

France, Germany and the USA

There are those who seem to think the UK is too small and too unimportant to be an independent country. They think we need to choose between submerging our identity with the EU and accepting their government, or being a junior partner of the USA and accepting US decisions and standards. The people who think like this favour us being controlled by the EU, and spend their time running down the USA at every opportunity. This doctrine is reflected in the EU's spin, with President Macron warning us we will be opting for junior status in some kind of USA Union if we dare to implement our wish to leave the EU.

This view is absurd. There are many advanced successful countries in the world who are neither members of the EU nor client states of the USA who are considerably smaller than the UK in population, in total wealth and military power. From New Zealand to Singapore, from Australia to Canada, there are prosperous countries that have alliances with many but are ruled by none other than themselves.

It is also a dangerous myth that the EU or Europe is in some way capable of defending itself. Most European countries like the UK are members of NATO, and rely on the US defence umbrella and the NATO guarantee of mutual assistance for their defence against potential large aggressors. NATO is a better arrangement than the EU, offering mutual support but not enforcing a legal obligation on each NATO member to provide troops and weapons to every NATO action. For many years it has helped keep the peace in Europe and ensured the continuing commitment of potentially huge US forces to the defence of the West.

If we look back at our history we will see that we have in the last 250 years been at war with France, with the USA and with Germany. The war with the USA was in stark contrast to the war with the other two. The UK lost, with many in Britain unhappy about taking up arms against US settlers from the UK who had similar views of liberty, limited government and taxation to the home country. The USA triumphed not only by might but also by right, and since then relations have usually been mutually supportive.

In the cases of the long wars against France and Germany the UK's role was totally different. Here the UK stood alongside the small and oppressed countries of Europe that had been invaded and quelled by the imperial powers, and fought successfully for their liberation. Once again might and right combined to ensure a happy outcome after terrible violence. These victories made the UK a good European, and showed that many people and nations did value self determination and self government. When British armies finally reached France at the end of the Napoleonic wars and Germany in 1945 those nations were relieved and surprised that the British army was banned from looting, rape and commandeering supplies, and duly paid for food and other items needed. It made the point that this was no army of occupation or oppression, but liberators of Europe from tyranny who planned to go home as soon as their job was done.

Today the threat is of course not from violent conquest but from clumsy bureaucracy and poor EU wide economic policies stifling opportunity and limiting the political expression of democratic electorates. Architects of the EU project itself say the UK will become a colony of the EU if we dare to leave. This worrying language or poor joke sums up what is wrong with their analysis. The UK does not have to choose between staying in a centralising EU or accepting poor terms from the USA for a deeper and closer relationship with her. The UK can continue to champion global free trade, democratic self government and a world diplomacy to try to settle world problems. We will continue to need NATO to help with our defence and with our contribution to global security, and we will continue to trade with the EU and the USA with or without free trade deals. We need only accept a Free Trade deal if it works for us as well as for them.