



Brexit was a Win for the Good Guys

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Watching the Brexit campaign generated mixed feelings: It was a little like the man who saw his mother-in-law drive his new Mercedes off a cliff. In the United Kingdom some people who hated free trade, immigration, and market innovation challenged the officious, wannabe super-state headquartered in Brussels. Who to cheer for?

The Brexiteers, who deserve at least a couple hurrahs. The European Union created a common economic market throughout the continent, an undoubted good, but since then has focused on becoming a meddling Leviathan like that in Washington, D.C. The good guys won.

- 1) Average folks took on the commanding heights of politics, business, journalism, and academia and triumphed. Obviously, the “little guy” isn’t always right, but the fact he can win evidences a system which remains open to all of us.
- 2) Told to choose between economic bounty and self-governance, a majority of Britons chose the latter. It’s a false choice in this case, but people recognized that the sum of human existence is not material.
- 3) Those governed decided that they should make fundamental decisions about who would rule over them. The Eurocrats, a gaggle of politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, academics, lobbyists, businessmen, and others, were determined to achieve their ends no matter what the people thought. No longer, said the British.
- 4) The rule of law will be respected—or at least not so flagrantly flouted. Those signing up as EU members did not realize that the it would be a transfer union. At least some countries likely would not have agreed to expand Brussels’ writ had they realized that explicit strictures against bail-outs would be ostentatiously ignored.
- 5) Routine incantations of the need for “more Europe” and importance of “European solidarity” no longer will be confused with arguments. Those in charge always want more—more money to distribute, publicity to satisfy, rules to enforce, and power to wield. Their vision of “more Europe” is Europe giving them more.

6) Democracy triumphed over bureaucratic inertia. The EU is known for its “democratic deficit,” a hydra-headed, unelected executive. The Brussels bureaucracy has become the perfect means to impose policies which otherwise lack political support.

7) The pretensions of the EU as Weltmacht never looked so silly. A flag that no one salutes and anthem that no one sings. Multiple presidents: three, four, or is it five? Insistence that all which is good and decent comes from the EU as ever more people organize and vote against it.

8) Demonstrating that other EU members can throw off the cloak of, if not tyranny, bureaucratic obsession. The EU most often crushes unplanned independent thinking. The Eurocrats always seemed to win. Until now.

9) The recognition that most human decisions are not wrong but different, and need not be uniform across a continent, especially one made up of such diverse peoples. People often value different approaches and standards and are entitled to live their lives as they wish, even if inconsistent with the continent’s most “progressive” thinking.

10) The Brits ignored silly scare-mongering about how Europe and, indeed, Western Civilization, would be threatened if the UK left the EU. Britain would still be a member of NATO—just as Turkey belongs to the military alliance but not the EU. World peace does not depend on Britain in or out of the EU.

11) Schadenfreude is a terrible thing, but almost all of us glory in the misfortune of at least some others. The recriminations among the Remain camp in Britain are terrible to behold. Labour Party tribunes blame their leader Jeremy Corbyn, whose supporters blame the Scottish nationalists. Almost everyone fingers Cameron. Apparently America isn’t the only home for myopic bickering.

12) Sometimes the advocate of a lost cause triumphs. Nigel Farage has been campaigning against the EU forever, it seems. Yet every advance appeared to trigger a retreat. Even election night he admitted that it looked like the British would choose to remain. Except they ended up taking his advice.

13) A bracing reminder that people want to believe that their views matter, that what they do actually makes a difference and those claiming to represent them actually listen. Otherwise, normally decent folk will look to the fringes to find political champions willing to speak for them.

Could Brexit turn out to be a mistake? Yes. We live in an uncertain world with imperfect knowledge. We can only guess at the future. And Britain has been capably governing itself for hundreds if not thousands of years.

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