final outcome.

Who could have possibly imagined that one of the consequences of President Obama’s failure to intervene in Syria to stop the civil war would be Britain’s exit from the EU—a move that he opposed? This is just another reminder that international relations are a complex system with an endless number of moving parts, making the ripple effects of important decisions impossible to predict.

That realization should also make us guarded in assessing the security implications of Brexit. At first blush, they do not look good. Britain has been the most stalwart pro-Atlanticist voice in the EU. Its politicians have made a case for tougher sanctions against Russia than many of the Continental states, which are more dependent on Russian natural gas and oil.

Britain will, of course, stay in NATO, but its voice in the EU will be silenced, making it likelier that the EU will suspend or soft-peddle sanctions imposed as punishment for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. That is why Vladimir Putin has been working overtly and covertly to break up the EU. Among other things, the

Russian strongman has been giving aid and encouragement to anti-EU parties such as UKIP and, in France, the National Front. His ultimate objective is to break up the EU entirely—something that becomes more likely now that Brexit has passed. The EU is deeply unpopular in many of its member states. The most notable exceptions are the Eastern European states, which see the EU as a vital buffer against Putin’s aggression. If the UK succeeds in exiting, others may decide to follow suit.

All that said, Brexit does not have to be as much of a drag on collective security as many commentators (including me) fear it might be. The key variable is what sort of Britain emerges from the rubble: Will it be a Great Britain or a Little England?

Part of the answer will depend on whether Scotland decides to stay or to go, the chances of secession having grown because the Scots are as pro-EU as most of the English are anti-EU. If Scotland goes, Britain would lose nearly 8 percent of its population and GDP along with its only nuclear submarine base. That would make it harder, if not necessarily impossible, for Britain to play the kind of outsize role in world affairs it has played for centuries. But of course, the future of Scotland is not a decision for Scotland alone. Much will depend on the future of British politics.

Some of the most ardent “Leave” campaigners are Russian apologists and immigration bashers; they are, in short, the British version of Donald Trump. If they get their way, Britain will pull up the drawbridge and pursue an essentially isolationist course. But that is not true of the mainstream Tories who backed Brexit.

Conservatives such as Justice Minister Michael Gove and former Defense Minister Liam Fox are confirmed Atlanticists who want the UK to punch above its weight and to act in close concert with the United States. Boris Johnson, the front-runner to replace David Cameron as prime minister, is a mercurial figure who waited until the last minute to announce whether he was pro- or anti-Brexit and was widely suspected of joining the “Leave” side to further his own political ambitions. But with his outspoken admiration of Winston Churchill, he would seem to be on the side of those who want an active and strong and pro-American British foreign policy.

The Labor Party is even more split on these issues than the right. Its current leader is Jeremy Corbyn, a far-left “nutter” who has been an outspoken advocate of Irish and Palestinian terrorism, a foe of Israel and the United States, and a sympathizer for every Communist dictatorship on the planet. Corbyn was a lukewarm and reluctant supporter of the “Remain” side because he views the European Union as a “neo-liberal” plot to impose a free market on Britain (in contrast to Conservative “Leave” campaigners who view the EU, with more justification, as a statist plot to impose illiberal policies on Britain). He now faces a revolt among Labor MPs who would like to see a leader more in the mold of Tony Blair or Gordon Brown, the last two Labor prime ministers who were both pro-American and in favor of an activist foreign policy.

A key indicator of which way post-Brexit Britain will go—toward a more activist or a more isolationist foreign policy—will come in the defense budget of Cameron’s successor as prime minister. The current Tory government cut defense spending by 20 percent, leaving Britain’s armed forces at their smallest levels in centuries. Last fall, facing growing dangers from Russia, ISIS, and other quarters, Cameron finally reversed

course and announced a modest increase in the defense budget that will allow Britain to maintain defense spending of 2 percent of GDP—the NATO benchmark, which few other European states meet. If Cameron’s successor builds on that defense budget and puts even more pounds into the Ministry of Defense, there is a real chance for Britain to emerge stronger from the EU than it has been in it. London could pursue a more Atlanticist course without as much need to cater to the anti-American prejudices of some of its Continental neighbors. It could even provide more military capacity that NATO desperately needs to continue to deter the growing Russian threat in the east. And that would be great news for the United States, which has counted on its “special relationship” with Britain since World War II.

