

Britain's global leadership – the positive future for a UK outside the EU

The Bruges Group firmly believes that we need to reframe the debate to focus on the positives that Britain poses, in particular our excellent global links, higher education, to the City of London and technical brilliance in manufacturing. The UK, when freed from the restraints of the EU, has numerous attributes. Quite simply we do not have to be governed by Brussels to secure our prosperity, in fact far from it. This research, by Ewen Stewart, makes the positive case for independence.

- Inside the EU we are punching below our weight and should do better. Self-belief coupled with a hard analysis of the nexus of power and strategic advantage will lead to this being addressed but that can only be so once we are outside of the EU.
- The Eurocentric orientation of the UK is misplaced. Emerging markets, by 2018 are expected to account for 45% of world GDP and the European Union's share will have declined from 34.1% to 20.2%, with the Eurozone representing an even smaller 14.6%. China's share is predicted to surpass the entire Eurozone by 2018.
- Nations that can address this extraordinary shift in global growth will capitalise most effectively on these new trade flows. The attractive European trade bloc, of the 1970's does not look so attractive in this light, given the Eurozone's inexorable decline of the share of global GDP. The UK is uniquely well placed to exploit these shifting trading patterns given its global links and its service and financial sector bias.
- Britain is uniquely positioned globally in terms of economic, cultural and soft and hard power assets. The UK is

home to the world's global language, the world's most global city and many of the most notable global universities and research institutes. British legal ideas and the common law approach is admired the world over. It is the basis of our stability. These advantages would continue irrespective of our membership of the EU.

- British manufacturing remains comfortably within the top ten, in terms of output, globally. The UK is now a net exporter of motor cars with four out of every five cars produced in Britain exported. Britain is the world's second most significant aerospace manufacturer, possesses two out of the top ten global pharmaceutical companies while also having strong positions in marine, defence systems, food, beverage and tobacco manufacture, off-shore engineering and high-end engineering and electronics. British design, be it in fashion or sports cars, continues to be world beating.

- The UK retains a key skills base and has developed a high-end, high-margin capability. Membership of the EU, with its cost pressures has almost certainly done more harm than good to this capability. Industry has little to fear from withdrawal.

- The UK is a world leader in sport, media and culture. Higher education is also a great strength with British universities ranked amongst the best in the world. This coupled with the growing strength of the English language and our traditional excellent global links gives the UK real influence in world affairs. This will not change once we are outside the EU.

- While the US is the pre-eminent power accounting for 39% of all global defence expenditure and an even greater technological lead the UK's defence expenditure remains in the global top 4. Technologically too Britain's forces, while numerically modest, are highly advanced. Technology generally trumps numbers. The UK is perhaps one of only 5 or 6 nations that can still project power across the globe.

- As the world's 5th largest economy Britain will not be isolated by leaving the EU. On the contrary British power would, in some cases, be enhanced. For example we would swap our 12% EU voting weight at the World Trade Organisation for a 100% British vote.

- The UK is currently estimated to be a member of 96 different international governmental organisations so the loss of one such organisation, albeit a very important one, is unlikely to be damaging. To read the paper on-line, click on the link below:-

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