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Robin Niblett – Garden Lecture
China/Hong Kong: Greece: Turkey
Charles Kennedy

EVENTS

19th-23rd September Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Bournemouth

29th-31st October 60th LI Congress. México City.

2nd November Anuja's International Fair. David Lloyd-George Room, NLC 3.45-8pm

30th November LIBG Forum: Israel and Palestine - two states or one? Britain's decisive role. Sir Vincent Fean. NLC. 7.00pm

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Britain's Place in the World

Lord Garden Memorial Lecture

Dr Robin Niblett

Baroness Garden: Good evening and welcome. I'm Sue Garden, a Liberal Democrat Peer, which is not quite as lonesome these days as being a Liberal Democrat MP. I'm really honoured to be invited to chair this, the 8th Annual Lecture in memory of my wonderful husband, Tim. He would, I think, be surprised – and I'm sure he'd be delighted – that ideas and issues around security and international affairs, where he had such interest and expertise, continue to be discussed in his name. For that, we have to thank Liberal International British Group and, in particular, Robert Woodthorpe Browne for initiating these lectures, and Chatham House for hosting them. My family and I are truly appreciative and we do thank you.

My main task this evening is somewhat strange, as I have to welcome our speaker to his own organization and his own stage. But it is a very great pleasure to do so. Dr Robin Niblett has been director of Chatham House since 2007, a post which Tim once held. Robin has brought great distinction to the post. He has a great record in international and strategic thinking, from appointments in the United States. He is highly regarded on both sides of the Atlantic as well as further afield, as demonstrated in his award of CMG, which reflects so very well on him and on Chatham House. In addition, I gather he has only just arrived in from the Far East. He is in great demand at conferences and he's been invited to give evidence to committees in the House of Commons as well as the House of Representatives and the Senate, particularly on European affairs. I'm very pleased to see that he is a linguist and adds his voice to the campaign to increase language proficiency in the UK. He's a musician, married to an artist, so very definitely an all-rounder.

He's speaking tonight on Britain's place in the world following the general election. It's at a time when our international role is one on which not all politicians are agreed. Robin, we look forward very much indeed to what you have to say.

Robin Niblett: Thank you very much, Sue. You're right, this is strange to have it this way round. I've become quite comfortable actually doing the Q&A and being able to drop in and out, bouncing off what the speaker said. This time I'm going to have to hopefully

deliver some goods for you to be able to pick up off. It's actually a great honour to be giving the Tim Garden Memorial Lecture this year, so a big thanks to you, Sue, and to Robert, to all of your colleagues, for giving me the opportunity to do this.

It's great to have an opportunity to be able to honour Tim. I always say to our staff here that the people at Chatham House at any one time are Chatham House. It isn't this kind of reputational issue that goes backwards and forwards; the reputation is built in each moment. As I well know, and Victor Bulmer-Thomas, my predecessor and sort-of Tim's successor, well know, he put in place the foundations on which we've been able to build, and at a very important time for the institute, when it really needed his kind of leadership. So it's a chance for me to say a big thank you.

The one thing I want to apologize for is giving the same topic talk as Ming Campbell in the end, because although I'm going to do Britain's place in the world, I'm conscious at the moment, and especially a year after this election, with the referendum coming up, that actually Europe and Britain's place in the world are tightly interconnected. But I don't want to talk about the negotiations that are ongoing right now, or how to win a Yes vote, or whether a No vote has merit. I'm not going to go in that direction. I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the link between Europe and Britain's place in the world. Obviously these are my personal reflections – which I look forward to refining, I might add, as well – but it's a great opportunity to get some feedback and share them with you today.

I want to make a specific argument – or test, I might say, a specific argument with you: that the important changes taking place both domestically and internationally make obsolete the notion of a Britain that can chart its own destiny by balancing equally between its diverse channels of influence. The idea of returning to a sort of neo-Elizabethan age of British foreign policy, which I think has been partly the idea since 2010 – the idea of looking out for the world while downplaying the platform of the Euro-Atlantic base – implied a level of independent choice for Britain that I don't think will reflect the reality of Britain's international interests in the future.

Yes, Britain has notable strengths. I wrote about them five years ago when we had the last change of government. They certainly give it an opportunity to be more influential than most countries its size. But in the future, it's going to have relatively limited resources and it's going to need a geopolitical base from which to ensure its prosperity, protect its security and project its interests. As imperfect as the EU is on all levels – and I know, as a student of the European Union – I think it offers the main source of leverage for Britain in a world where leverage is essential. I think unless British policy-makers accept the fact that the country's strategic strength is going to be linked inexorably with that of its European neighbours, then Britain risks seeing its influence decline structurally and not just temporarily.

So let me start first of all with a couple comments about the decline thesis – how real is it, strengths and weaknesses. Then I want to talk a little bit about where the UK stands in this changing world, and then do a very quick historical look at Britain's adjustments that it made in the past to a changing strategic order. Then I want to argue why I believe the UK will need to recognize that the EU countries and EU institutions must be the first inner circle for Britain's international influence, surrounded then by the transatlantic relationship and reaching out beyond that to bilateral and multilateral relationships.

As somebody who has the opportunity and privilege of travelling a lot, I'm struck by the sense that Britain is in decline that you hear as you travel around the world. I was on this platform with a couple of American colleagues and one Brit, Timothy Garton Ash, in the lead-up to the election. It was all: 'never in 25 years – never in 35 years – have I seen Britain in so much decline'. I found myself, I have to say, resisting the theory as much as they put it forward. But why this debate now?

I think partly it's perceptions. The perception is that at one level, on security, Britain has moved from being on the team on the field to being on the reserve bench of international security. The non-decision to go into Syria and the semi-involvement militarily in terms of taking on IS stand out as examples.

Second, the government has carried out some pretty severe cuts to its defence capabilities, but in particular to power projection – the size of its naval forces, the lack (temporarily, at least) of an aircraft carrier projection capacity. Senior US officials have been outspoken in their concerns about the long-term risks of the UK as a kind of P-5 contributor to international security.

Third, there is the referendum on the EU and the uncertainty this puts into Britain's place in the world, and the insecurity that it brings that maybe Britain even after the referendum might not be able to re-establish its relationship exactly right.

Fourth, we must remember the broader moorings of Britain's influence have also begun to drift. For 70 years, the UK was a privileged nation at the heart of a Western order. It risks being less influential in a UN of rising powers; less significant in a leaderless G20 than in a world when the G7 led. So you can see there is a combination of reasons why I think this idea of structural decline has taken on a certain element of consistency.

However – and this is Chatham House, a place where we do 'on the one hand, on the other hand' – I think Britain actually is doing pretty well, despite this structural decline. These are points I made in the talk. This is a country that has had to halve its deficit over the last five years and yet has come out of the crisis with one of the fastest rates of economic growth in the OECD, one of the lowest rates of unemployment. One of the most popular destinations in the world for foreign direct investment – top in the EU, second in terms of stock only to the United States, ahead of China and Germany in foreign direct investment. It is also proving particularly attractive to emerging markets. India and China are making the UK their main destination for foreign investment. Despite some pretty tough regulatory changes, the City of London has retained its position as one of the top two preeminent cities for financial issues in the world. It's the largest exporter of services, etc.

Even in the international realm, the UK continues to be in the top realm of its capacity to exert influence. It's had a 19 per cent cut in its defence budget but it's still the fifth-largest defence spender in the world, with power projection coming back into its armoury in about five to ten years' time. Despite a 16 per cent cut in the FCO's budget, it still retains a global platform of embassies and actually an increase in much of the emerging world, with particular increases in Beijing and New Delhi, but also some of the mid-sized countries (South Korea, Malaysia, Nigeria, Vietnam, Pakistan, etc.). And as people constantly point out and you all know, but just to remind you, one of the best networked countries in terms of international institutions. I think it's actually used those networks quite cleverly. I think the period of the presidency of the G8 in 2013, Britain used its hub position to push an agenda of open government, tax openness – the tax evasion debate that has now become so prevalent around the world was pushed really from a British

agenda of that time. Cyber-security, internet governance, combating sexual violence – the UK has taken on the role of playing a thought leader on new international challenges. I should, of course, remind us all that we have now one of the largest foreign aid budgets, second-largest spender of official overseas development assistance in the world, and highly respected security and intelligence services.

Having just skimmed on my mobile phone this morning, this is where the Bruges Group report stops, by the way, for those who want to read it – it gives the list of all the good things. Let me now go to the stuff that isn't so good, which is the challenges. I think although the UK survived the financial crisis relatively unscathed, it now faces some pretty serious challenges that will persist through this parliament and potentially beyond.

The first are in the economic space. The UK might have cut the deficit in half, but it still has one of the largest deficits in Europe, close to 5 per cent of GDP. As a result, its debt-to-GDP is now around 80 per cent, and we're spending 3 per cent roughly of our GDP on debt servicing – about a third higher than we're spending on our defence budget. Despite the most optimistic scenarios, surpluses stand quite a long way off, and with some really severe cuts that will need to be undertaken, which at times seem difficult to be able to understand how they'll take place. If there's no tax rises going to happen, we have key areas of social spending ring-fenced, certainly the tools of international influence are likely to be the ones that will be hit as a result. The FCO may have still ended up through the last parliament with a global spread but it is a thin spread. A continuing big shift to greater use of local staff, a gradual loss of longer-term career FCO staff as a result of the change in final salary pensions and other restrictions on compensation, lack of investment in technology infrastructure when that becomes so important in being able to communicate messages and reacting quickly to changing events. And while the MOD has some big investment coming in, certainly military officials and others that I hear commenting on these issues and those who study these issues more closely than I do, point out that we might end up with a lot of good kit but without the troops to be able to carry out and implement and use the stuff. Therefore, our capacity to project might end up being theoretical more than real. Even DFID, with its strong budget, has found its staff cut heavily under the current cuts.

So the tools for international influence are likely to remain under pressure for quite a long time into the future. At the same time, the UK is running a 5 per

cent of GDP trade deficit as well. Our currently good stock of balance of payments, our large stock of overseas investments, are not providing the same returns that they used to in the past, to make up for our deficit in trade of goods, if not in services.

Ultimately, the UK is not a productive country. We do not spend sufficient amounts on R&D. We have aging physical infrastructure, low levels of educational attainment in the primary and secondary levels, a shortage of long-term capital for new businesses. These were challenges when the government came into power; they were challenges that emerged under the Labour government. We still have them today, at the start of the new parliament.

I think the second point I want to say quickly, domestically, is that there's a big question as to whether this perception of decline is cyclical or structural. I hear many people say it's cyclical: when the money comes in, we can go back to doing what we were doing before. But I think this ignores the change in British politics – and not just British politics, politics throughout Europe. The fragmentation in the power of established parties, a rise of parties like the SNP and UKIP – one represented heavily in parliament, the other not, but UKIP with 13 per cent of the British population, with a highly sceptical view of international affairs, not just about Europe but also about the United States. Both those parties are actually Euro- and US-sceptic. They will have a stronger voice.



Robin Niblett & Sue Garden

We're also going to have a UK that spends its time fixated not just on the EU referendum but also on a whole series of constitutional adjustments. Maybe an English parliament; certainly more devolution to Scotland, maybe to some of the other national parliaments, cities. We're going to have more voices involved in British foreign policy. The idea that we can go back

somehow to a period where foreign policy could be made in Westminster, paying attention here and there to shifts in public policy but not being led by them, I think that is fanciful. Ultimately, I think we're going to end up in a situation where there is a structural shift towards a much more cautious engagement in foreign policy affairs than we had in the past – not only because of the economic shortages and our capabilities, but also the changing nature of British politics.