It is too soon to say which way the situation will develop, given how many wild cards are still in play. Assuming that Trump-style isolationism does not take hold on the other side of the pond, the United States can play a useful role in urging Britain to continue working with Washington to provide much-needed security for the international community as it has done for decades. A good sign that the “special relationship” still exists would be to move expeditiously to negotiate a US-UK free trade treaty.

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# The Potential Perils of Grexit

by Kori Schake

Would a Grexit from the Eurozone create any strategic problems? Absolutely. If other Eurozone countries force Greece out of the currency union, we should expect it to have a deeply damaging effect on the NATO alliance, which remains the crucial lever by which the United States organizes security contributions from European countries. Greece has always been a balky, reluctant member of NATO, so it is tempting to believe a rupture in the Eurozone would be followed by an embittered Greece withdrawing also from NATO, relieving us of the hassle of dealing with them—they would become just one more poor, prideful country that has little effect on the international order. But if Greece were to leave NATO, the West would lose their significant contribution as a fighting force, access to bases instrumental for power projection in the Mediterranean Sea and Middle East, and use of a large merchant shipping fleet.

Moreover, a Greece stripped of NATO's protection (even if it should choose that outcome) and Europe's financial underwriting would likely search for alternative providers. The Tsipras government early on in its financial crisis flirted with a Russian option; Russia's resentment of the West, growing confidence, and a rising price for oil (occasioned by increased skittishness in financial markets from Greece leaving the Eurozone and NATO) could make the prospect more enticing. China, too, might see advantage in securing Mediterranean ports or a foothold and listening posts in Europe.

Even if Greece did not flout allegiances with non-Western countries, it could create strategic

problems for Europe by simply refusing to cooperate. Outside the Schengen compact, Greece would have no obligation to assist in managing immigration. Outside the Eurozone, Greece would have no obligation to govern itself transparently or well, no requirement to open its books for inspection or implement anticorruption measures. It would become less European and more Balkan, which would make Europe less stable and less safe.

Operationally, too, Grexit could be problematic. If Greece remained in NATO, the economic devastation would surely impede Greece's ability to provide security both for itself and to others. Greece leaving NATO would incentivize Turkey to test claims in the Aegean, raising the prospect of conflict in which NATO countries would be obligated on Turkey's side against Greece. At a minimum this would result in intensive mediation distracting from other, higher priorities for the alliance; further up the scale, it could see other countries joining Greece's side to array against NATO.

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# The Strategic Problems of Grexit

by Barry Strauss

With Britain posed to exit the European Union, other European countries might reconsider their own status. None has a more fraught relationship with the EU than Greece, primarily because of its experience with the Euro. And what if Greece leaves the Eurozone?

A Greece outside of the Eurozone would be economically crippled and politically unstable. A return to the drachma no doubt appeals to national pride, but sober analysis shows that it could in no way balance the disadvantages of losing access to European markets and capital. True, a weaker currency would attract tourists to Greece, but the same result could be achieved by internal devaluation—that is, by lowering prices—without the disruption and dislocation of leaving the Euro. The current emigration of Greek young people might turn into a flood, with economic opportunity in Greece becoming even less than its current low level. Besides, the Euro is overwhelmingly popular in Greece, and any government that pulled out of it would face huge domestic political opposition and likely instability. Still, it is worth considering the strategic consequences of a Greek pullout from the Eurozone.

Greece has historic ties to Russia. The two states share Orthodox Christianity, unlike most members of the EU. They share a common historical enmity to Turkey. Russia aided Greece in its War of Independence (1821–1829). The Soviet Union sheltered Greek leftists who fled after defeat in the Greek Civil War (1946–1949). Most important, Russia is a rising power in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

If Greece left the Euro, its loyalties to the West would weaken, including its loyalty to NATO. Given today's changing strategic balance in the region—Russia up, America down—Greece might well consider Russia a better security partner than NATO in any case, but were Greece to leave the Eurozone the attraction could prove well-nigh irresistible.

