

Gibraltar: The Real Reason for Brexit Finally Revealed

By [Seth Ferris](#)

Global Research, March 18, 2018

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 17 March 2018

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

Once again the naked truth has shown itself while everyone was looking the other way. Analysts have been giving all sorts of reasons as to why the Brexit scenario has developed as it has. But the truth has been staring us in the face, all the time – which is exactly why these debates have been encouraged.

Whichever way they voted, British people are no longer primarily arguing about the EU itself. The issue is whether the consequences of leaving, which are becoming increasingly burdensome, are a price worth paying. The pound has tanked and the promised quick fixes on immigration, employment and opportunity have not materialised. Problems no one ever expected have also arisen, such as the impact on the Irish border, the possible grounding of flights and significant employers in Brexit-voting areas threatening [to relocate to the EU](#).

The Brexit camp have gone from crowing about their victory to telling everyone they will survive somehow, and worrying that the government might not deliver Brexit after all. The Remain supporters believe they are being proved right, gaining traction by presenting Brexit as a con imposed on the electorate by newspaper magnates and politicians wanting to protect themselves from tax demands.

But all of a sudden, the real reason Brexit is being pursued in the face of political logic has come out. The media owners may have facilitated Brexit, but it is another dimension of a very familiar story. If we had understood this before we might have seen who all those tax dodgers are really working for – and what the consequences will be for a rich, developed country which has sold itself into Third World-type slavery.

As bad as our friends

Great powers, whether countries or individuals, are always tempted to behave badly simply to show they are different. Absolute monarchs often had a succession of mistresses just to show they were special people, above the moral codes of ordinary mortals. Powerful nations do whatever they can get away with just to show they are part of the club, as the centuries of walking into other countries to create empires testified.

We have all seen how the same process works nowadays. The great powers exert control through military partnerships and energy dependence. If these methods don't work, first propaganda and then brute force are used to force recalcitrant countries to obey their master's will. When it gets to that stage, there is no way out for those poor countries. All the "wars of liberation" we have experienced since World War Two have left their supposed beneficiaries even more dependent than before, with only the oppressors changing, [if they even do](#).

So it is no surprise to now find that there was a military dimension to Brexit few had noticed. Brexit should not affect the UK's membership of NATO or its network of operational agreements with other countries, as the Common European Defence Force is not yet a reality. But it does change the status of Gibraltar, that isolated bit of rock which is a British Overseas Territory due to a long-forgotten dispute of little relevance [today](#) - and this presents both a problem and an opportunity for its notorious fairweather friend, the US, which it is now seeking to exploit.

Your future not ours

Gibraltarians were given a vote in the EU referendum, and 96% of them supported remaining a member. Only 823 voted to leave. But this is hardly surprising, given the abundant benefits EU membership has given this tiny enclave of around 30,000 people.

Though a strategic military location guarding the narrowest stretch of the Mediterranean, Gibraltar has prospered more from the open border with its former owner, Spain, than it ever did from being a prominent Royal Navy and Royal Air Force station. The people may be famous for being "more English than the English", but the local economy, and that of southern Spain, benefits greatly from the open border between the two. This is a situation the UK and Spain's common EU membership made possible, as Spain, which joined the EU later, was only allowed to do so on condition the border was opened.

Madrid has never got over losing this rocky outcrop in 1704, during the War of Spanish Succession, the contemporary equivalent of the Yemen conflict. It still claims it as its own, and closed the border between the two in 1969 when Gibraltarians voted to remain under British rule. The British invested further in the Rock's military dimension, and promoted it [as a tourist destination](#), but with military cutbacks and the rise of more exotic holiday destinations it faced an uncertain future. Only the reopening of the border, and the rise of online gaming, have given the locals a reason to have a more than sentimental attachment to the British state.

Brexit will close that border again. It will also give Spain 27 allies in its claim to sovereignty over the Rock. Spain is demanding that Gibraltar remains with the Customs Union if the UK does leave the EU, and is apparently [winning that battle](#). As Gibraltarians support this step, this creates a division between the UK and Europe in which the British subjects on Gibraltar support the other side.

This is taking place against a backdrop of the US trying to reduce its commitment to NATO, despite its ongoing involvement in expensive foreign conflicts. Despite this, it has always objected to the creation of a European Defence Force controlled by Europe itself, more independently of the US. With Europe increasingly united and belligerent in the face of Brexit, contrary to expectations, this creates a military division between the US and EU which has not existed since the EU was founded.

So the US has to bypass the EU to retain military control of Gibraltar via an ally. Brexit achieves this, provided the UK can be brought on board.

With few other friends who prefer it to the EU, the UK is desperate to recreate its old "Special Relationship" with the US to try and limit the economic impact of its own decision, though [with limited results](#). It will have little choice but to sell itself to the White House in the bleak world it is now offering its people, who are realising they can't all be fooled, all of

the time.

When the US takes control of a country it builds military bases there. The British still have a sizeable military presence on Gibraltar, but have scaled its back in recent years because the Rock's strategic significance is more commercial, as the gateway to a major maritime trading route, than military. But now it is intending to establish a new base there, bigger and better than anything seen before, even as its trade declines as a result [of leaving the EU](#).