The timing for this isn't great. I want to move to the second point, which is the external context in which Britain is operating currently. The external context holds many positive features – I don't want to underplay them. We'll go from roughly 1.8 billion to probably 3 billion people in the middle class by 2030 if growth continues in the emerging markets the way it's done so far. That will create great opportunities for British businesses, British employment, British jobs and further inward investment. But I work at Chatham House and I've got to point out the negatives as well, and the risks. If we don't point out the risks, we don't deal with them.

I think there are three in particular. The first is that there are winners and losers of globalization. The losers don't want to be losers, and the winners want to make sure that their winning continues. There is a highly mercantilist approach to globalization amongst many countries vying to develop national champions, to protect or cultivate strategic industries under non-tariff barriers. They're also looking to raise their voice in international economic institutions. Britain is going to have to watch out that it doesn't become one of the losers, given the productivity challenges it faces right now.

There is also a much bigger geopolitical dimension to this winner-loser dimension. I think Russia is trying to avoid declining further, being a bigger loser than it's already been. The United States and China are duking out over who is going to be the stronger in the Asia-Pacific. The Middle East is worried about the rise of Iran; if it no longer is operating under sanctions, it can tap into the power of globalization. The UK could find itself pulled into some of these conflicts given its P-5 role, its strong security relationships with the United States, the Middle East, the Gulf countries. But in terms of political cohesion, material resources and international influence, it's going to find this a very difficult call to answer.

Secondly, international institutions are not emerging to deal with the pressures of globalization. The UN Security Council is increasingly in stand-off. The IMF and World Bank are losing legitimacy. The WTO is

paralysed. It means that the risk of spillover from this competition between winners and losers is much greater than in the past. The US – we can talk more about it later on, in Q&A – is ambivalent about the kind of role it should play there. We might hear plenty of American political leaders saying they want to have the US going back to being a strong leader, but I would argue that Barack Obama is probably more in tune with the American people than many of the members of Congress and critics on the right say. The idea of offshore balancing, as people have described it, is much more tempting to many Americans than intervention in the future.

In the end, what we're seeing in this unpredictable institutional environment is countries are grouping together in regions to deal with problems that they find they can't deal with at a global level. So it's not just the European Union but it's the African Union, the Pacific Alliance in Latin America, ASEAN, the Eurasian Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council. Each of these are trying to find benefits amongst the likeminded.

I think the implications of this shift for the UK are significant because the extent to which power continues to drain away from the Bretton Woods institutions, the UK's ability to promote its interests in those institutions will decline. To the extent that we have greater great-power competition, particularly between the United States, China and Russia, I think the UK will find that its voice is more diluted in this kind of unstructured world. In the same vein, however close or special the UK relationship is with the US, it will increasingly become one amongst a number of key bilateral relationships.

The third key external challenge which I wanted to point out is to do with the issue of state fragmentation. State fragmentation is happening all over the world in different ways – even in Europe – but the place where it's in its most violent form is in our neighbourhood to the south, in the Middle East and North Africa, the eastern Mediterranean. We've really seen powerless, ineffective governments and a growing youth population with no sense of opportunity allowing their countries to be torn apart along sectarian and tribal lines. As much as the UK and the US and their allies try to bottle this up, we could end up in Europe with a lawless zone, something akin to Afghanistan-Pakistan, on our neighbourhood, with the risks of terrorism and uncontrolled immigration that could come from this. So as Britain looks to the future, it's finding that its neighbourhood is now almost one of the crucibles of international instability. I think the kind of tactical adjustments that governments have been taking in the last 10 to 15 years don't fully capture the nature of the

changes. Let me come now to the third part of my remarks, which is how has Britain adjusted in the past and how should we think about the future.

Britain is a country that is pretty pragmatic and has made adjustments when it's had to in the past. Winston Churchill talked about Britain's three interlocking circles: empire, the English-speaking world (principally, the United States) and Europe. Ultimately he saw Britain sitting at that intersection between those interlocking circles, equally influential ideally in all three. The Suez crisis of 1956 put paid to that imperial vocation that Britain wanted to remain. It kept the Commonwealth but ultimately it put itself in a position of a junior partner to the US in the Cold War. But the economic decline in the 1960s and 1970s then made Britain realize it needed to commit to Europe at the same time. So while our relationship with Europe has always been awkward – we did not join up, obviously, to the single currency after its launch – we ended up in a sort of uneasy combination of those three relationships, principally the transatlantic and European, but always with that ambition to try to reclaim some of the international – imperial, you might call it, or post-imperial – connectivity.

In the 21st century, we've explored this interestingly. David Miliband really pushed the idea of a 'hub Britain', taking advantage of its NGOs, language, London as a capital city, time zones. He argued that Britain should be that global thought leader for 21st-century challenges. Interestingly enough, the David Cameron coalition government we just had continued that view, this idea of Britain being at the centre of a web of global networks. I think he wanted to wean Britain off, personally, its instinctive deference to the US and also its obsession with Europe. In a way, it was a return to Britain sitting at the intersection of Churchill's interlocking circles, but now commercial diplomacy would be the reconnection to the world.

I think over the last five years there has been some progress in this direction, particularly if we look at China. A wobbly start to the bilateral relationship after the Dalai Lama's visit, but since then Britain has been touted as the centre for internationalization of the RMB and Britain's exports to China have doubled, from about £7.3 billion to £15-16 billion over the last five years.

But really this rebalance has only been partially successful. You would have to pick particular countries to identify them. Russia, far from becoming an energy partner, has become an adversary. The Gulf states are wary of letting Britain too close to them, even commercially now, following the Arab Spring

and Britain's initial support for the Muslim Brotherhood. India has ignored the idea of the special relationship that was put forward in the coalition's initial agreement back in 2010. It has turned its focus really much more to the US.

And things may actually get tougher. The emerging economies – China, Brazil, South Africa – are entering really complex transitions to move into middle-income status. They are finding this transition, as we have seen particularly in Turkey and Brazil, very difficult indeed. At the same time, our relationship with Europe has ended up in the complex environment that we all know and I'm not going to repeat here. We know the roots of the decision of why we're standing in front of a referendum. Whatever the roots of that decision, we're now in a position where Britain is seen, as Herman Van Rompuy put it, as being engaged in Europe with one hand on the door handle, which makes it difficult to be influential in Europe the way it was in the past.

The United States has also become a bit frustrated, I'd say, with the UK. I had one senior US official who described to me Britain's 'self-indulgent obsession with Europe', as she put it. Ultimately, this has fed the diversification of the US' relationships to Germany over the euro, to France (to a certain extent) on security issues and the Middle East and the Sahel. This has compounded the concern about the defence cuts.

At the core of the problem – I suppose this is my point, or my thesis – is that this continuing desire of British leaders to have maximum international flexibility, to have Britain either as a pivot or a hub or a bridge or a connecting node in a networked world – or as William Hague once put it, a hub with many spokes coming out of it – each of these concepts imply that Britain can pursue a foreign policy that can face in multiple directions simultaneously. I don't think this approach works anymore. It's not just that it's difficult in practical terms to have your cake and eat it, in terms of how you face in multiple directions simultaneously, it's that the shifts in world order are coinciding with this decline in the UK's relative material capacities and its ability to apply international leverage.

Ultimately, I don't think Britain can think of itself anymore – and maybe it's an [indiscernible] pensive, they'd say in France – but this instinct that we still could be at the intersection of those interlocking circles. Instead, I think Britain has to commit to put Europe as its inner circle, have the United States and the transatlantic relationship as that surrounding

circle, and then the bilateral and multilateral relationships after it. Why? As I said earlier, Britain has a difficult relationship with Europe and a long and historical Euroscepticism, which makes it particularly difficult for politicians to think of Europe being that inner circle. In fact, I think often that's the reason they don't go there, because ultimately this would involve a commitment that very few politicians have had the courage to take. One has to recognize that British scepticism has been hardened in recent years – one could say, justifiably. The EU's focus on monetary union, which had a defective design from the beginning, has raised concerns that its further integration could disadvantage the UK. Obviously the migrant issue is one that is a deep concern to many people in the UK. It has had an effect on blue-collar wage levels, on social services, even if the aggregate impact has been positive for Britain.

Then there is the sort of hypocritical element. John Major made a good point, which I know others have made as well, in a speech in Germany just recently: while Europeans are telling Brits all the time that the sanctity of movement of labour should not be touched, they don't mention the fact that according to Mario Monti, only about 20 per cent of EU services are allowed to be traded across European borders currently. When you think that services are 70 per cent of EU GDP, that is not exactly the four freedoms that the architects of the single market had envisaged.

So why then put Europe in that inner circle? Basically, I think there are three reasons, and I'll say them quickly because we can talk about them more later on. I think Britain with Europe as its inner circle has the best prospects of leveraging its economic competitiveness internationally. It has the best prospects for strengthening its security. It has the opportunity to maximize its international influence on global challenges. I think the economic argument, in some ways, is the easiest and most obvious, in the sense that as much as people put out – I think just today there's been the latest big missive in the Telegraph about the disadvantages to British business. But at least – I'm not an economist – if I just look and add up the benefits in terms of being able to leverage the weight of a market of 500 million people, at a time of growing global economic competitiveness and market opening, it seems to me the UK is going to be that much better off on negotiating access to these growing markets around the world as part of such a group. Even if not every trade agreement looks exactly like Britain would like it to look, as one of its biggest countries, it has the opportunity to at least design a good chunk of that negotiation to its advantage. It's highly unlikely that Britain will get better access for

its services in big emerging markets, doing it by itself, than it would do within the EU. If I just take one statistic, because statistics tend to get thrown out a lot by the camp that says Britain doesn't get enough out of its economic relationship: in just the one year after the EU-South Korea agreement was signed in 2011, so in the year 2012, British exports increased by 57 per cent in that one year after the EU-South Korea agreement was signed.

Second, foreign investment. Britain desperately needs foreign investment. We don't have the long-term capital playing within the economy and our ability to attract it, which is connected to the fact that we don't just have slightly weaker labour laws, but we also have the connectivity into the EU market and we do not suffer from the disadvantage of non-tariff barriers excluding us from Europe – again, I hear a lot of people commenting that we're still in the WTO, the tariffs would be low with Europe even if we were outside. Non-tariff barriers – product standards, regulations – that's what determines your access to a market today. If you're not writing those rules, you will be disadvantaged.

Again, maybe I'm being over-optimistic here, but one has to go against the grain a little bit. I think the timing of thinking about pulling away from Europe economically might end up being perverse. As I said, emerging markets are about to go into the transition to middle-income status, one of the most difficult transitions you can possibly make. Who knows if they'll make it? Yet at the same time, the EU and the Eurozone is just starting to take the fruits of structural reform, under the whip hand of the reforms that needed to be undertaken as part of being in the single currency. It would be ironic to pull back just at the time when Europe might take advantage of its nine economies being in the world's top twenty most competitive, with some of the most competitive companies in the world as well.

A second point is security. This is where I think it gets perhaps more interesting, to a certain extent. Again, the EU is by no means a traditional security actor. It's not going to defend Britain against an overt military attack. But that's not what we're talking about in today's world of security that I've described. Ultimately, if you look to the east and even to the south and the Middle East, what will be the main determinants of security? They will be, in the case of looking south to the Middle East, counter-terrorism cooperation, judicial and police, border control – all of the stuff that you need to do with the EU, as that is the route through which these threats will move. At the same time, the ability to pool financial resources, do market-opening measures and bring material resources

to those countries in North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean that might help them stabilize – again, most effectively undertaken in collaboration with EU partners.