As a Russian ally, whether de jure or de facto, Greece could provide port facilities and even a military base. The result could add to the pressure on Turkey. Russian partnership with Iran and support for beleaguered Syrian President Assad—now, armed support—puts pressure on Russia's historic rival, Turkey. A Russo-Greek alliance would all but close the circle around Anatolia.

At a minimum, Turkey might be forced into a de facto alliance with Russia and at least a tacit withdrawal from NATO. Even more radical outcomes are imaginable, however, including Russian support for the PKK, the armed Kurdish nationalist movement, with at least the threat of changing Turkey's borders.

In short, a Greek withdrawal from the Eurozone would likely yield political instability in Greece, a Greco-Russian partnership or alliance, and increased pressure on Turkey, all with deleterious results for the United States and its European allies.

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# The Eu-Progressive Paradigm Is Falling Apart

*Bruce Thornton*

Long-developing cracks in the Western political establishment's century-old paradigm suddenly widened this year. In the United States Donald Trump, a reality television star and real estate developer, improbably became the Republican Party's nominee for president. Bernie Sanders, a socialist and long-time Senate crank, challenged the Democrats' pre-anointed nominee Hillary Clinton, who prevailed only by dint of money and undemocratic "super-delegates." Meanwhile in Europe, the UK voted to leave the European Union, perhaps opening the floodgates to more defections.

These three events share a common theme: populist and patriotic passions roused by arrogant elites have fueled a rejection of Western establishments and their undemocratic, autocratic, corrupt paradigm.

That political model can be simply defined as technocratic and transnational. Starting in the nineteenth century, the success of science and the shrinking of the world through technology and trade created the illusion that human nature, society, and politics could be similarly understood, managed, and improved by those trained and practiced in the new "human sciences." This new "knowledge" said people are the same everywhere, and so all humans want the same things: peace with their neighbors, prosperity, and freedom. The absence of these boons, not a permanently flawed human nature, explains the history of war and conflict. National identities, along with religion and tradition, are impediments to

institutionalizing this "harmony of interests." International organizations and covenants can be created to enforce this harmony, shepherd the people towards the transnational utopia, and leave behind the misery and wars sparked by religious, ethnic, and nationalist passions.

Technocracy, however, is by definition antidemocratic. So how can the foundational belief of Western governments—the sovereignty of free people and their right to be ruled by their own consent—coexist with an administrative state staffed by "experts" and armed with the coercive power of the state? Quite simply, it can't. As for the transnational ideal of a "harmony of interests," it was repudiated by the carnage of World War I, when the Entente and Central Powers sent their young to die under the flags of their nations on behalf of their particular national interests. Yet the West still codified that transnational ideal in the League of Nations, even as it enshrined the contrary ideal of national self-determination, the right of people to rule themselves free of imperial or colonial overlords.

This gruesome war demonstrated that people are still defined by a particular language, culture, mores, folkways, religions, and landscapes, and that nations have interests that necessarily conflict with those of other nations. That's why the League failed miserably to stop the aggression of its member states Japan, Italy, and Germany, and could not prevent

an apocalyptic Second World War that took at least 50 million lives. Yet the Western elites continued to pursue the transnational dream of technocratic rule after World War II, creating the UN as yet another attempt to trump the reality of national differences with some imagined harmony of interests. In reality, the UN has been an instrument used by states to pursue those interests at the expense of other nations.

Still not learning their lesson, the transnationalists created yet another institution that would subordinate the nations of Europe to its control, on the debatable assumption that the carnage of two world wars was wrought by national particularism. They confused genuine patriotism and love of one's own way of living, with the grotesque political religions of fascism and Nazism, both as much avatars of illiberal tribalism as nationalism grown toxic. Thus was born the supranational EU, which began modestly in 1958 with the European Economic Community, and then relentlessly expanded over the years into today's intrusive, unaccountable bureaucracy of anonymous technocrats that has concentrated power in Brussels at the expense of national sovereignty.

Similarly, in the United States the progressives of the early twentieth century began transforming the American Republic based on similar assumptions. They believe that economic, social, and technological progress rendered the Constitution—particularly its separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalist protections of the sovereignty of the states—an anachronism. "The age of enlightened administration had come," F.D.R. proclaimed, and he set about creating the federal bureaus and agencies that have over the years expanded in scope and power, and increasingly encroached on the rights and autonomy of the states, civil society, and individuals.