Why? Who is the UK at war with? Who does the Gibraltar base protect the UK from? It is hard to see the answers to these questions until you substitute "US" for "UK". Then the importance of Gibraltar looms as large as the Rock itself, as it would have done long before had we not been encouraged to look in other directions.

One boot on one foot

Gibraltar has gained a new military dimension thanks to US actions in Libya, Syria, Egypt and other countries with a Mediterranean coastline. The US, and particularly the Trump White House which has always supported Brexit, doesn't want those pussies in Europe remaining in charge of it.

The biggest obstacle to creating a European Defence Force is the reasonable unwillingness of national parliaments to abandon their sovereignty over the troops they are sending to their deaths. They may support the idea of a European force in principle, but in practice they make it difficult to achieve by insisting on local control of decisions affecting their own citizens. This is understandable, as fighting for your own country makes a lot more sense to potential recruits than fighting for somebody else's, as the US itself found in a place called South Vietnam.

The US doesn't have that problem. It doesn't even have local control in practice - while presidents and congressmen come and go, the US military-industrial complex remains, with most of its senior personnel serving longer at their levels than any politician. It does pretty much [what it wants](#), but for political reasons tries to present everything as "allied action", a joint response to a crisis recognised by all "right thinking" nations.

If the EU can no longer be trusted to be right-thinking, or agree to support the unilateral actions of unaccountable US military or intelligence brass, the US has to have Gibraltar to keep the naval supply route going. It can't do that if the UK, which owns it at the express request of the natives, is part of the EU.

Leaving the EU is causing the UK hardship which no politician wants to be held responsible for - even senior Brexiteers can see what is happening, [despite their public bluster](#). But the British government is insisting it has to respect the "Will of the People", even though those people never voted for the consequences they now see daily.

More than the monkeys we don't give

Gibraltar might be considered an insignificant issue, a smaller piece of a much bigger puzzle. Until you look at the power relations between the US and UK. Who offers what to whom, exactly?

When the UK joined the EU in 1973 its Prime Minister, Edward Heath, specifically stated that it was doing so because the UK could no longer rely on its special relationship with its

former colonies to ensure prosperity. As his government was later driven to introduce the notorious “Three Day Week”, in which a three day working week was effectively imposed to conserve energy, this idea [resonated at the time](#).

However it also upset former empire nations such as New Zealand, whose own agricultural industry relied on this special relationship, as the UK is being reminded now it runs to these countries looking for trade deals and signing none.

The US, the great superpower, was one of these former colonies the UK could no longer rely on for its welfare. The UK was consciously preferring the EU to it. As long as the Western alliance was still a reality this didn’t matter so much. Now it is increasingly a verbal construct that changes things dramatically.

The US doesn’t need anything from the UK it can’t make at home, in the industries Trump keeps saying he wants to revive, or get from other countries it takes more seriously. The UK desperately needs US patronage however, as leaving the EU will leave it with no trade deals at all, with anyone, for a period and few countries are interested in the UK on its own rather than a member of the EU. The only thing the UK does have is Gibraltar, and that is the one thing the US wants.

It would be politically impossible to tell the British public that the future of the UK now depends on letting the US effectively take over Gibraltar via its UK “partners”. But unless the UK can find other significant countries who prefer it to the EU, that is the reality. The UK can’t survive at the back of the queue when its wage levels and social infrastructure are designed for a nation at the front. It’s giving the US what it wants or nothing, and that is a reality any future administrations in both countries will have to face.

Taking back control

British people are generally pro-American, and even more pro-Western. But the US-UK relationship has long been a source of irritation to many of them. The US claims to speak England’s language and gained all its institutions from the UK. Yet the former colony now sets the international standard in everything, and its old masters don’t see why they should change their ways and standards to fit in with the US, even if non-English speaking countries are more willing to do so.

During the Iraq War there were frequent complaints that Tony Blair and George W. Bush, who was widely regarded in the UK as an embarrassment to the US, were working so closely together that Blair had his tongue lodged in a certain part of Bush’s anatomy. US commentators often felt it was the other way round. But it was ultimately that perception which fuelled public interest in how that war had started, and ultimately to the Chilcot Report, which effectively stated that Blair had misled parliament to involve the UK [in a US scheme](#).

It will therefore be interesting to see what the declassified government papers tell us, 30 years from now, about who first raised the Gibraltar issue with whom, and how this related to the timeline of the EU Referendum and the Brexit campaign. Particularly as this decision may make those government papers a historical relic, as the long-suspected US plan to make the UK its 51st state may be much nearer fruition by that time, in fact if not in name.

*

Seth Ferris is an investigative journalist and political scientist, expert on Middle Eastern affairs, exclusively for the online magazine "[New Eastern Outlook](#)".

Featured image is from the author.

The original source of this article is [New Eastern Outlook](#)

Copyright © [Seth Ferris](#), [New Eastern Outlook](#), 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Seth Ferris](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca