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THE JOHNS HOPKINS MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

BREXIT: HOUSE OF COMMONS (2018)

Chaired by Amanda Donoghue

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Brexit: House of Commons (2018)

Topic A: Britain's Exit from the European Union

Topic B: A Post Brexit Future

Committee Overview

This committee represents a unique Model UN simulation, and will emulate the House of Commons (HoC) and be set in July 2018. The HoC is the lower chamber of the United Kingdom's Parliament and features 650 members, each of whom are elected to represent constituencies. The committee will operate alongside the crisis committee titled "Brexit – Her Majesty's Government (2018)." This means that the committees will communicate with one another, responding to their respective developments in ways that the delegates deem sufficient to achieve strong resolutions for this General Assembly committee's topics.

Topic A, Britain's Exit from the European Union, delves into the situation that unfolded when 17 million citizens of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union (EU) on June 23, 2016. As a unifying body for the European continent, the EU has provided resources such as stability, alliances, and trade opportunities to its 28 member states for decades. At the same time, some argue that Britain's national unity and experiences with immigration have been complicated by its ties to the EU.

The polarizing nature of the Brexit issue has meant that negotiations to work out the final details have lacked significant progress or compromise. It is now July of 2018, and members of Parliament must embark into uncharted territory to arrive upon an appropriate course of action for this unprecedented challenge. Elected members of the HoC will be tasked with representing their constituents' widely varied perspectives, especially in light of an impending deadline.

In tandem with Topic A, the question of the leadership of the Conservative Party must be answered by this committee. Britain's political leadership has witnessed tumult and turnover since June 2016, and it would be self-damaging for Britain to embark on the bold path of separation from the EU without calming its internal political landscape. Otherwise, the preparations made to specifically ensure the success of Brexit may be rendered useless. Thus, both Topic A and Topic B should be of paramount concern to the delegates of the House of Commons. While this may not appear intuitive, the future of the world beyond Britain is at stake.



Topic A:

Britain's Exit from the European Union

Introduction

The “Brexit” debate is one that has sparked significant controversy throughout the United Kingdom and the world since its inception in 2016 when the term combining the words “Britain” and “exit” was coined. Surrounded by political, social, and economic conflict, the process of withdrawing from the European Union has proven to be no easy task for the United Kingdom.

On June 23, 2016, over 33 million United Kingdom citizens cast their vote in a public referendum that posed the question – “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?”¹ By a narrow margin of 51.9% to 48.1%, United Kingdom voters expressed their desire to withdraw from the European Union², a longstanding political and economic union of 28 member states dating back to the mid-20th century.

Yet despite these results, the vote was far from decisive in many regions of the United Kingdom. The disagreement was especially prevalent in nations like Northern Ireland and Scotland, where 55.8% and 62.0% of voters respectively chose to remain in the European Union. Meanwhile, it was a larger majority of voters in the nations of England and Wales who selected to leave the European Union that ultimately yielded the referendum’s result.³

In the years since, the focal point of the Brexit debate has been the process by which the United Kingdom should withdraw from the European Union. Members of Parliament have continued to separate themselves into factions based on their opinions regarding the conflict. These factions are becoming increasingly polarized in the House of Commons specifically and talks of compromise have been slim. Thus, it is the goal of this committee to set terms by which the United Kingdom can successfully withdraw from the European Union within the time constraints they have been given.

Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which states that, “any member state may decide to withdraw from the union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements,” lays the groundwork for the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union. It mandates that a state must file an office notification of their intention to leave and should negotiate a deal with the European Union regarding the two parties’ future relationship.⁴ In May 2018, it was announced that a summit would be held the next month to discuss the current status of the Brexit negotiations.⁵

¹ *Referendum on membership of the European Union*, (UK Electoral Commission, 2015), Page #1.

² *EU Referendum Results*, (BBC, 2016).

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ Jennifer Rankin, Julian Borger, & Mark Rice-Oxley, *What is article 50 and why is it so central to the Brexit debate?*, (The Guardian, 2016).

⁵ *Brexit*, (House of Commons Library, 2018).

Relations with the European Union

Though Brexit debates did not gain traction until then-Prime Minister David Cameron's public referendum in 2016, this was by no means the first disagreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union. Euroskepticism, or the opposition to the policies of the European Union, has been a facet of Britain's political landscape since the United Kingdom first joined the European Union in January of 1973.⁶

In the early 1990's, the European Union began to establish free movement amongst its member states to empower Europe's working population to travel across borders with ease for work or leisure. Known today as the Schengen Area, this European Union initiative consists of 26 member countries; however, the United Kingdom chose to opt out of this agreement, which was widely accepted and encouraged by other major states in the European Union.⁷

Additionally, in the months leading up to the 2016 public referendum, multiple pro-Brexit campaign organizations gained footing. The Electoral Commission ultimately designated "Vote Leave," perhaps the most successful amongst these organizations, as the official campaign in favor of Brexit.⁸ It was the work of groups like these that largely influenced the results of the referendum.

⁶ *EU member countries in brief*, (European Union).

⁷ *Schengen Area*, (European Union, 2013).

⁸ Jon Stone, *Vote Leave designated as official EU referendum Out campaign*, (Independent, 2016).

⁹ *Migrant crisis: EU's Juncker announces refugee quota plan*, (BBC, 2015).

Pro-Brexit Sentiments

One of the primary arguments in favor of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union was centered upon immigration policies. In 2015, the European Union established a plan to welcome hundreds of thousands of migrants, particularly refugees, from multiple nations in Africa and the Middle East.⁹ While the United Kingdom was able to successfully opt out of this plan, it prompted many Euroskeptics to question the European Union's control over the refugee crisis and express concern that future policies might make it more challenging for states like the United Kingdom to deport migrants to other European Union member states.¹⁰

In the years leading up to the referendum, net migration to the United Kingdom had been steadily increasing.¹¹ In fact, the total number of migrants in the United Kingdom tripled to approximately three million from 2004 to 2015. Additionally, the majority of these migrants originated from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and other relatively new European Union member states.¹² This influx of migrants generated mixed sentiments in the United Kingdom. The proportion of unskilled workers, refugees, and asylum seekers amongst these newcomers was growing rapidly. This prompted opposition among United Kingdom citizens, many of whom were still experiencing the effects of an economic downturn just a few years prior that contributed to an unemployment rate of

¹⁰ James McBride, *What Brexit Means*, (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).

¹¹ *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report*, (Office for National Statistics, 2019).

¹² James McBride, *What Brexit Means*, (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).

8.1% in 2011, which was the highest it had been in more than twenty years.¹³

Meanwhile, tensions in the United Kingdom were building even further. The frequency of terrorism events had been steadily increasing for multiple years. Between 2014 and 2016, the United Kingdom experienced the most terrorist plots among countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), at nearly double the number in the United States, the next leading nation.¹⁴ As a result, Eurosceptics grew especially wary of the European Union's approach to handling the influx of refugees. Many opponents asserted that this "crisis" was one that the European Union was struggling to contain. Additionally, the membership in the European Union ensured the United Kingdom's participation in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This sparked fear that Islamic terrorists would be guaranteed extradition to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), rather than have the chance to face trial on United Kingdom soil.¹⁵

These issues paved the way for pro-Brexit campaign organizations, specifically Vote Leave, to capitalize on United Kingdom citizens' desire to "Take Back Control," a popular slogan that characterized the mounting distrust for the European Union. Members of Parliament and other activists who supported the pro-Brexit initiative argued that by continuing to participate in the European Union, the United Kingdom was essentially yielding all control over trade, human rights, and migration to the ECJ.¹⁶ The Eurozone, a monetary union of nineteen states that use

the euro, is a powerful voting bloc that has significant influence over decisions made by the European Union. The United Kingdom, which uses the Pound sterling as currency, is therefore an outlier to this political and economic alliance of major European powers. This proved to be yet another concern for pro-Brexit activists, who asserted that the United Kingdom cannot receive fair representation in European Union decisions, given that they are outnumbered greatly by the Eurozone.¹⁷

Anti-Brexit Sentiments

Despite these arguments, there would be no dispute surrounding Brexit without the existence of an equally vocal and opinionated group of activists advocating for the United Kingdom to remain a member of the European Union. Interestingly, perhaps one of the most central arguments employed by anti-Brexit strategists also related to economic issues. Even though the United Kingdom is not a member of the Eurozone, these individuals assert that the United Kingdom's ties to the European Union provide the nation with much-needed economic security and stability. As a full member of the European Union, the United Kingdom enjoys multiple significant economic privileges including, but not limited to, exemption from border checks, steep tariffs, and restrictions on trade with other member states of the European Union.

By choosing to withdraw from the European Union, the United Kingdom risks both short- and long-term economic consequences. Economists' predictions as to these outcomes vary substantially,

¹³ *Unemployment rate in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2000 to 2018*, (Statista, 2019).

¹⁴ *Global Terrorism Index*, (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017).

¹⁵ *European Convention on Human Rights*, (Council of Europe, 1994), Page #15.

¹⁶ *Taking back control from Brussels*, (Vote Leave).

¹⁷ *Eurozone Fast Facts*, (CNN Library, 2019).

indicating that Brexit is at best a risky option for the United Kingdom economy. To add to these concerns, the majority of economists actually point to some long-term decline in gross domestic product (GDP) for the United Kingdom economy relative to the status quo.¹⁸ GDP, a widely used measure of economic prosperity, indicates a state's cumulative market value of goods and services over a given period of time. Therefore, a decline in GDP as a result of Brexit would suggest that the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union would prove harmful to their own economy.

Another compelling argument against leaving the European Union is that many believe that the United Kingdom is not currently equipped to provide the infrastructure that would be necessary to facilitate the new regulations and restrictions that would be placed upon business and trade in the United Kingdom. Without a tie to the European Union, both imports and exports in the United Kingdom would be subject to additional customs checks that are currently only required of goods coming from or going to other nations. As a bloc, European Union is decidedly the United Kingdom's largest trading partner, accounting for 46% of its exports and 54% of its imports.¹⁹ Therefore, billions of Pounds worth of goods would theoretically be processed with more scrutiny upon the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, especially without explicit negotiations regarding the United Kingdom's new economic relationships with each of the remaining European Union member states.

Therefore, as one might expect, the true impact that Brexit will have on the United Kingdom economy is impossible to predict without knowledge of the terms upon which the United Kingdom ultimately withdraws from the European Union. Any number of possibilities exist, given the countless perspectives that currently inhabit Parliament and the United Kingdom government as a whole. For the sake of simplicity, many members of Parliament identify three types of withdrawal strategies. The first is a "soft" Brexit, which is defined as one that allows the United Kingdom to maintain close relationships with its former partners in the European Union. The next alternative is a "hard" Brexit, which is one that empowers the United Kingdom to shift away from the regulations that the European Union previously mandated. Finally, perhaps the riskiest strategy is a "no deal" plan, which essentially would prompt the United Kingdom to sever ties with the European Union without establishing a precedent or expectation of future trade negotiations.²⁰

New Issues with Brexit

Having been a vocal proponent of the United Kingdom remaining a member of the European Union, then-prime minister David Cameron resigned just days following the controversial Brexit referendum. As a result, Theresa May soon assumed her new role as prime minister and leader of the Conservative Party, promising further referendums to determine the best course of action for the United Kingdom to carry out their newfound plan to withdraw from the European Union. Yet given the controversial nature of the original vote, it is unsurprising

¹⁸ Iain Begg and Fabian Mushovel, *The economic impact of Brexit: jobs, growth, and the public finances*, (European Institute, London School of Economics), Page#2.

¹⁹ *Statistics on UK-EU Trade* (Parliament, 2019), Page#1.

²⁰ J.P., "The Economist explains: How a soft Brexit differs from a hard one," (*The Economist*, 2018).

that additional questions and disagreements would continue to plague this process in the coming months.

At the present, members of Parliament have proven unable to work together effectively to create solutions for these growing concerns. Theresa May's negotiations with the European Council have proven relatively successful, but her lack of support from the Parliament has hindered her ability to move forward with Brexit strategies. Meanwhile, calls for a second referendum asking the same question have increased substantially, and many members of Parliament have asserted their belief that this would yield an overturn of the public's previous decision to withdraw from the European Union.²¹

National Disputes

As mentioned previously, the original Brexit referendum was closely split throughout the United Kingdom. However, upon closer inspection, one will find that the regions, specifically states, voted much differently from one another. Perhaps the starkest difference occurred in Scotland, where merely 38% of voters selected to leave the European Union, while an overwhelming 62% chose to remain.²²

These results are indicative of the rift that has begun to develop between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. Members of Parliament and other Scottish advocates have continued to voice their concern over the Brexit developments. In the House of Commons, members representing the Scottish National Party (SNP) have vowed to vote against any Brexit deal and set forth their plan for Scotland as a full participant in the European Union. They cite

diminished rights and trade as amongst the most prominent reasons to remain in the European Union. As a result, the Scottish National Party voted against the invocation of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which was the United Kingdom's first step toward withdrawal from the European Union.²³

Given the decisive nature of Scottish citizens' vote in the referendum, members of the Scottish National Party also assert that the United Kingdom would essentially be forcing Scotland out of the European Union against their will. In 2014, prior to the Brexit referendum, Scotland chose not to seek independence from the United Kingdom as a result of a referendum that yielded only 45% in support of Scottish independence.²⁴ Yet in the months following the Brexit vote, there have been increasing demands for a repeat of the same referendum to gauge Scottish citizens' support for its future ties to the United Kingdom, given its intentions to withdraw from the European Union. A Scottish independence movement could prove both unpopular and challenging in the remainder of the United Kingdom, which adds significant weight to the negotiations that must take place in the House of Commons to arrive upon a compromise.

Northern Ireland

In the 1920's, Northern Ireland was first separated from the rest of Ireland. Ever since, the two states saw significant conflict that lasted the better part of the 20th century. Much of the disagreement, labeled "The Troubles", was rooted upon religious beliefs and identities. In Northern Ireland, the Unionists - mostly Protestants - supported the British crown, while the Nationalists -

21 Castle, Stephen, "Brexit Explained: Not a Brit? Not a Problem! Here's What It All Means," (*The New York Times*, 2018).

22 *EU Referendum Results*, (BBC, 2016).

23 *What is the SNP's plan for Brexit?* (Scottish National Party).

24 "Scottish referendum: Scotland votes 'No' to independence" (BBC News, 2014).

mostly Catholics – pushed back from the United Kingdom and wished for independence.²⁵

In 1998, the Belfast Agreement, also known as the Good Friday peace accord, was ratified. It established a demilitarized border between Ireland and Northern Ireland and essentially put an end to the religious conflict that had been occurring for decades. One of the integral facets of this peace agreement was its guarantee for free trade and transportation between the two states.²⁶

Upon Brexit, Ireland would, in fact, remain a member of the European Union and Northern Ireland would theoretically withdraw with the rest of the United Kingdom. Given this context, it is clear that any Brexit negotiations that might hinder the open, demilitarized border would prove to be unpopular amongst citizens in Northern Ireland. Business in both states rely heavily upon their ability to move past the border with ease. A no-deal or hard Brexit could result in months, or even years, of additional negotiations regarding border security with Ireland. Not only would this hinder the economy, but many also fear that it could reignite old tensions between Protestants and Catholics in the region, leading to a return to The Troubles.

If the border is to remain open during the United Kingdom's negotiations with the European Council to withdraw, the United Kingdom must maintain – at least in part – its relations with European Union customs. Yet this is easier said than done. It would also mean that the United Kingdom would be privy to trade rules and decisions leveraged by an international body in which

they have no voting power. As a result, the European Council would be able to use this upper hand as a major point of leverage to negotiate terms that may not benefit the United Kingdom upon its withdrawal.²⁷

This crucial issue has been heavily discussed in the House of Commons. Ten members of Parliament represent the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland. These members as well as several others are significant contributors to the Conservative Party's voting bloc. While some suggest that the United Kingdom might permit Northern Ireland to retain some connections with the European Union by way of continuing to follow its trade and custom restrictions, these members of Parliament and many more have voiced substantial concern with this notion. Additionally, these debates have sparked further conflict with the members of Parliament representing the Scottish National Party, who are hesitant to adopt any plan that might permit exceptions to Northern Ireland but not themselves.

Single-Issue Parties

The Brexit discussion in the House of Commons has transcended the traditional party lines. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for members of Parliament to negotiate with one another and work together to find a compromise, given the multi-faceted nature of the issue at hand.

In 1993, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) was first founded; yet it did not reach its prominent place in Parliament until the year leading up to the Brexit referendum. In fact, it was the mere existence of the United Kingdom

²⁵ "What was the Good Friday Agreement? (BBC Newsround, 2018).

²⁶ "The Belfast Agreement/Good Friday Agreement 1998" (Northern Ireland Assembly).

²⁷ "The Economist explains: How a soft Brexit differs from a hard one," (*The Economist*, 2018).

Independence Party that initially encouraged then Prime Minister David Cameron to begin the referendum process in 2016.²⁸ Nigel Farage, who has served as a member of Parliament since 1999, quickly rose to prominence as the leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party. Though its influence in the House of Commons was relatively short-lived, after Nigel Farage's departure and the loss of a substantial number of seats in the 2017 elections, the establishment and growth of

this party was telling in the development of British politics.²⁹ It indicates the potential for single-issue parties – comprised members of Parliament who may not have traditionally associated with one another but happen to agree upon just one specific issue – to rise to power quickly and efficiently. Future coalitions like these could prove harmful to the major political groups like the Conservative Party whose influence could be hindered by single-issue politics.

²⁸ "United Kingdom Independence Party" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

²⁹ McBride, James, "What Brexit Means," (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).

Questions a Resolution Must Address

1. *How can the House of Commons successfully negotiate Brexit?*

The House of Commons should focus its efforts on the many issues discussed in this guide. For example, it must weigh the benefits and consequences of hard, soft, and no-deal Brexit plans. Next, it should determine an appropriate course of action for the Cabinet and the Prime Minister to negotiate with the European Council.

2. *What leverage is held by the United Kingdom?*

The United Kingdom's prosperous economy and significant benefit to the European Union does increase its amount of leverage in negotiations. The United Kingdom also has powerful allies that might sympathize with their cause.

3. *What leverage is held by the European Union?*

The United Kingdom has been following the European Union's trade and border agreements since 1973. While it might be in the best interest to preserve these customs agreements, withdrawing from the European Union would render the United Kingdom privy to decisions that they have no say over based upon their lack of voting power.

4. *How does approval for Brexit break down across the United Kingdom?*

While many regions remain somewhat evenly split regarding their Brexit sentiment, Scotland has proven to be increasingly anti-Brexit. Members of Parliament should consider the constituents from their regions when making considerations about this debate.

5. *How does approval for Brexit break down across the parties in the House of Commons?*

Brexit sentiments are not evenly split by party. However, members of Parliament should consider their party loyalties when negotiating with other members of Parliament and determining appropriate courses of action.

6. *What role do single-issue parties play in current Parliament politics?*

While the United Kingdom Independence Party has fallen from its prominent status in the House of Commons, there is always the possibility of further single-issue coalitions forming in Parliament. It is important to consider the impact of these groups and determine their role in the legislative process.

Bloc Positions

The House of Commons is composed of representatives from across the United Kingdom, with a variety of party affiliations. General party affiliations of some of the more dominating presences within the house of commons are described below. Bear in mind that this list is not exhaustive and dually that representatives are also expected to reflect the interests of the constituents from their respective districts. Those policies should be independently researched and referenced in all policy initiatives.

▪ *Conservative and Unionist Party*

With regards to Brexit, the conservative party is heavily split. Delay in the process, legislative difficulty, and numerous position resignations have left the party weak in light of its previous commitment to leaving the European Union swiftly. In the event that this goal is achieved, the conservative party also intends to adapt the existing immigration system to be better use to national interest. Furthermore, it aims to limit the jurisdiction of the ECJ. Other notable plans include leaving major policy coalitions like the Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries policy.³⁰

▪ *Labour Party*

The Labor Party, while still favoring a departure from the European Union, considers the social aspects of a hard Brexit; namely the rights of European nationals in the United Kingdom, post Brexit.

▪ *Scottish National Party*

The SNP is presently pro-remain and thus will consider policy adaptations in the event of Brexit. It is a strong advocate for the United Kingdom to “remain within the European Single Market and Customs Union.” (BBC News, 2018).³¹

▪ *Liberal Democrats*

The Liberal Democrats are in favor of Brexit yet wish to maintain very close ties to the European Union and Europe as a whole. The party also wishes to ease the process for residence and registration of European nationals within the United Kingdom, potentially through Brexit.

▪ *Democratic Unionist Party*

The Democratic Unionist Party is engaged in a working agreement with the Conservative Party in favor of leaving the European Union.

³⁰ “News: Vote Conservative.” News | Vote Conservative. Accessed November 15, 2019. <http://www.conservatives.com/sharethefacts/>.

³¹ “Brexit: Where Do the Parties Stand?” BBC News. BBC, November 5, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48027580>.

Conclusion

It is evident that the Brexit debate is far from simple. Where there is no shortage of possible solutions for how to negotiate the United Kingdom's withdrawal, the significant number of stakeholders in the conflict complicate the issue significantly.

The House of Commons' first task will be to arrive upon a compromise that appeases a majority of its voters, but this is easier said than done. Members of the Scottish National Party voice continued disapproval of Brexit and express concern about their lack of representation in the United Kingdom, given that their citizens voted decisively against withdrawal from the European Union. Meanwhile, members of the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland have also raised issues regarding Northern Ireland's open border with Ireland, a member of the European Union. While it might appear isolated, the Northern Ireland border debate is indicative of the larger economic and social

consequences that Brexit might bring about for the United Kingdom. To effectively withdraw, the United Kingdom must reconsider and renegotiate its relations with the European Union. In that sense, the European Council also possesses significant leverage in these talks.

While this guide is meant to provide an overview of the Brexit debate and a framework for the most pressing issues at hand, it is not exhaustive. Part of what makes this debate so multifaceted and complex is its pervasiveness into all areas of United Kingdom and European politics. Therefore, it is essential that delegates conduct their own research into their members of Parliament to determine their perspectives, values, and suggestions. However, the dais will look favorably on creative solutions that empower delegates to work together on finding a compromise to allow the United Kingdom to move into the next stages of Brexit.



Topic B: *A Post Brexit Future*

Introduction

In the event that a sufficient deal is made to facilitate Brexit, or that a hard Brexit occurs, policy makers and representatives should be ready for severe adjustments. Should old relationships be mended, or should new opportunities and partnerships take precedent? Alternatively, should Brexit fail to occur, these representatives hold the burden of adjusting the United Kingdom's role in the European Union to be more symbiotic in nature. Delegates should expect their ideas to differ along party lines as well. Moreover, all delegates should realize that they must be prepared to deal with the repercussions of the ultimate Brexit decision, regardless of if it was one they supported. Therefore, in the coming sections, issues that Brexit has revealed will be highlighted in order to focus delegates on precisely what must be addressed for the United Kingdom to succeed in the future.

Security Concerns

Considering that, "The United Kingdom is arguably the European Union's strongest defence power [as] one of only six member states meeting the NATO target of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defence," (The Institute for Government, 2018) ³² there are grave security concerns in the wake of Brexit. To begin, in the absence

of the European Union's largest military powers, threats are not well heeded. The United Kingdom also consistently held a hard line in terms of punitive action and, "losing the United Kingdom's strong support for sanctions could have an immediate impact," as many countries like Russia are disincentivized to comply in the absence of a threatening force like the United Kingdom. This permits such offending countries to act as they please without consequence and thus may reduce the administrative power of the European Union. ³³

Additionally, intelligence sharing post Brexit and proposed limits to it should also be considered. The United Kingdom is also the largest intelligence contributor to the European Union, but now it may or may not be beneficial to limit information access. The European Union has seemingly taken the former route and has already limited the United Kingdom from accessing projects with a security dimension like the Galileo Satellite System.³⁴ This comes in spite of British petitions to continue working on the project and other larger security partnerships after Brexit.

Immigration Narrative

The initial referendum vote to leave the European Union was driven in part by an influx of immigrants in recent years.

³²"UK-EU Defence and Security Cooperation after Brexit." The Institute for Government, May 22, 2018.

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/uk-eu-defence-and-security-cooperation>.

³³User. "Security Concerns That the EU Will Confront Post-Brexit." BlueStar Strategies, November 4, 2017.

<https://www.bluestarstrategies.com/news/insight-and-analysis/312-security-concerns-the-eu-will-confront-post-brexit>.

³⁴"UK-EU Defence and Security Cooperation after Brexit." The Institute for Government, May 22, 2018.

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/uk-eu-defence-and-security-cooperation>.

Many British leaders have maintained the stance that leaving the European Union and regaining control of Britain's would curb fears of globalization and prevent jobs from being taken by immigrants from British citizens. Former London Mayor Boris Johnson led the campaign to leave the European Union in 2016 primarily on the grounds of zero-tolerance immigration control. Johnson promised to curb immigration by ending free movement from the European Union into Britain.³⁵ Johnson's campaign on zero-tolerance immigration is a stark contrast to his current vision of future immigration policy which is "Amnesty for some, deportation for others." Undocumented immigration would be dealt with swiftly, while attempting to issue legal status to "long-term irregular workers."³⁶

Trade and Travel

Delegates should also consider the economic repercussions that could result from adapted trade and travel policies. As mentioned above, immigration was a primary driving force for the affirmative Brexit referendum. However, open travel between the United Kingdom and Europe for European citizens may also be dramatically affected, severely impacting tourism. Moreover, should British citizens travel to the European Union, what jurisdiction does the European Court of Justice now hold? Such legal questions should also be assessed following transition.

While there are economic options for the United Kingdom after Brexit, all require significant structural change. Many

European Union countries also may house anti-British sentiments after Brexit. This can particularly complicate trade relationships and future foreign investment opportunities for Brexit. The United Kingdom could potentially join the European Economic Area (EEA). Established in 1992, the EEA extends the European Union's single market to non-European Union nations. It differs from the European Union in that it was founded as a commercial agreement meant to foster economic growth and development. This is an attractive option for many policy makers, as the EEA allows countries to benefit from the free movement of goods or uniform competition regulations (as in the European Union) without having to tolerate European Union attempts to coordinate taxation or having to adhere to a common security policy (i.e. the European Union speaks with one voice at international forums).³⁷ Alternatively, the United Kingdom could negotiate new bilateral agreements with specific countries in the European Union or generally trade with the European Union in adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and procedures.

Scotland

The referendum on June 23, 2016, revealed an important dichotomy within the United Kingdom. Specifically, while the majority of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, Scots overwhelmingly did not. In fact, Scotland was one of four parts of the UK where no single constituency voted to leave (CBS

³⁵ "From 'Zero Tolerance' to 'Amnesty.'" Infomigrants, August 2019. <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/19206/from-zero-tolerance-to-amnesty-boris-johnson-s-vision-for-uk-immigration-post-brex>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "History of the EU Archives." Campaign for an Independent Britain, February 2016.

<https://campaignforanindependentbritain.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Norway-what-is-the-difference-between-EU-membership-and-the-EEA-Agreement>.

News).³⁸ Chris Deerin, the director of the Reform Scottish think tank, believes that, “If Scotland is independent in 2025, 2030, ... Brexit will pretty obviously be the main reason for that. ... It has set Scotland against England.”³⁹ From the perspective of the Scottish people, Scotland is essentially being forced to leave the European Union as a result of its connection to/being part of the UK, a decision that many feel will result in economic difficulty. To have such geographically defined disagreement has led Scottish government officials to begin reopening a case for independence.

Theresa May’s Brexit Deals

Before May’s resignation on July 24th, 2019, she proposed a Brexit deal consisting of two parts: a Withdrawal Agreement covering the terms of the UK’s exit, and a Political Declaration setting out a framework for future relations (Barnes, 2018).⁴⁰

Concerning the former, the Withdrawal Agreement would establish a transition period to run after Brexit until the end of 2020, during which many pre-existing arrangements would stay in place, a financial settlement – money the UK owes to the EU to settle its debts, and citizens’ rights. This means that, although the UK would no longer be an EU member, it would still have to conform to EU rules during this transitional period. Proponents of this transitional period argue that it gives people and businesses time to adapt to the UK outside of the EU, and that it gives the British government more time to reach a better, final deal. Opponents of this

transitional period argue that instead of taking back control, the UK would be surrendering it to the EU. The UK would be outside the EU with no formal say over rules it would be obligated to follow. Concerning the financial settlement, many supporters of Brexit are against it because it involves large sums of money being paid to Brussels while bringing no guarantees regarding the future of the relationship. On the flip side, however, the EU has made it clear that if the sum is not paid, it would severely damage the UK’s reputation on the world stage. Concerning citizens’ rights, EU nationals in the UK and Britons in the EU would retain residency and social security rights after Brexit. The Freedom to Move and live within the UK and EU would continue throughout the transitional period, and people would be allowed to settle when it ends and apply for permanent residency after five years.

The Political Declaration’s key points include the Northern Ireland backstop and Economic partnerships. The Northern Ireland backstop is controversial because it would present customs and regulatory issues, which could mean products being checked at the border. At its core, the backstop is a trade concern. In terms of the economic partnerships, different parties in the EU have agreed to develop a comprehensive free trade area as well as wider sectoral cooperation where balanced trade is in the mutual interest of both parties.

³⁸ “Will Brexit Drive Scotland to Break from the United Kingdom?” CBS News. CBS Interactive. Accessed November 16, 2019. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/brexit-news-scotland-independence-gains-momentum-as-united-kingdom-set-to-leave-european-union/>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Barnes, Angela. “What Does the Draft Deal on Post-Brexit Ties Say?: Euronews Explains.” euronews, November 22, 2018. <https://www.euronews.com/2018/11/22/eu-and-britain-agree-on-draft-deal-on-post-brexit-ties>.

Chequers White Paper

The Chequers White Paper was published by the UK government and is the longest and most detailed explanation yet of proposals for the UK's future relationship with the EU. The paper lays out five main areas of focus: The economy, Communities, The Union, Democracy, and The UK's place in the world. The UK published document states the following concerning these areas of focus:⁴¹

For the economy, the paper seeks to develop a broad and deep economic relationship with the EU that maximizes future prosperity while at the same time minimizing trade disruption between the UK and the EU and protecting jobs;

For communities, the paper seeks to address concerns voiced in the referendum vote by ending free movement and putting in place a new immigration system,

introducing policy to support farming and fishing communities, and keep citizens safe;

For the union, the paper seeks to meet commitments to Northern Ireland by protecting the peace process and avoiding a hard border, and safeguard the constitutional and economic integrity of the UK;

For democracy, the paper seeks to reclaim UK sovereignty, ensuring laws made are passed by elected officials enforced by UK courts, with a clear accountability to the people of the UK;

For the UK's place in the world, the paper seeks to promote innovation and new ideas, assert a fully independent foreign policy, and work with the EU to promote and protect essential European values of democracy, openness, and liberty.

⁴¹ Walker, Peter. "Whats in the Brexit White Paper?" The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, July 12, 2018.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/12/whats-in-the-brexit-white-paper>.