But the Eurocrats and progressives forgot one of the most ancient beliefs of the West, and a fundamental assumption behind the structure of the Constitution—that a flawed human nature, vulnerable to corruption by power, is constant across time and space. As Benjamin Franklin wrote during the Constitutional convention, "There are two passions which have a powerful influence on the affairs of men. These are ambition and avarice: the love of power and the love of money," which when combined have "the most violent of effects." As much as the democratic mob, any elite, whether of birth, wealth, or education, is subject to power's corruption and abuse. That's why our Constitution checked and balanced power: to limit the scope of any part of the government, and thus safeguard the freedom of all citizens no matter their wealth, birth, or education.

In contrast, the conceit of progressives and EU functionaries is that they are somehow immune to the seductions of power. They think their presumed superior knowledge and powers of reason make them more capable and trustworthy than the fickle, ignorant masses and the elected officials accountable to them. History, however, shows that technocrats are as vulnerable to the corruption of power as elites of birth or wealth, and that power is, as the Founders were fond of saying, "of an encroaching nature" and must "ever to be watched and checked." The expansion of the EU's tyrannical regulatory and lawmaking power at the expense of national sovereignty is the proof of this ancient wisdom. So too are America's bloated federal executive agencies aggrandizing and abusing their powers at the expense of the people and the states.

Thus the dominant paradigm that has long organized politics and social life in the West is now under assault, for history has presented this model with

challenges it has failed to meet. The resurgence of Islamic jihadism and terror has been met with sermons on Islamophobia and therapeutic multiculturalism. A newly assertive Russia has pursued its national interest with state violence, only to be scolded by our secretary of state for “behaving in a 19th century fashion.” The financial crisis of 2008 was caused in part by government political and regulatory interference in the market, the same policies that have kept economic growth sluggish for over seven years. Feckless immigration policies have been worsened by a failure to monitor those who get in, and to assimilate those that do. And most important, the redistributionist entitlement regime has weakened the citizens’ character, fostered selfish hedonism, and is on track to bankrupt this country and many in Europe. All these crises have in the main been the offspring of progressives and Eurocrats, whose only solution is to cling to the policies that empower and enrich them, but degrade their own cultures and endanger their own peoples.

Millions of citizens both in the United States and in Europe have been watching these developments and living with the baleful consequences that the hypocritical, smug progressive and EU elites seldom encounter in their daily lives. This long-festering anger and resentment of those who smear them as stupid racists, neurotic xenophobes, and fearful “haters,” has now burst to the surface of political life. People can see that the “we are the world,” “global village” cosmopolitanism enriches and empowers the political, cultural, and business elites, but passes on to the people the risks of careless and often deadly immigration policies, and the economic dislocations of a globalized economy. They see that coastal fat cats, who can afford the higher taxes and the costs of environmental regulations, care nothing for the flyover-country working and middle classes pinched by higher electric

and gasoline bills. People who live in tony enclaves of white professionals and hipsters support unfettered immigration, while others have to live with the crime and disorder that comes from thrusting into their midst people from very different cultures and mores, including some who have a divine sanction to kill the same people who have welcomed them in.

In short, millions of ordinary people in America, England, France, and many other Western nations know that the paradigm of transnational hegemony and technocratic rule created not a utopia, but an arrogant privileged class that believes it is superior and thus entitled to boss other people around and lecture them about backward superstitions and bigotry. And it looks like these average citizens have had enough.

England has spoken in favor of popular sovereignty and self-government. Soon it will be America’s turn. Our British cousins made the right choice. Let’s hope we do too.

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# Why Brexit Alarms Britain's Baltic Allies

*By Max Boot*

The world is transfixed by Britain's referendum Thursday over whether to stay in the European Union. Some of the most interested and anxious spectators of the "Brexit" debate are in the Baltic republics, where I recently spent a week meeting with political and military leaders as part of a delegation from the Jamestown Foundation.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania know what can happen when Europe isn't united. Their freedom came to an end in 1940 when Soviet troops marched in, followed by Nazi troops the next year. Britain and France were too busy fighting for their own survival to offer assistance. The United States was still pursuing isolationism. Nor was the West able to do anything when, in 1944, the Red Army reoccupied the Baltics, imposing a brutal dictatorship that would last until 1991.