The east is the same. Yes, it's important to reassure NATO members who are exposed to Russia's revanchist outlook right now, through NATO and rapid reaction task forces and so on. But the most effective way of blunting Russia's intentions, I would say, in that part of the world is to help strengthen the political governance and the economic prospects of those EU members and neighbours with the weakest economies and governance systems. Ultimately, this is where the EU is most effective. Legal standards, structural economic assistance, energy union, competition policy, energy charters – these are the tools of resilience which will actually keep British citizens safe, as well as those countries in an independent position. Sanctions, as we've seen, can impose a cost, even if they don't always change policy.

The last area is more amorphous and I think needs to be tested, but I'll throw it out here: the ability to influence global risks, those transnational risks like climate change, pandemic diseases, cyber-insecurity, failing states. How can Britain best play in those areas? I think we've seen already in the climate change space, the UK has leveraged the EU very well. Yes, the EU got pushed to one side at Copenhagen by the big boys, but in the end – and this is in the end process – we're coming to the Paris agreements with now a coming together amongst all three big players (China, the United States and Europe) with Europe's leadership on renewable energy having brought down a lot of the costs of solar power in particular for the future. But I think also part of the difference is going to be in the future thinking not just about climate, the issues of digital markets – where again, the EU will be incredibly important – privacy for citizens, it's also a question of making individual countries more resilient to deal with the challenges, just like we could make North Africa perhaps more resilient, or Eastern Europe in the future. In sub-Saharan Africa, EU cooperation, both bilateral with France on security, but on trade, smart financial assistance, preferential access to the EU market, can be important for sub-Saharan Africa. In Southeast Asia, anti-piracy collaboration could be done between EU military forces who are less powerful on the security front and much more powerful in the soft security dimensions of sea lane surveillance. Even in the Gulf, one of the big challenges the Gulf will face is not just Iran but its own energy security in the future, as they consume more and more of what were their exports. Energy efficiency and integration are things that Europe can work on and the UK could be influential in that

dialogue.

Some of these initiatives will fail. Some might succeed. But I think the UK will have a better chance of success if it puts cooperation with its EU partners in the lead in these areas.

So let me conclude. I think for the growing group of mid-sized states around the world like the UK, whose economic strength will never be preponderant enough, regionally or globally, to really be able to be influential, whose military resources and economic pull are declining in relative terms, being a key player in a strong regional institution is a critical lever for national influence. By the way, if you're a strong country with strong attributes like the UK, you can be that much more influential.

I suppose my bottom line is I think the UK – it's all about relativity. The UK will be richer, safer and more influential by committing to Europe as being in its inner circle of its foreign and security as well as its international economic policy. Should the British people decide – and they will decide whether Britain remains inside the EU or not – if they do decide that it should, then I think British policy-makers need to commit to make the most of this opportunity to increase their influence for the future, both for their citizens and for the country as a whole. Thank you.

Britain's Place in the World Lord Garden Memorial Lecture Dr Robin Niblett CMG Director, Chatham House. Chair: Baroness Garden of Frognal 23rd June 2015

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Gardeners' Question Time

Question 1 Robin, do you accept that it is the British politicians' concentration on the domestic affairs that has caused this nation's external weaknesses?

Robin Niblett - I always say that I have the luxury of not having to be elected, so I can say what I like up on this stage about what I think is best for Britain, but I don't have to get elected in doing it. So that's a first point. If I had to be elected, my main priority would be domestic affairs. What I feel British politicians do not do well enough is connect domestic affairs to international affairs. It's so obvious actually, in a way. We've done quite a bit of polling at Chatham House with YouGov over the last four years on British attitudes toward what their ambitions should be. The British people are ambivalent. They want to be a great power but they don't want to commit British troops out to intervention. At the core of it is this idea that the world out there is dangerous, and somehow they expect the politicians to protect them. You can see why, if you go through my litany of risks.

But ultimately, our ability to protect ourselves at home will be hugely enhanced by intelligent engagement, and intervention at times, abroad. I suppose my key theme here – and this is the hardest thing for all British politicians to say – is that intervention will be more credible and more influential in collaboration with EU partners and sometimes new institutions than by itself. And with the US where it counts – we've got to pick our horses for courses. But I don't blame any British politician for focusing on domestic politics. What I blame them for is not connecting the domestic and the international.

Question 2 In the past, Britain has been great because of its colonial base, its Commonwealth base, backed up by an army and a navy at some strength. In the past few years we've had some comments from the United States and members of their Senate and government, indicating their concerns over the reduction in the power of the army and the navy. Surely if we're to retain our position in the world through influence, we must have more spend on defence, or at least 2 per cent GDP spend. I support that, by the way. But I'm curious to get your ideas now, thank you.

Robin Niblett - I was involved in chairing a NATO policy expert group in the lead-up to the Wales Summit, or Newport Summit, last year. We had a bit of a debate about the 2 per cent thing. In the end, we put it in our report. We also added a comment that, if I

remember rightly, 20 per cent of the military budget should be applied toward equipment and procurement. Because what you find is that what you spend on is as important as how much you spend. If you're spending on keeping bases that were designed for another era of Cold War conflict, is that effective when you've got very subtle, complex forms of intervention coming from the east, from Russia, and also hybrid and complex threats coming from the south and Middle East?

So the content is as important as the quantity. But that being said, my view is if you don't put a target there, then it is a statement of withdrawal, in a way. It's a statement that military power doesn't matter. I'm afraid I'm a believer in deterrence. If you took the police off the street in London, we'd all get on very well at the moment but things change. The world at some level – sorry to go IR theory here, but as a British IR theorist once said – is an anarchical society. Ultimately, the society is there providing it has the protection. Two per cent is a statement by governments to say: we think defence is important. Not intervention, not military attack left, right and centre, but that we need to treat this as a core part of our security.

It may not be influential – I think you said 'influential' at some point. As I said in my remarks, the reason why I think the EU needs to be in the inner core is that defence becomes an insurance policy. The US, in a way, has become our insurance policy here in Europe. But the influence may come less from defensive capabilities and more from the other ones I described.

Question 3 Could you make some comments about soft power, coming from two areas? One, the fact that we've got a universal language which we can project our culture through – the British Council and similar bodies; the ESU, for example. Secondly, the fact that we can project quite a lot of goodwill through this 0.7 per cent commitment through DFID, which is giving us great plaudits around the world.

Robin Niblett - Soft power being the power of attraction, the idea that people want to follow you in ideas rather than being forced or coerced, even by relatively benign things like trade policy – in that sense, you gave two examples. I would say that the foreign assistance has the benefit of enhancing our soft power but actually is perhaps even more important if it is spent effectively in connecting the domestic and the international security. Ultimately, the Department for

International Development and many of the NGOs associated with it rightly note the importance of reducing poverty and meeting various Millennium Development Goals, and our sustainable development goals later this year.

But for it to be politically sustainable, it needs to be connected as well to citizens' and taxpayers' sense of security. I think this idea that Britain is using some of its resources – hard-earned, we're a country going through some very tough periods and tough cuts – but that we understand that helping other countries helps ourselves, is a very powerful and inclusive message. It's not a power-projection message, it's an engagement message which, in a world where every country wants to have its own voice and doesn't want to be told what to do, enhances soft power.

The English language, I don't know. I think it's great because we get – I get quite often to moderate a lot of things, because people think we have this great facility with moderating. Sometimes, I know from my time in Washington, people think that what we say is more intelligent than what others say, just because we say it in English and we can command the language. These are useful advantages which should be used. But I also remember the Spanish spending a lot of time talking about the Hispanic region, Latino Hispanoamerica, we speak the common language. Well, it doesn't help Spanish soft power, in my experience. What Spanish companies have been able to do in Latin America is take advantage of that language more to go in and take advantage of business opportunities. It hasn't necessarily made the Spanish voice of the Spanish government, or rather Spanish policies, more influential.

In the end, English is used by America. America, you could say, has great advantages but America's power these days is being limited. The danger of the language one – I'll finish on this point – is that you could find just about every other country is able both to speak English, maybe not as well as we do but well enough to get done what they need to get done, but they also have their own languages to dominate their own regions or markets, and we can't play in that one as well. So as the study that we carried out together with the British Academy said, it is vital that we don't rest on our laurels of the English language and we really invest, through universities, in our public institutions, our government departments, in language capacity.

Question 4 I wanted to ask you about the way you characterized British foreign policy. You talked about David Miliband and his thought of 'hub Britain' and you used the phrase 'commercial diplomacy' for David Cameron and the coalition government. Is that the

phrase that you would still use, that you expect to be the dominant spirit of this government for the next few years? Or are you detecting something different?

Question 5 Your speech sounded like the opening salvo of the pro-EU referendum campaign. No doubt it can be challenged very strongly on many of the things that you said. However, we don't have time for that. So what I would like to just say is there was an underlying assumption throughout your speech that projection of power, influence in the world, is something 'good'. I have my doubts on that. I think one has to be careful what one wishes for. The other point that you never mentioned was the Commonwealth. I think you mentioned it once in your speech of 45 minutes. So perhaps you can say something about that.

Robin Niblett - Very good questions both. Where will this government go, having done hub and commercial diplomacy? Although this is now a Conservative government rather than a coalition government, I think this is going to be a government that wants to have a more balanced and rounded set of relationships. The slight downgrading, if I can say, of the US relationship – we'll be solid but not slavish allies – of which there were quite a few opportunities taken, I think there is an effort to re-engage a bit with the US.

If the referendum ends up with Britain staying in the EU, then I think what Philip Hammond said here – sitting in this chair actually at Chatham House, on June 1st – about actually that Britain would lean forward in Europe, in the areas where it can be influential (I'll come to influence in a minute) – energy policy, single market, foreign affairs issues – will be where they'll go. So we will end up, I think, with a Britain that goes back to the traditional one I described, of trying to see in all directions simultaneously, which is hub Britain.

The point I'm making is I think if you're in government – I haven't been in government, like many people here – but if you're in government, you've got to choose where you put emphasis. My concern is that governments in general – and this is a bipartisan, tripartisan comment – have not put as much effort as they should be doing into specific relationships in Europe in order to be able to be influential, even if it's going to be in three directions. Ultimately, I would be putting more emphasis back in Europe, given the context. But I think they'll go back to a more traditional approach. Commercial is useful but commercial hasn't worked out quite the way people thought.

I thought about this a lot, and I'm trying to write up what I'm saying here, so this was an action-forcing

event, this speech, to try and make me get my thoughts together. They're not fully formed completely yet. But I have a paragraph in there, because I thought I had to answer that question. A lot of people say, what's Britain's role? What does that mean, role? Role is a pointless word, or even position. Ultimately, if a country can be influential beyond its shores, it should be, in my opinion. If you're a government, you represent your citizens. Your citizens want to make sure that they are prosperous, safe, healthy, etc. The world outside today influences enormously whether you are healthy, prosperous, safe, from climate to terrorism to economic opportunity. Yes, there are plenty of domestic decisions that need to be taken – I listed them out in my speech. But if you have the ability to influence your external context, take it. Don't be embarrassed about it. Now, don't overplay your hand. The obvious thing: don't intervene where intervention doesn't help. Don't play to old ideas that because we had colonial relationships, they'll become useful relationships in the 21st century. That might be a subtext of your comment; I've heard other people make that point. But I think if you can be influential, do it. I think that's useful.

Question 6 I'd just like to preface my remarks about Lord Garden, since this occasion is in his honour. I once had the privilege of talking on my own doorstep about foreign policy, when he was canvassing for a local Liberal Party in the very un-liberal constituency of Barnet. He had this whole range of experience in policy making and command as well as think-tankery. Talking about foreign policy on the doorstep was something that very few of your colleagues, Robin – **Baroness Garden** He was supporting me, who was the Liberal Democrat candidate at the time.

Question 6 My question is about another topic which wasn't mentioned in your lecture, Robin: the right to protect. Two of Tony Blair's wars, as he liked to call them, or military interventions were undertaken in the name of the right to protect, in Sierra Leone and, very controversially, in Kosovo. David Cameron's Libyan adventure was also boosted by the arguments for the right to protect. We haven't heard much about it recently. Syria seems to have put a bed to it, as far as Britain is concerned. What do you think about that?

Question 7 Following on from that question, a hard question: the Baltic states and indeed Finland are absolutely convinced that Russia will attack them sooner or later. What effect will this have on Britain's relationship with Europe, because they have no choice but, under Article V of NATO, to defend? If you take that further, and Russia is repelled or stopped, will it change Britain's attitude to Europe?

Robin Niblett - Three very good questions. I didn't answer the gentleman's question about the Commonwealth. Let me just say something on the Commonwealth very quickly, having actually spent a day recently at the headquarters of the Secretariat here in London, because I was involved in a search actually.

The reason I don't push the Commonwealth in my remarks – I'm very cautious about Britain rah-rahing the Commonwealth. I think the quieter that Britain is in the way that it operates within the Commonwealth, the better. If members of the Commonwealth collectively want it to be what it can be, I think it can be very powerful. Election monitoring, good governance, improving the role of women in economic development, teaming up with DFID – this is the kind of soft areas of change and influence that could be amongst the most powerful in the future. So I think the Commonwealth, if its members allow it to be what it could be, can be great. I have some scepticism that a sufficient majority of its most influential governments let it be all it wants to be, and Britain ends up maybe not being able to encourage it, therefore. So I'm a little ambivalent about it. Enough on that.

R2P, responsibility to protect. I think this was a very important adaptation to the UN system. The idea that governments are responsible for upholding the values and laws in the UN Charter, and that just because they're governments and therefore they control the monopoly on violence doesn't mean that they then can crush those laws, was an incredibly important evolution.

Libya has ended up damaging it. In my opinion – again, one has to be in the heat of the matter, and I wasn't. But I sense there was a drift between protecting the civilians that needed to be protected, and taking all necessary means to do it, which is what the UN resolution allowed the governments to do in the Libya operation – but it did drift over into getting rid of Qaddafi. Once it did that, I think you ended up with a bunch of governments saying, hold on a minute. That's not exactly what we thought.

So you've ended up with R2P being weakened as a concept at just the wrong moment. I think what is happening in Syria is appalling, and that it has been allowed to go on as long as it has. I know people say there is no good solution – well then, pick which bad solution. I'm on record as having advocated some type of intervention, both in 2012 and later, in Syria. I felt that letting things play out, which is the phrase I used, meant that it would play out very badly. I think they have played out very badly. I think R2P, the responsibility to protect, is a concept that should be retained.

I don't think the Russian government is planning to invade anyone. Famous last words, yes? I say 'anyone' – let me rephrase that. I don't think they're planning to invade the Baltic states in the near future. That would be the diplomatic answer. That's the one that's on the record. I think in the end President Putin is a very intelligent man. Certainly, he knows how power works. I think he feels Europe is weak, Europe is divided. Governments don't trust each other right now. The euro crisis has left, whatever happens with Greece, a deep well of distrust among the governments. In a way, if the MH17 plane hadn't been shot down, I wonder if the sectoral sanctions would have been applied. I think he feels maybe he can wait and Ukraine will sort of drift back into his lap. If it does, it will be as a kind of failed state, and that will be fine by him. I think Russia is quite happy to have a group of semi-failed states as long as they are under their control – black holes, corrupt, not a problem. A cordon sanitaire around Russia – perfect.

So I think his view is more 'I need to protect Russia' than 'I need to expand'. If he needs to get into hard power, it will be very subtle hard power. It will be corporate, it will be money, it will be corruption. It will be areas that Angela Merkel is very aware of, not just Britain and other governments. So I think ultimately he knows that if there were to be an attack on the Baltic states – I know there's been some polling on this, Pew did a very interesting poll on 'would you back your government if there were an attack on the Baltic states?' Quite a few countries said: maybe not. Worth looking at that poll. But I think in the end, the governments would step up. They know that if a NATO member is attacked overtly and NATO did not stand up, this would be a moment that – I'm a big believer that governments learn from the past. They might make new mistakes and they might make mistakes that look a bit like the last ones, but governments learn. If you look at how we've handled the financial crisis, governments have not made the same mistake as last time. They've made some new mistakes but not the same mistakes. People have learned from the 20th century that you do not allow an attack like that to happen, not overt. I think ultimately this is a place where governments will step forward and I think President Putin knows that perfectly well.

Question 8 Two issues I'd like to raise. One is this issue of mercantilism, the second one is exogenous influences on governance. Robin raised this issue of mercantilism. Of course we know that it originated in 1776, the economic orthodoxy then, although it took until after the Second World War before it had any meaning.

Secondly, the exogenous influences – doesn't this demand that we have a greater degree of transnational/supranational governance? I'll leave it at that.

Question 9 If Britain pulls out of Europe, don't you think there's a danger of Frankfurt leapfrogging London as the financial hub of Europe?

Robin Niblett - I will comment on mercantilism quickly. I don't think mercantilism works the way it used to, which is why China is being quite intelligent in the way it's handling its rise. This is one of the lessons learned from the 20th century. Controlling territory doesn't bring economic benefit the way people thought it did and the way in some cases it did in the 20th century. So one of the reasons I'm more optimistic about the 21st century than the 20th is that although there are a lot of tensions, and I've described them in my remarks here, and countries are out to win in the global economy, they don't want to let mercantilism, if they can possibly help it, tip into war. Emotion, atavistic concerns, history, memory, can be more powerful often than economics. So I'm less worried about mercantilism, I'm more worried about emotions. As Dominique Moisi describes it, emotions in foreign policy can trump the most logical outcomes. But I think mercantilism is not as dangerous as it was. Forgive me, I think my jet lag has knocked off the exogenous influences part, but I'm sure it was a good point.

On Frankfurt leapfrogging London, I think somebody said earlier that my speech sounded like a salvo in the 'In' campaign for the Europe referendum. I'm sure it can be taken that way. I wrote a piece back in 2010 where I strongly argued that Britain needed to look beyond Europe and beyond America, to reconnect in particular with the rising mid-sized powers that wanted British partnership and that offered Britain economic opportunity. Ultimately, we should obsess less about Europe and about the US relationship as well, which I think is very strong and will remain strong, whatever happens.

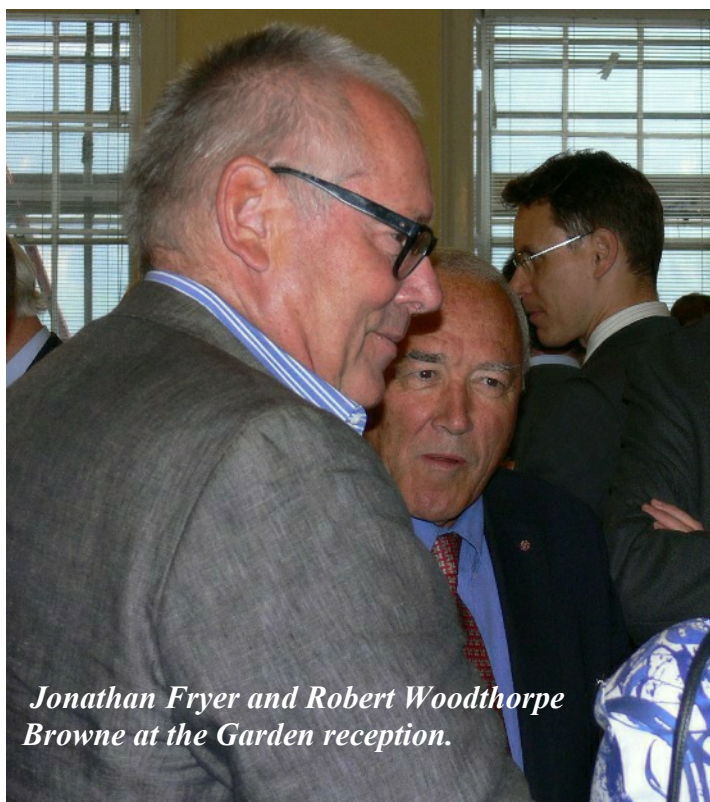
The reason I wanted to say what I said today is that you can only do that reaching out from a strong base. I don't think – I would say this, wouldn't I? – I think that's an objective statement. It will be seen as subjective by many but the reason I wanted to lay out the global context as clearly as I did was to try to provide the foundation for the argument.

If you're going to provide a foundation for this argument, then I think one has to be very careful not to overplay the risks of being out of the EU. If Britain were to leave the EU, I think it would remain a strong,

influential and economically potentially successful country. It has a growing population, it will be the largest population in Europe. Even if it left the EU, it probably would be as well. This gives it a certain material capacity. It would have to work harder to be successful if it were out, so governments would be more disciplined, the people might be more disciplined, etc.

I think on the financial side, this reminds you: if the UK were to leave the EU, the EU would be weaker. So you don't transfer UK strength to European strength if the UK is out. So Frankfurt, yes, might take some of the business of London. But you'd end up with a potentially weaker City and a not-as-strong Frankfurt. That's almost at the core of my message about the whole thing. It's richer, safer, more influential – I didn't say rich, safe. This is relative. We're in a world of relative strength, relative power, and that's what needs to be focused on.

So I think the City would come up with clever stuff. People want its talent. We can be attractive, all sorts of soft power, things that would keep us here that Frankfurt wouldn't have. But the City would be weaker – smaller, would lose certain types of business. The Eurozone would probably pass clearing bank regulations, all sorts of things that would mean certain types of business would be lost. Remember, the UK did very well out of dollar markets when it wasn't in the US. You know better than I do on this stuff, back in the 1970s. So my key point: I don't want to over-play. That's why I'm trying to be as sober as I can about the benefits of 'In'.



Jonathan Fryer and Robert Woodthorpe Browne at the Garden reception.

International Abstracts

Former ambassador's bizarre attack on Obama lays bare strains in US-Israeli ties, by Chris McGreal. The Guardian 22.06.2015

More than anything else, this suggests that there is something wrong with the professionalism of the US Diplomatic Corps, or the political ineptitude in selecting them.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/22/former-ambassador-book-obama-us-israeli-relationship>

Slavery's Long Shadow, by Paul Krugman. New York Times (The Opinion Pages) 22.06.2015

Incisive analysis of the on-going impact of racism on US domestic policy.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/opinion/paul-krugman-slaverys-long-shadow.html?src=me&module=Ribbon&version=context@ion=Header&action=click&contentCollection=Most%20Emailed&pgtype=article>

In this context, it is worth looking at the following

<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-most-diverse-cities-are-often-the-most-segregated/>

However, as a counter-balance, Obama's eulogy for the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, who with eight of his parishioners was murdered by a white gunman in South Carolina: Obama's Eulogy, which found its place in history, by Michiko Kakutani, New York Times 3.07.2015 – includes link to Obama delivering the eulogy c. 40 minutes.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/arts/obamas-eulogy-which-found-its-place-in-history.html?src=me&module=Ribbon&version=origin@ion=Header&action=click&contentCollection=Most%20Emailed&pgtype=article>

The Rojava Revolution, by Evangelos Aretaios. Open Democracy 15.03.2015

Rojava – essentially Syrian Kurdistan, is a semi-autonomous statelet, at the forefront of the conflict with ISIL. I came across this whilst researching the review of *Rifugio* and is possible the first good news from the region since that fool Blair first committed war crimes

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/evangelos-aretaios/rojava-revolution>

Recent reports from Al Jazeera suggest on-going successes.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/06/content-quasi-states-isil-rojava-150624054713157.html>

THE SILK ROAD AND THE FRAGRANT HARBOUR

On 29 June 2015, following the LIBG AGM at the National Liberal Club, members were treated to a talk by China expert and independent consultant, Andrew Leung on “*The Silk Road and the Fragrant Harbour – China and Hong Kong in a transformed world*”.

Galloping through close to 70 slides Andrew tried to impart to us in a limited time some of his vast knowledge. He started by describing the new world order as “multi-polar”, “flat, connected and dynamic.” As we move from G7 to G20 nations, there are an increasing number of areas where we will need to work co-operatively, whether in tackling the challenges of climate change or in space exploration.

China’s rise, on the other hand, is nothing new; there was a time in history between the Tang Dynasty in the 7th century till the industrial revolution in the early 19th century, when China held the number 1 position in the world. In 2010 she overtook Japan as the 2nd largest economy and was poised to overtake the US by 2030.

Accompanying China’s rapid growth, were a host of new problems, such as the rise of the trade unions, potential social unrest and the “monster of corruption”. The world had been gripped by details of the Bo XiLai scandal involving the former Party Secretary of ChongQing, his wife and the murder of an Englishman. More recently the conviction of Zhou Yong-Kang, former Minister of Security and member of the Standing Committee, sent shock waves through the country and signalled President’s Xi Jin Ping’s strength within the Party.

It was however the topic of the new Silk Road (“One Belt One Road”) that managed to excite the most interest at the talk. This was the new frontier, where East meets West. China, the great pioneering nation, has been investing vast amounts in new infrastructure by rail and sea to forge ever closer economic links with her neighbouring countries. And to finance her global ambitions, the AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) was set up to rival the IMF and the World Bank.

And what was the relevance of all this for us in the UK? Andrew suggested that there were equally vast opportunities for the UK, not only as one of the founding members of AIIB, but also as China expands westwards, we would be the recipient of much of her

capital investments and as one of the top destinations for Chinese tourists and students.

The presentation then moved on to the topic of Hong Kong. In this area Andrew showed himself to be more conservative than liberal. Rather than commenting on the current political impasse between the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council, he dwelled instead on factual observations of the situation in Hong Kong, such as the frustrations facing Hong Kongers with the



influx of Chinese visitors and migrants (a population of 7 million coping with 47 million visitors from China a year!) Admittedly there were widening inequalities with power held by big business in Hong Kong, but in his view the umbrella movement and the demands of the Pan Democrats for universal suffrage were somewhat idealistic and unrealisable.

The talk was followed by a lively Q&A chaired by LIBG Chair-elect Phil Bennion. Was a strong EU in China’s interest? What is China’s budget on defence? Is the Chinese Communist Party at risk of losing control? How can the Pan Democrats be able to influence the executive in Hong Kong moving forward?

To wrap up the evening, Joyce Arram gave a formal response and a vote of thanks on behalf of LIBG.

Merlene Emerson (Executive member LIBG and London Assembly candidate)



Hong Kong Liberal Democrat Conference Motion Autumn 2015

Following Andrew Leung's talk, members of LIBG & the Chinese Liberal Democrats were inspired to revisit last year's Emergency Motion. The text reads below. Unfortunately, as reported elsewhere, it did not make it onto the final conference agenda.

Conference notes that

- A) the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 formally agreed, in accordance with the "one country, two systems" principle, that on its return to Chinese sovereignty Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region ensuring that it would keep its freedoms, autonomy and an undated promise of universal suffrage.
- B) Article 45 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China states that "The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures.

However, conference notes with concern that

- 3) At the end of August 2014 the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Chinese Government confirmed their position, stating that civic nomination is not compatible with the Basic Law, so it will not allow an open nomination process for the election of the Chief Executive, and that the proposed selection process will limit the range of candidates who are nominated and undermine the democratic process.
- 4) Since then there had been a growing police presence in Hong Kong with increasing numbers of peaceful protesters being arrested and escalating civil unrest between pro-democracy and pro-establishment groups.-
- 5) The Chinese government did not welcome the Foreign Affairs Committee investigation into the political situation in Hong Kong and in December 2014 banned members from the committee from visiting Hong Kong to meet with senior officials, legislators and business

leaders, viewing the proposed visit as interference in China's internal affairs.

- 6) There is currently a constitutional impasse following the defeat on 18 June 2015 of the electoral reform bill to grant Hong Kong's 5 million citizens the right to vote for their Chief Executive in 2017.

Conference believes that

- g) Civil, political and economic rights are inter-linked, and are best secured in societies with democratic governance structures.
- h) A free press and the right to demonstrate peacefully are essential to the functioning of a free society and are among the most crucial pillars upholding Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy.
- i) Given the commitments the UK government has made to the citizens of Hong Kong, we have a responsibility to ensure democracy and human rights is delivered, and maintained, for the citizens of Hong Kong.

Conference call on the UK government to

- x) uphold its commitments to Hong Kong as laid out in the Sino-British Joint Declaration 1984.
- xi) closely monitor the preservation of Hong Kong's free press and the right to demonstrate freely, and be bold in affirming its support for these fundamental rights.
- xii) commit to universal human rights, the rule of law and democracy and to maintain our interest in the continued smooth political and economic developments in the interests of the people of Hong Kong.



* link to Andrew Leung's slide presentation:

<http://www.andrewleunginternationalconsultants.com/files/the-silk-road-ad-the-fragrant-harbour.pdf>

Of Referenda and Forgotten Conflicts...

Phil Bennion

I greet you as the new LIBG Chair with the world looking increasingly unstable. Let us hope that this is a passing phase, but I suspect that it will last some time. My personal view is that varying reactions to globalisation have created the turbulence and it is likely to take decades to work through the system.

Close to home we have the certainty now that we face a referendum on UK membership of the EU. LIBG will work closely with Liberal Democrat European Group (LDEG) on a campaign strategy for the Liberal Democrats. Nick Hopkinson, Chair of LDEG is also on the LIBG executive, Adrian Trett is a member of both and I am a former Chair of LDEG. We have arranged to meet Sir Graham Watson on 20th July to discuss our strategy. Current ructions of the Euro and the future of Greece could make this a more difficult referendum to win, but a resolution to this problem might have the opposite effect.

The Middle East is a concern for all. IS or Daesh, as we are now being asked to call them, are a major threat to our security, using the trappings of 21st century society and technology to assist their aim of a theocratic caliphate. Although they have lost ground in some areas there is speculation that they could try a westwards advance towards Jordan and Israel. The attack in Tunisia seems to have been claimed by them, although a brutal act of terrorism, rather than battle for territory.

The failure of the EU to agree on a protocol to share the burden of refugees crossing the Mediterranean is shameful as was the decision to reduce resources for sea patrols.

AS LIBG we can do little to stop the inferno, but we do have a duty to try and make sense of the world. If this can put us in a position to advise others or facilitate the dissemination of such knowledge, then so much the better. Please let me know if you would like to organise a debate or speaker programme. We are particularly keen to get more active in this respect outside of London.

All members, guests, or simply the interested are welcome to our Forum and other speaker events at the National Liberal Club. Our recent talk from Andrew

Leung gave us a broad view of China and Hong Kong and it was at least comforting to here that China has a strong interest in global stability. A recent joint event with LDEG on migration was also illuminating. We have an event on Israel/Palestine on November 30th and a Forum on the 2nd November. I am also looking into a talk on Kurdistan this autumn as I have been approached by Arif Bawecani of the exiled Kurdish liberals of Iran.

A conflict which rarely makes the news here in the UK is that in South Yemen. I have heard today from my Yemeni contacts here in the UK that the city of Aden is on the brink of starvation. The inhabitants are also under fire from Houthi militia as well as being at odds with the government forces. They are calling for the UK government to send aid directly to Aden as a matter of urgency as none of the aid going to Yemen is reaching them. I have been recommended the True Human Rights Institution (THRI) as an NGO successfully distributing food parcels in the affected area.

Phil Bennion



Phil Bennion at Occupy, Hong Kong, last year.

Greece and some lessons for all of us -

Do we need a global default?

Felix Dodds

Syriza's win in the Greek referendum showed to the whole of Europe and the World that people will not stand for harsh austerity measures originally caused not by them but by the financial and banking sectors casino capitalism. Remember the financial crisis wasn't created by the people but by a small number from the finance sector virtually all of who have not suffered or found themselves in jail.



The current economic model, which has brought unprecedented prosperity to the more developed countries and to particular people in those countries, has only deepened the inequality inside those countries and between them and most developing countries. That the Sustainable Development Goals have goal 10 "Reduce inequality within and among countries" shows that we are in difficult times.

We are still experiencing the impacts of the financial crisis of 2008 and the medicine that we have been given of reducing our pensions, reducing social service support and increase in unemployment particularly for the young isn't working isn't working. Youth unemployment was a driver for the Arab Spring and has also been a recruitment of ISIS (See CNN report). It has been one of the elements behind the challenge in Greece where youth unemployment stands at 60%. It isn't alone in Europe there are similar problems in Spain (49.3%) and Italy (41.5%).

The conditions for what happened in Greece are ripe in Spain with Podemos who's allies won in the local elections in cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and Zaragoza taking 25.69 of the votes if you add the socialists and other assorted left parties nearly 68% of Spain voted against austerity. In Italy the 2015

regional and local elections solidified the left in power in many cities and regional governments

Back to Syriza for a moment they brought together a coalition of the youth, unemployed, fed-up and poor when they got elected in January this year but yesterday's referendum saw their support at over 61% that means that they have drawn from the centre and centre right of Greek society.



The party's leader of Spain's Podemos Pablo Iglesias today tweeted that 'democracy had won'.

There are interesting parallels of the ecological problems with the financial crisis. The banks and financial institutions privatised the gains and socialised the losses. We are doing the same with the planet's natural capital. Our present lifestyles are drawing down the ecological capital from other parts of the world and from future generations. We are increasingly becoming the most irresponsible generation our planet has seen. The past 30 years have been characterized by irresponsible capitalism, pursuing limitless economic growth at the expense of both society and environment, with little or no regard for the natural resource base upon which such wealth is built.

The global financial crisis has provided abundant 'teachable moments' for politicians, policy-makers and the public to ponder a series of critical lessons. But clearly, too many of them have not yet learned enough. The real questions will be, first, whether we all learn those lessons, and then, whether we take the appropriate actions in time.

The bipartisan Levin and Coburn Report issued by the US Senate found ‘that the crisis was not a natural disaster, but the result of high risk, complex financial products; undisclosed conflicts of interest; and the failure of regulators, the credit rating agencies, and the market itself to rein in the excesses of Wall Street (Levin and Coburn, 2011).



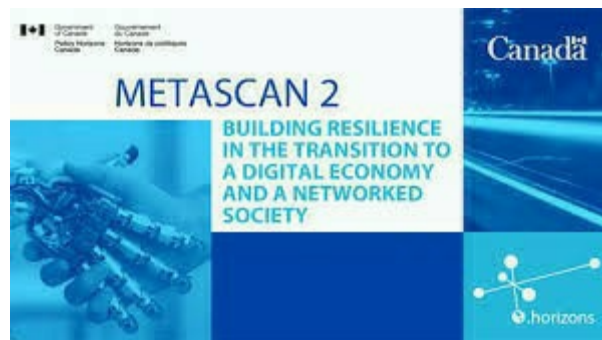
The majority of individuals running the developed world’s private and public financial institutions and the keepers of conventional wisdom in New York, London and other major developed country financial centres were virtually unanimous in acting as though they had repealed the laws of economics, and that growth in investments and profits could continue indefinitely, no longer restricted by macroeconomic conditions or local realities.

Global debt has according to the McKinsey Global Institute increased by \$57 trillion or 17% by 2007. In the old days countries defaulted on their debts but in a globalized world perhaps we need to think out of the conventional box and do a global default or re-boot. This would create liquidity and enable governments to invest again.

My friend Jeb Brugmann pointed out a great interview with the star economist Thomas Piketty in Die Zeit reminded people that German had a debt that amounted to 200% of their GDP after the war and in the London Debt Agreement (1953) where 60% of German foreign debt was forgiven.

There are critical problems we need to face over the next fifteen years. The Sustainable Development Goals have identified those, what the SDGs did not look at were the emerging new technologies and their impact. I have mentioned this in my blog before referring to the Canadian government’s Metazone2 and Metascan 3 reports. I suggested that we might see a loss of 2 billion jobs over the next 15 years due to these new technologies in five areas: power industry;

automobile and transportation – going driverless, education innovation, 3D printers and robots.



We need a world that can address these challenges and opportunities with enthusiasm, with innovation and with hope not one that is inward looking less secure, more dangerous and more violent. Thank you Syriza for giving us a chance to reflect and hopefully change direction.

Felix Dodds is a senior fellow of the Global Research Institute at the University of North Carolina, an associate fellow at the Tellus Institute in Boston and is co-director of the Nexus 2015: Water, Energy, Food and Climate Conference. He was chair of the National League of Young Liberals in 1985. This article was first published on his blog on 7th July 2015. <http://earthsummit2012.blogspot.co.uk/>

Bournemouth Conference

LIBG and the Chinese Lib Dems submitted a motion for the Liberal Democrat Bournemouth conference on Hong Kong.

The FCC did not select this motion for debate. The committee was perfectly happy that it was a well-written motion on a good topic, when it came down to balancing the acceptable motions with the time available for debate, ours lost out.

LIBG and LDEG will be running a joint fringe meeting (the cost of these is becoming prohibitive) - *Dealing with a Resurgent Russia*, on Monday 21st or Tuesday 22nd September 2015 (date to be confirmed). The speakers are Ian Bond (Director of Foreign Policy, Centre for European Reform), Ambassador Witold Sobków (Polish Embassy, London), Jacqueline Minor (Head, European Commission Representation) and Dr Alan Bullion (Senior Analyst, Informa Agra). Sir Nick Harvey will chair the meeting.

Help running the LIBG stall will be most welcome, more details will follow.

The 2015 Turkish Election – Back from the Brink A Victory for Democracy

Wendy Kyrle Pope

The month of Haziran (June) is a busy one for swallows and politicians in Turkey, building nests and seeking election.

In June four years ago, when Turkey held its last Parliamentary Election, it was just that, an election. Recep Erdogan's Justice and Peace Party (AKP) won 327 out of the 550 seats, followed by the Republican People's Party (CHP) on 135, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) on 52, and a grouping of independents (28 of which are now the People's Democratic Party, HDP) the rest.

This year it mattered for, among the expected issues, the economy, unemployment (currently 11% with 20% youth unemployment) and relations with their immediate neighbours, loomed Erdogan's bid to change the Constitution and usher in a Presidential Executive form of government, signalling the end of parliamentary democracy. For this (although as President he is supposed to be politically neutral) his Justice and Peace Party needed 330 seats to call a referendum on the constitution, but, if they got two-thirds (367) seats, they could just go ahead and make the changes.

Turkey's current constitution was drafted under the military government in the early 1980s. Turkey's Armed Forces have been the defenders of Turkish democracy and secularity since Ataturk's time in the 1920s and 30s, and have stepped in from time to time when corruption or political chaos threaten to engulf the country. They are regarded as their "Mothers' Sons". Erdogan has an uneasy relationship with them. In 2008, hundreds of senior military officers received jail sentences in connection with two plots to overthrow the AKP government; in 2015 all suspects in one of these two plots were acquitted due to invalid evidence. Critics of Erdogan and the AKP called these show trials, invented by the Government to neutralise the anti-Islamist influence of the Armed Forces.

Turkey uses the D'Hondt voting method (as do Spain, Poland, Denmark, Israel and Russia), a system which uses a percentage of the total vote to weed out very minor parties and reallocate their seats to larger ones. Most countries use a few percent, Turkey uses 10%. Were this system to be translated onto the UK's 2015 Election, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens and the

SNP would have received no seats at all, the Conservatives and Labour another an extra 28 and 49 seats respectively and UKIP would have 10 MPs. Those standing as independents are exempt from D'Hondt, hence HDP's relative success in 2011.

Erdogan became president in 2014, after he had served the maximum three terms as Prime Minister, "did a Putin" as many commentators observed. The role of the Turkish President is that of a head of state, politically neutral, there to be first citizen in a country of equals. Erdogan envisages a different role, that of an Executive President, with the Parliament (and the Armed Forces) under his control; a short step towards a dictatorship. His presidency has already caused controversy, with pronouncements such as (on the day of his election) "Today is the day Turkey is reborn from its ashes", and, later, "I come with my people on every issues. I am the President". He had two cartoonists jailed for poking fun at him.

However, some of his own AKP party oppose the Constitutional changes he proposed. Quite apart from the unease about these, the increasing authoritarianism (which led to the riots in 2013), creeping Islamisation, corruption scandals, and the fact that the economy is faltering (having survived the world recession in 2008), the wisdom of aligning Turkey with the Syrian rebels in a world of ISIL and other foreign policy matters is being questioned. The position of women in society is seen to be going backwards, and there are more reports of rapes and domestic violence.

His own protégé, the Prime Minister Davutoglu, has expressed concern about the stalled Kurdish negotiations because Erdogan declared that "there is no longer a Kurdish problem". The AKP promised increased Kurdish rights and Kurdish university departments, but nothing is happening.

The Republican People's Party (CHP) came second in 2011 with 125 seats. This is the party Kemal Ataturk founded in 1923, and is perceived to be dogmatic and elitist, but it is also committed to secularism and anti any Presidential form of Government. Its election pledges include raising the country's minimum wage from 950 lire per month (about £235) to £1500. Fuel costs are prohibitive in Turkey, although food and

accommodation are cheap. The CHP feel that the tremendous economic growth of the 2000s has increased the gulf between rich and poor, are also very concerned about the unemployment rate. It also wants a free press and a reduction from 10% to 3% in the electoral threshold.

The National Movement Party (MHP) obtained 13% of the vote in 2011. Known as the Grey Wolves, they are a far right party. They support some Kurdish minority rights, but do not approve of the peace process as they argue that the Kurds should submit themselves to the Turkish State.

The Democratic Socialist, pro-Kurdish new People's Democratic Party (HDP) was officially founded in 2012, but had gained 28 seats in 2011 under a grouping of independents to avoid the 10% D'Hondt rule. Probably most similar to the Greek Syriza or the Spanish Podemos parties, and describing itself as anti-capitalist and environmental, it is led by Selahattin Demirtas and chaired by a woman, Figen Yuksekdag. Women have a 50% quota in the HDP. Its programme is one of rights for minorities, women and LGBT people, ending all discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity and religion. They want to drive forward the Kurdish peace process (Demirtas's brother is fighting with the Kurds in Iraq), and allow mother tongue education, abolish the obligatory Sunni lessons in schools, instead having lessons which correspond with the pupils' beliefs. Erdogan described the HDP as a front for terrorists, atheists and Zoroastrians. Now it is a party, it had to get 10% of the vote to get any seats at all. The Kurdish population (around 20% at 14 million) plus the younger, more Western looking younger people are its main supporters.

On 7th June, in the liberal and most pro-CHP Izmir, I spoke to voters. Careful not to intrude or appear in any way to interfere, conversations started about general matters, but soon, without any encouragement, the subject of the election came up. People were very frightened and very frank about what they thought of the President and his plans to take their precious democracy from them. "He is a monster, a Hitler. He has sacked all the best generals, put puppets in their place. He wants to rule like Putin. Write it! Write it! Tell Europe". The polls in Turkey closed at 5pm, and the results started to come in just after 7pm.

And it was a night of drama. At just after 7pm, the state controlled Anadolu Agency which feeds the results to the media, was showing a probable 45% AKP share of the vote, and a 9% one for the HDP. Then, at 7.11, it informed its users that the HDP had passed the 10% threshold and that the AKP's share

was falling to such an extent that it would lose its majority in the Parliament. In 10 minutes, Erdogan's dream of becoming another Ataturk vanished. The final result was the AKP went down to 258 seats, the CHP up to 132, the MHP 82, but the greatest victors were the HDP, who managed nearly 13% of the vote, which equals 78 seats. Erdogan was silent that night, but the people of Turkey were not. Relief, joy and the vindication of its democracy overflowed into the streets. Among the new members of Parliament are four Christians, two from the Yazidi community and, at 97, a record number of women.

Coalition negotiations are still ongoing at the time this article is being written. It is likely to be an AKP-CHP one, for stability, but anything could happen. What is important is that the Turkish people recognised the threat to their democracy and did something about it. The AKP hogged all the media airtime with its election broadcasts during the campaign, but the others made their voices heard, by utilising social media and mass rallies up and down the country. International observers reported that the election was fair, and praised the high turnout (about 84%), but again noted that the 10% party threshold was not.

As a seasoned commentator summed up "the results of the election, in which peace and maturity defeated anger, otherization and humiliation, presage a beautiful summer for Turkey".

Wendy Kyrle-Pope

Wendy Kyrle-Pope was chair of LIBG until the last AGM; she remains on the executive as Treasurer.



Close to Ani, Turkey. The closed border between Armenia and Turkey. August 2013, by Linda Dorigo. ©

From Rifugio, Christians of the Middle East, by Linda Dorigo & Andrea Milluzzi. Schilt 2015 £29.95 isbn 9789053308431, which will be reviewed in the next issue.

Charles Kennedy

Charles Kennedy was a strong supporter of Britain's place at the heart of Europe, but his commitment had origins different from that of some LibDem colleagues in Parliament. His background was not in a continental education or in the languages of Europe. He might have become an Atlanticist like his fellow Scot Gordon Brown. After all he was in the United States as a Fulbright scholar when he fought and unexpectedly won his parliamentary seat at the age of 23.

His commitment to Britain in Europe was deep and personal. He always professed a chain of loyalties. The first was to the Highlands, where his family were crofters and where values and needs were different from those of lowland Scotland. Then came his Scottishness, which propelled him to Home Rule, embodied in the Parliament at Holyrood. Home Rule, however, was a cause which should lead to federalism, and Charles, though drawn into politics under the Social Democrat banner, understood the force of the federal argument developed by great Liberals - Gladstone, Asquith and Lloyd George. The Westminster Parliament, however, remained frustratingly antiquated. So membership of the European Union was not a challenge to British sovereignty but a natural, welcome development. And, calling upon another strand of Liberal thinking dating back to the Forties and Fifties, Charles also saw hope in a strong United Nations. It was his insistence on the UN's role in the Iraq crisis that gave his party a distinctive, powerful voice, and wrong-footed Tony Blair's Government.

Leader of the Liberal Democrats at a rare moment when foreign affairs dominated domestic politics, Charles had the beliefs to underpin day-to-day decisions under pressure, whereas Blair as Prime Minister repeatedly demonstrated that public-relations slickness was no substitute for a lack of historical grasp. Faced with the possibility of a threat to Britain's place in Europe, Charles was uncompromising. There would be no backsliding on his watch. Later, he became president of the European Movement in this country. The referendum that we now face will need similar determination from the Yes side, and it is one of the sadnesses of Charles's death that he will not be giving the country his unswerving advice.

Like Jo Grimond in an earlier generation, Charles mixed with students and learned from them. Also like Grimond he was twice elected a university Rector, in

his case at Glasgow, his alma mater. The openness of students to new ideas appealed to both men, whereas most visiting politicians are content to pass on dogma and look to recruit interns. The internationalism of universities - and nowadays the large number of students from overseas - make for debate, at which Charles excelled. Scottish students are also overwhelmingly pro-European.



Charles with Caroline Pidgeon at the Harrogate Conference in 1999

At the memorial service for Charles in the hall where he had been installed as Rector, Jim Wallace (Lord Wallace of Tankerness) looked back to Charles's greatest political challenge and his finest moment: "When it came to the debate on intervention in Iraq in 2003, Charles showed great courage and mastery of the House in the face of huge opposition. He was hounded, harangued and heckled from both government and opposition benches. He was accused of being an appeaser, but he stuck to his principled stance. It's easy with the benefit of hindsight to see the strength and rightness of his position; but it was a very different story in March 2003. It was the mark of a man of principle."

Willis Pickard

Willis Pickard is chair of Liberal International in Scotland and a committee member of the European Movement in Scotland

Sheila Tennant

May I add my own recollections and tribute to the many which are being made about Charles Kennedy. I do recall the Question Time broadcast of 12 March this year (A private man devoted to family loved by friends and hit by tragedy – Wednesday 3 June) as Charles' "performance" and appearance was so lack lustre that it was noticeable. Not knowing the sad reason behind his appearance those of us who saw it automatically came to the same conclusion that he had "hit the bottle" too hard before the broadcast. In hindsight the producer should have firmly told Charles that his place was to be at the hospital with his family to be there for his father. I am sure the audience in the venue as well as those of us watching at home would have understood and been sympathetic to Charles, his father and family at that time. As it was his apparent lack of interest in the programme caused us all to have the wrong impression.

I last saw Charles to speak with at Jeremy Thorpe's funeral the previous December. He was in fine form and health then. How sad that our two party leaders who related most strongly to the electorate have died so closely in time.

Of the many Question Time broadcasts which Charles took part in I recall in particular one which was transmitted around the time of the Iraq War. I was in the audience, sitting front directly opposite Charles who was on the end of the panel. Another of the panellists that broadcast was Yasmin Alibi Brown. Charles was in fine form and aware that I was sitting close to him he kept grimacing his reactions to the comments of the other panellists to me being pleased to see a friend's face in the audience. Some of his reactions were so comical that I was shaking with laughter most of the recording (thank goodness it wasn't going out live!) that I was sure we were being picked up by the cameras and would appear in the broadcast later that evening. Luckily when the transmission did go out later none of our reactions appeared. When I commented on this to him some months later, when we next met, he was quite unfazed and assured me that he knew very well that his reactions would go unnoticed.

He was a delight to meet and fun to know. It really was a pleasure to know him and to see how passionately he cared about his politics and the party not just during his leadership but generally. His legacy will be not just the time he led us to having our highest number of MPs of last century but the revival of the Party after the 2015 election.

Joyce Arram

Deputy President Liberal Democrat Lawyers Association

Miss Sheila Tennant, who passed away in June 2013, was a very long-standing member of Dundee Liberal Democrats and its predecessor local Liberal Associations over many years

Sheila was a stalwart of the Liberal cause and was a much valued and hard-working party member. She lived in my West End Ward and was still helping to deliver my FOCUS newsletter well into her older years.

I first met Sheila in 1980 when she was a lecturer in history at the then Dundee College of Commerce and, in addition to her professional and personal interest in history, she was a long-standing member of Dundee West Church and a very valued member of Liberal International. Sheila was a great internationalist and supported many Liberal International events and activities.



It is typical of Sheila's generosity that she left extremely generous legacies to both her church and to the Scottish Liberal Democrats. The Sheila Tennant award is now presented by Liberal Youth Scotland for an outstanding contribution from an LYS member. Her church has used part of her legacy to it to make awards to recognise local community endeavour which the church describes as follows:

"In the Sheila Tennant Awards in the spirit of Mary Slessor, we pay tribute to two enlightened and creative women who trusted humanity to deliver progress. Sheila Tennant was an intelligent, creative woman of faith and she made a bequest to Dundee West Church in support of its work with the community. The awards are her legacy. Mary Slessor was a dynamic inspiration for down to earth grass-

roots Christianity and for those who wanted to do things a bit differently. She was not afraid of change or grasping opportunity.”

Sheila was greatly respected by all of us and is very sadly missed.

Cllr Fraser Macpherson, Dundee Liberal Democrat City Councillor.

Liberal Democrats For Seekers of Sanctuary Fringe Meeting at the Liverpool Spring Conference

Our fringe meeting was a joint one with Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats. The theme was on busting the myths around asylum. We had two excellent speakers who left people in no doubt as to what the facts were.

Ewan Roberts, Centre Manager from [Asylum Link Merseyside](#) (ALM), which provides friendship, health and support, spoke about the situation as it was on the ground, and the amazing work his organisation did to support those seeking sanctuary. They have thousands who have no support and 175 people a day, who have 100 different languages between them, using the centre. His presentation is here. [Roadshow Opening Short Sep 2014](#)

Durani Rapozo, the Complex Needs Coordinator there spoke passionately about his journey, starting with the tragic circumstances why he had to flee from Zimbabwe, and how he was followed by spies. He had a long wait for a decision, and told us how he had to walk 4 miles to use his food vouchers, and how much he valued support given by local organisations. But since being granted status has gained qualifications up to a PhD and does vital work in teaching and social work. His wife has now been able to join him, and she is a manager in Social Services. His presentation is here [Duran Lib Dem Conference 14.03.2015](#)

Suzanne Fletcher spoke on asylum issues including what indefinite detention for immigration purposes was about, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) report, our policy on ending indefinite detention, and signing up to the Citizens UK ask on this too.

Below are the reasons why we exist. Please take time to have a look. Get in touch if you have any queries at admin@ld4sos.org.uk

WE BELIEVE in standing up for those who seek sanctuary in our country. Asylum seekers should be treated with compassion, humanity and dignity.

WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT the way the present system works with unfair deportations & removals; dawn raids; detention centre atrocities; returns to unsafe countries; unlimited detention; insecure asylum housing, and lack of support for failed asylum seekers who cannot return to their own countries.

WE AIM TO co-ordinate work already being done; share ideas and experiences; be a point of reference for decision makers, and work to formulate new policy.

OUR VALUES are embedded in the preamble to the Liberal Democrat Constitution.

WE SAY the party and the country's policies, and how they are carried out, should reflect this.

If you agree with us, please [join us](#)

Suzanne Fletcher

Liberal Democrats For Seekers of Sanctuary & Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats Fringe Meeting at Liverpool Spring Conference - 14th March 2015.



Ewan Roberts, Manisha Ray, Durani Rapozo & Suzanne Fletcher.

Hastings Liberal Democrats Forum on Trident Renewal

One of the issues that may appear to have been decided by the outcome of the General Election is whether or not to renew Britain's military nuclear capacity – Trident. The four Vanguard Class submarines that carry the Trident missiles will have to be replaced in 2028, which means that work on that project has already started on the drawing board. The Ministry of Defence has said it will cost £17.5bn to £23.4bn to procure the replacement system. That is the estimate at 2013-14 prices, of which, between £12.9bn and £16.4bn would be spent on the submarines themselves. The decision on whether or not to build those submarines will be taken in the life of this Parliament.

At the General Election, debate on Trident renewal focussed mainly on whether this was an issue that the Scottish Nationalists would force on a minority Labour government. The debate thus mainly missed the point. It is improbable, Mr. Putin notwithstanding, that Britain would ever use its nuclear weapons. Whatever the 2013-14 estimates may be, we can all expect the costs to rise, and in an austerity-strapped economy we can all think of other things that the money could be spent on.

During the General Election campaign, Nick Perry, the Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrat Parliamentary candidate, made public his opposition to Trident renewal.

However, there should be a public debate on the issue of Trident and our nuclear weapons. Whether they are renewed, whether they are replaced, or whether they



are done away with, and what the alternatives are. CND Chair Kate Hudson stressed this quite forcefully at the Lib Dems Against Trident Fringe Meeting at the Liverpool Spring Conference, and also said that

she thought that the Liberal Democrats were the most likely people to conduct that debate. To this end, Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrats took up Toby Fenwick's offer to speak to local parties on the subject and urge others to follow that example in some form.

Toby Fenwick's presentation on the future of Trident was fascinating at many levels. As a Treasury insider, he had worked on the project and has written two **books on the subject for the think tank CentreForum**. Maybe a unilateralist at heart, Toby recognised that the moral high ground alone would not sway the supporters of Trident in the Labour and Conservative parties. He thought that a unilateralist stance would be a greater hostage to fortune than Tuition Fees. He therefore advocated a multi-lateral approach which would aim at making Europe nuclear-free by 2030. The need to commission nuclear submarines to replace the existing stock in 2016 did not overly prejudice this, as they were more efficient and better suited to Britain's needs than their diesel equivalent.

Amongst the 'what ifs' was the speculation that Ed Miliband would have relied on Liberal Democrat pressure to steer a Labour-led coalition past his own party's hawks. The current Liberal Democrat policy, of 2013, is a mess. The byzantine course of how it was arrived at – more Nick Harvey's approach proving unworkable and Clegg's lack of interest delivering the momentum to a pro-American Spad, was a horror story to anyone concerned with the internal workings and democracy of any political party. Toby was seen as such a threat to the Clegg-bunker that he was prevented from speaking on the subject at the Liberal Democrats 2013 Glasgow conference.

And so there was a coming together of minds – at least strategically. Toby thought that the motion to the Lib Dem conference was unilateralist, and would be an even greater hostage to fortune than tuition fees. Nick Perry and Chris Lewcock, in particular, disagreed with this, but everyone agreed that the Lib Dems Against Trident motion should go on to the conference agenda, where it can be debated, amended and a coherent policy be arrived at. To this end Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrats are urging the Conference Committee to accept the motion.

Toby's book 'Retiring Trident: an alternative proposal for UK nuclear deterrence' is published by Centre Forum (www.centreforum.org).

Stop Press: We understand that the Liberal Democrat Federal Conference Committee has accepted the Lib Dems Against Trident motion onto the final agenda for the Autumn conference - despite Parliamentary **advice**.

reviews

Freeing the Innocent: From Bangkok Hilton to Guantanamo, by Stephen Jakobi.
Book Guild Publishing 2015 £17.99.

This is the autobiography of the founder of Fair Trials Abroad and also the story of that organisation (though the author makes clear he has not been actively involved for nearly a decade). Jakobi writes “this book is mainly a chronicle of victims and rescue attempts.” It includes short sections on many well known international cases: starting with the arrest of two Birmingham teenagers for smuggling drugs in Thailand in 1990 (Karyn Smith and Patricia Cahill), through the Greek plane spotters, British nanny in America Louise Woodward, and Liverpool cause célèbre Michael Shields (jailed in Bulgaria). Many of the names are cases famous from the media of the 1990s and 2000s. The book is well written and well produced (just a few typing errors), well indexed, and is above all an honest and an interesting account. Jakobi documents the many failures and far fewer successes. He always gives credit to his staff, trustees, volunteers, partners, funders and other people who help.

I recommend the book highly for four reasons – it's a good story, well written; it reminds us of the importance of the right to a fair trial and how often this is not respected in the modern world; it is a good book for journalists and for campaigners because a lot of the content is about how to run campaigns (like Des Wilson's EU fiction thriller 'Campaign'); and the author makes some important observations about the quality of European justice, and the right to fair trial. He holds the common law and northern European systems in high regard (though with caveats about large parts of the USA). It is a concern that nearly every barrister and solicitor I know fears for the future of justice in England and Wales if the Conservatives implement the measures that they were trying to under the Coalition. The book unusually praises both politicians and the media as much as it condemns them. Stephen Jakobi acknowledges the consistent support of famous national and hardworking city and local journalists, from across the spectrum and size of publication. His approach may disappoint some as, as lawyer and campaigner, Fair Trials Abroad seems to prioritise the best result for the client (release) over the right legal result.

The book is an interesting story, it chronicles important cases, and deals with important legal principles. It is a good book for Liberals because the

author has been a Liberal since hearing Grimond speak at Cambridge (and a committed but like so many good people unsuccessful Parliamentary candidate). Graham Watson and Sarah Ludford, MEPs, and Archie Kirkwood MP all get good mentions, but Jakobi is fair and critical of politicians of all parties as he believes they deserve it. He is positive about Labour's Mo Mowlam, Baroness Scotland, Louise Ellman, and Robin Cook and Jack Straw, sometimes, about Conservatives John Bercow, Anne Widdecombe and others. He acknowledges support from Socialists, Greens and Liberals in the European Parliament. The European Union gets a lot of unusual praise and recognition – especially MEPs for their support but also the institutions. They came to the rescue with grants. So did the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust. Jakobi strongly criticises the European Arrest Warrant in implementation and practice but believes that with proper safeguards it is a vital measure. I agree.

Jakobi trained under the leading British civil liberties lawyer, Geoffrey Bindman. He benefits also from friendships with leading barristers and solicitors (who happen to be Lib Dem peers) Anthony Lester (architect of the Human Rights Act for Labour when they finally switched to supporting a Bill of Rights) and Andrew Phillips. I was surprised to find that Fair Trials Abroad, while later a charity, basically charged for Jakobi's services. However as the book makes clear, he continued to be a practising solicitor (beneficial for his clients), often worked unpaid or paid very much in arrears, and while the amounts still sound quite large to me they are no doubt small to pay for an experienced lawyer and considering the high necessary costs that Jakobi bore through a personal guaranteed overdraft in work overseas to help clients.

Three of the high profile cases are: the plane spotters in Greece; Louise Woodward; and Michael Shields. I was convinced at the time of each and said so regularly that in each case the accused would have been arrested, charged and convicted respectively if they had happened in the UK, but that the plane spotters would have been rapidly released, Woodward probably convicted and Shields almost certainly convicted, but both quashed on appeal when the flaws in the original trials and police investigations were revealed. Jakobi seems convinced of the innocence of each of them and is scathing about flaws in the respective legal processes. I said to Michael Shield's father that I was certain if he had been tried in Britain he would have initially been convicted because of the weight given to eyewitness evidence by juries. As I was doing research on police complaints systems in Bulgaria at that time (facilitated by the British Council and the University of Liverpool) I asked the Deputy Minister for Police questions about the case. The

current Labour Mayor of Liverpool, Joe Anderson, is noted as an outstanding supporter of Michael Shields, which is correct. It is also acknowledged that many others helped behind the scenes (of all parties and none). The family ran a huge campaign. Families feature compassionately throughout. Maajid Nawaz and Moazzam Begg are two cases included. Nawaz the individualistic and outspoken figurehead of anti 'Islamic' extremist group Quilliam, has found himself pilloried by the pricks of the media as he is a high profile Parliamentary candidate. He comes across well in Jakobi's narrative, as he did (though I didn't entirely agree with him) when I heard him speak at Liverpool University. Begg's situation as a Guantanamo detainee I knew about before hearing his father speak very eloquently at a Liberal Democrat conference, and I recall the motion that Azmet Begg and Stephen spoke on that Conference unanimously supported. The cases are not all high profile. Football supporters are often the victims – unfairly targetted by corrupt or lazy police and justice officials. The United Road Transport Union come across well as actively supporting their members detained right across Europe, and helping Fair Trials Abroad do its work.

There is another audience I recommend the book to. Those wanting to write themselves. Stephen Jakobi basically self-published having first taken courses and advice in how to write. He tells a little of this process and gives further advice for others on his blog. He praises the support of his handlers at Book Guild Publishing. I'm surprised one of the big commercial publishers didn't take up the manuscript. I've already recommended the book to contacts in the media interested in criminal justice (it would make an ideal BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week) as well as those who actively work on fair trials issues.

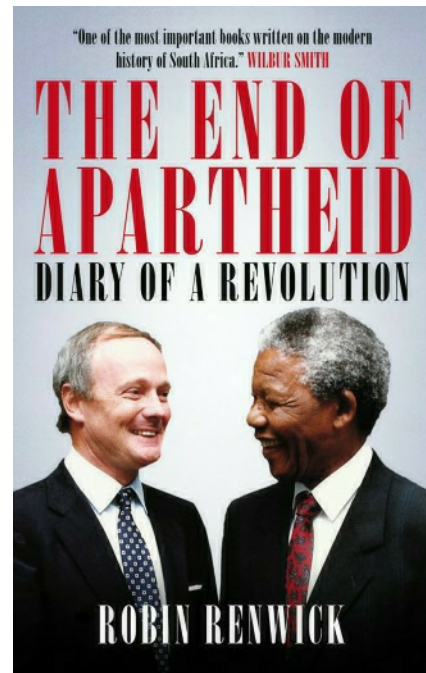
Kiron Reid

**The End of Apartheid, diary of a revolution,
by Robin Renwick.
Biteback 2015 £16.99
isbn: 9781849547925**

Robin Renwick was privileged in his diplomatic career to have been involved with Rhodesia 1978-80 and Ambassador to South Africa 1987-91. He was therefore involved in 'interesting times' and as a central player, his account of events is important. In particular, he causes us to reassess Margaret Thatcher in a more favourable light, and to see Nelson Mandela as the Man rather than the icon.

On Rhodesia, we felt that Thatcher was determined to get a solution at Lancaster House, and that Carrington, her then Foreign Secretary, was more sceptical of the

chances. This was reflected in a Liberator article at the time, when I think it was a ZAPU activist that I'd interviewed. Mugabe was clearly a problem, even then, though the extent to which was less known.



Nelson Mandela – very much more the team player, and loyal to that team, even when in doubt and aware of the need to bring them round to another way of thinking – he goes up even higher in our estimation. I won't go into the story further, the book is important for understanding the events that it covers and will have you gripped until you reach the final page.

Stewart Rayment

THE ARTESIAN QUARTET AT ST. LEONARD, BENGEO.

Hertford is extremely lucky to have the concert series at St. Leonard, Bengo. Neil Dewhurst has an ear for young talent, and the Artesians have performed at the church regularly. And what more charming a setting could one ask for than St. Leonard's of a summer's evening? The more so, since can be best approached by a brief stroll up The Warren and Hartham Common. St. Leonard's boasts to be Hertford's oldest building, dating from the 12th century, around 1120. Abandoned after the village grew and Holy Trinity was opened in 1855, the church was restored between 1884 and 1894, and again in 1938, when the Medieval wall-painting of the Descent from the Cross was uncovered. Pevsner described St. Leonard as a 'rare example of a virtually intact Norman village church' and its apse is an uncommon feature in Hertfordshire churches.

The Artesian's concert at St Leonard, Bengo was something of a potted history of the string media for

small ensembles, albeit with some mighty leaps, and not in a chronological order. Labels are not always helpful in Music, but one might say that the proto-Romanticism of the late Haydn leapfrogs onto the Schubert, through Dvořák to the postRomanticism of the late Richard Strauss.

Haydn is sometimes called, and not without reason, "the father of the string quartet". He practically invented the medium as a 'serious music' form. Composing string quartets throughout his career, the Opus 76 quartets are mature works from the mid 1790s, whence Haydn had returned to Vienna with the accolades of Paris and London. Commensurate with his recognition as a composer, he takes the medium out of the chamber setting into the concert hall. No longer tied to domestic abilities, the opening No. 1 in G major reads Allegro con spirit, and having seized



The Artesian Quartet & guests metamorphose St. Leonard, Bengoe.

our attention, Haydn challenges the listener throughout.

On through Mozart and Beethoven, the string quartet, was, for the Romantics, a benchmark of their abilities as a composer. Poor Schubert, just entering his maturity in the 1820s, left his Quartettsatz in C-minor (D703) unfinished for whatever reason; only one movement and a few bars, but from its discovery by Brahms its greatness has been recognised. It is a work that the Takács Quartet, earlier mentors to the Artesian Quartet have included in their repertoire, and have recorded for Hyperion.

Jumping further to Dvořák, here we have a composer constantly revisiting his work, in contrast. The Notturmo Opus 40 in B major was pre-figured in a number of his works, before finally taking this form in 1875, with the addition of double bass. These two works preceded the Haydn, Schubert a jolly start, moving the twilight and the Strauss.

So the shadows deepen across St. Leonard as the darker end of the string range, the double bass, the cellos, the violas, lead us into Metamorphosen. But the violins do not bring change; the change is external to the work, the death of German culture. Written in the last days of the Second World War, the Vienna Opera House had just been destroyed, the Dresden Opera House and Munich National Theatre, had already fallen. Strauss wrote in his diary *'The most terrible period of human history is at an end, the twelve year reign of bestiality, ignorance and anti-culture under the greatest criminals, during which Germany's 2000 years of cultural evolution met its doom'*.

Appropriately, the performance ended with a sustained silence, before the audience broke into applause.

The Artesian Quartet are Kate Suthers & Emily Davis (violins), Matthew Maguire (viola) and Antonio Novais (cello). They were joined by Joe Griffin (viola), Joy Lisney (cello) and Oliver Simpson (double bass).

The next concert in St. Leonard's series is on 29th August, when renowned violinist Simon Smith will be accompanied by the young Welsh harpist Anne Denholm, who has just been appointed official harpist to the Prince of Wales.

Saeed Rahman

**Dragon Tales, by Judy Hayman.
Practical Inspiration 2014-15 £5.99 each.**

Judy Hayman has stood in the Liberal interest on a number of occasions, ending up as Convenor of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, before turning her hand to writing something more substantial than a Focus leaflet. The result, which is on-going, is a series of childrens' books revolving around a family of dragons living in a remote part of the Scottish Highlands, chiefly through the eyes of the girl, Emily. Well, we know about the Loch Ness Monster, so this is quite plausible.

The dragons encounter adventures with earth moving machinery, a mountain giant, elephants, providing exciting climaxes within the stories, and there are more of these as the series progresses. I also like the breaks into Scottish dialect amongst the various beasties, though far from a *Train-spotting* for bairns you'll be relieved to know – nothing worse than 'bumble bugs'.

Quest for a Cave. 2014 isbn 9781910056080;
Quest for a Friend. 2014 isbn 9781910056158;
Quest for Adventure. 2015 isbn 9781910056226
Email Judy at judy@haymana.plus.com to obtain copies.

Stewart Rayment