Questions a Resolution Must Address

1. *What incentive, if any, does the UK have to maintain and strengthen trade relations with other European nations without membership in the EU?*

Given its newfound autonomy, the UK should be motivated to develop trade relations with new partners. However, the committee must decide whether non-EU states are worthy potential allies.

2. *Does the United Kingdom benefit from retaining Switzerland?*

The answer to this question will have worldwide implications, especially for Swiss nationals. Bilateral relations have historically been strong, although it is up to this committee to decide upon the importance of historical precedent.

3. *How will the United Kingdom regain security privileges and stakes within the European Union?*

A post-Brexit future may lead other countries to question the trustworthiness of the United Kingdom. Seeing as the country will remain in the same geographic region as members of the European Union, there should be a harmonious agreement between all actors about maintaining security.

4. *What are the district specific interests at play for each representative? Do certain demographics favor a particular outcome? If so, what can be done to either achieve that outcome or assuage those populations in the absence of achieving it?*

Although this committee is working toward a nation-wide solution, Members of Parliament are ultimately responsible for their constituencies. For popularity and re-election purposes, MPs should consider the needs and desires of their districts when outlining the nation's future.

5. *How, if at all, should the United Kingdom modify its relationship with the United Nations?*

Even though the United Kingdom's representation before the United Nations looks different than in Europe, a post-Brexit future will certainly be felt at the organization's headquarters in New York. For diplomatic purposes, this committee should ensure that the United Kingdom remains well-regarded among other international actors.

Bloc Positions

In relation to their positions on Topic A, the blocs within the House of Commons are further described below. This committee should heavily weigh the politics of these blocs when forming a resolution for this topic.

▪ *Conservative and Unionist Party*

The Conservative Party is a conglomerate of several important ideological groups. A notable division is that between the “One Nation” bloc, popular bloc within the party that prioritizes, “economic interventionism and social economic interventionism and social harmony” and a more economically-liberal bloc that instead promotes the values of a free-market economy and natural market correction. ⁴²

▪ *Labour Party*

The Labour Party seems to prefer maintaining collaborative ties with European Union states. For example, the Labour Party specifically noted continued participation in Horizon 2020, an important financial resource for the European innovation Union. The party continues this rhetoric in its desire to cooperate with the European Union on future climate change, immigration, and counter-terrorism policy making (The Labour Party, 2018). ⁴³

▪ *Scottish National Party*

The party is highly concerned with the question of Scottish representation within the state and especially in the house. Should Scottish interests be ignored in the discourse of Brexit, it is highly likely that party officials will advocate for the ultimate goal of the party: “an independent Scotland that is a full member of the European Union.”

▪ *Liberal Democrats*

Reminiscent of the views of the Labor Party, the Liberal Democrats would prefer a deal be made on terms that are bilaterally favorable. A unique point that the Liberal Democrats bring is the vigilance to protect entitlements previously secured under European Union legislation (Liberal Democrats). ⁵ These rights include maternity leave, annual leave and other labor privileges. ⁴⁴

▪ *Democratic Unionist Party*

The party has noted that it would not compromise the unions between the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and Scotland. Resultantly, post-Brexit policy initiatives specifically reference the creation of, “a successful, outward-looking, knowledge-based economy in Northern Ireland.”

⁴² Louth, Lord Norton of, and Paul David Webb. “Conservative Party.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed November 15, 2019. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., October 4, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Conservative-Party-political-party-United-Kingdom>.

⁴³ “Labour's 2019 Manifesto.” The Labour Party. Accessed November 15, 2019. <https://labour.org.uk/manifesto-2019/>.

⁴⁴ “Liberal Democrats.” Liberal Democrats, October 10, 2017. <http://www.libdems.org.uk/>.

Conclusion

The UK is currently being presented with a very important dilemma: to leave or not to leave. At this point in the process, either option will have ramifications for the UK, whether they be for better or for worse. In order to decide the best course of action, the committee will have to reanalyze several aspects of the UK's policy, the underlying issues, and aim to ensure the development of pragmatic solutions that respect the sovereignty and the rights of the British people. There is a plethora of historical precedents surrounding this decision, and some of this history can be used to the UK's benefit or to its demise. Members of Parliament will have to use their best

judgement in making these decisions, while not forgetting about the modern-day attitudes of their constituents. The work of this committee should ultimately be sustainable, certainly for the short term and ideally for decades to come. Otherwise, the United Kingdom risks losing its legitimacy and sovereignty, and, at the very worst, finding itself wanting to reverse the original decision made about Brexit. This, of course, would be logistically difficult, so it is in the best interests of this committee to wisely pick the best path for UK nationals, the politics of the state, and its international reputation.

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