The Balts are prosperous and free now, but for how long? With a total population of just 6.2 million and just 56,000 military troops, the Baltic states sit next door to Russia, with 142 million people and more than 3 million troops in its active duty and reserve forces. Already Russia's dictator, Vladimir Putin, has invaded Georgia and Ukraine. What is to stop him from marching into the Baltics?

The immediate deterrent is provided by NATO: All of the Baltic states are NATO members, and other NATO members, including the United States, are pledged to come to their defense if they are attacked. But the Balts are also members of the European Union, and they are convinced that a strong and vibrant EU is also necessary to maintain their prosperity and

security. The EU enforces economic sanctions on Russia and provides the financial support needed for its more vulnerable members in Eastern Europe to withstand Russia's economic pressure, such as threats to shut off the flow of natural gas.

That is why the Balts are alarmed at the prospect of Brexit passing. Their message for Britons is: "Lead, not leave."

The Balts admire the Brits and believe that with their shared devotion to free trade, British

## **POLL: HOW WOULD THE DEPARTURE OF A FEW NATIONS FROM THE EU AFFECT WESTERN SECURITY?**

- It would be disastrous and start a cascade that would lead to utter chaos in the Western alliance.
- If only Britain and Greece were to leave the EU, the union would still remain viable.
- The EU is largely irrelevant; NATO is the key, and the two are not identical.
- We need to return to concluding individual alliances with particular European nations.
- Both the EU and NATO are eroding, and the United States should now expect to provide for its own defense.

membership in the EU serves their interests, because it counterbalances the more statist and protectionist impulses of Germany and France. Britain is also in favor of a stronger anti-Russian stance than are Germany and France.

If Britain left the EU, the Balts fear that Scotland, which is more pro-EU than the rest of the United Kingdom, would leave Britain. Scotland just happens to be where Britain's nuclear deterrent is based aboard four Vanguard-class submarines. The naval base at Faslane could be relocated, but it would be costly to do so at a time when the British defense budget has already been cut to the bone. Odds are that a Britain outside the EU would be smaller and weaker than it is today.

Moreover, if Britain does vote for Brexit, it will lead to a period of turmoil with Brits and other Europeans debating the nature of their future relationship. Britain and the EU will have to pass a trade treaty, and the terms are sure to be contentious. While the negotiations are going on, Europeans will be focused inward—not at the external threat to the east.

The Balts fear, finally, that a British exit could set off a chain reaction of other exits. There is great unhappiness with the EU in many member states, and Putin has been supporting anti-EU parties in Europe of both the far left and far right.

Nigel Farage, leader of the UK Independence Party and a leading pro-Brexit voice, has harsh words for Brussels but nothing but kind words for Moscow. He has expressed admiration for Putin and been a regular guest on the Russia Today propaganda channel.

France's far-right National Front, led by Marine Le Pen, has admitted receiving tens of millions of euros in "loans" from a Kremlin-linked bank. Russia is also supporting in various ways other extremist parties, including the far-right Jobbik in Hungary, the far-left Podemos in Spain, the far-left Syriza in Greece, and the far-right Freedom Party in Austria, that are pro-Russia and anti-EU. Oh, and Putin goes out of his way to praise Donald Trump, who has called NATO "obsolete" and vowed to improve relations with Russia.

MAX BOOT is a leading military historian and foreign policy analyst. Boot holds a bachelor's degree in history, with high honors, from the University of California, Berkeley (1991), and a master's degree in history from Yale University (1992). He was born in Russia, grew up in Los Angeles, and now lives in the New York area. The Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow in National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, he is the author of the critically acclaimed *New York Times* best seller *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*. His earlier books include *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* and *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### THE STRATEGIC RAMIFICATIONS OF A FRACTURED EU

1. What are the strategic ramifications for the West? Should a few European Union members leave the union?
2. Does the EU impede or enhance European collective security?
3. How will the departure of Britain from the EU affect, if at all, the relationship of Germany within Europe?
4. Should the United States stay out of EU politics, or is President Obama's intervention critical for American trade and strategic interests?

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE**  
**THE CAPABILITIES OF TODAY'S TERRORISTS**

## Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

## Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

## Strategika

*Strategika* is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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