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Britain: Struggle for Sovereignty and Autonomy on too many Fronts

With the oldest form of Democracy in the world, Britain had created an institution that relies on the sovereignty of its borders. Many Britons pride themselves on only one land invasion in its long history. It has, therefore, a democratic institution that has withstood the test of time, at least for a millennium. The British Channel, which is so appropriately named, also acts a natural barrier that reinforces the concept of a strong border between the mainland and Great Britain. The channel has allowed, and arguably encouraged, Britain to build, at one time, one of the most powerful Navies the world has seen. This has allowed for a global empire, and in turn, the ability for Britain to become self-sufficient. The accumulation of these events in the history of the United Kingdom have allowed for an independent and strong belief in sovereignty.

British influence has occurred in Afghanistan, for example, for the past 200 years. “If we take a brief look at the history of Afghanistan, we find out that Britain had played an important role in all political issues...,” as the BBC Worldwide Monitoring states, “[and] therefore, the British government does not want to weaken its influence on Afghanistan.” An Afghan political analyst, Hossayni Madani, discusses in the article how Britain is not only competing for resources with the United States, but possibly Russia.

On a home front, Britain is experiencing a loss of autonomy between Scotland and the planned positioning of “Britain's four Vanguard class vessels, which carry the Trident nuclear deterrent.” (The Sunday Times (London)) Political issues in smaller

pockets of sovereignty within the United Kingdom show that Britain, and London governance, may very well be on its own someday; especially if Scotland passes a referendum to become independent.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Cameron must ‘play politics’ against Mr. Clegg, who advocates “that the UK will lose influence in the European Union if it sits on the sidelines during the crisis afflicting the 17-member eurozone.” (The Independent (London)) As other Liberal Democrats directly support bailing out other countries, Cameron is allowing for future political issues to be based upon this precedent of staying out of continental European economic affairs. Arguably, this allows many to consider sovereignty more important than economics.

But while budget cutting exists, so does the contraction of the state. As the state contracts, so does the ability to maintain autonomy, and therefore sovereignty. As The Washington Post depicts: “The extremity of Britain's fiscal crisis, of course, left few alternatives to budget-cutting ambition...” even with the Cameronism tactics of the “... ‘ring-fence’ around health programs and foreign assistance.”

Murphy’s Law is appropriate to describe this situation: “[Rupert Murdoch] dominated British public life,” a claim made by The Sunday Independent (Ireland), which makes one wonder about Prime Minister Cameron. “Cameron was, against his better judgment, drawn into Murdoch's inner circle” and diminished his charismatic leadership.

British sovereignty is being challenged. Logically, with all due recourse, modern historical events have caused a natural defense of one of Britain’s oldest institutions, if not the oldest. These may be the first signs to a shift in how the United Kingdom is referenced, and as a result, may influence the European Union and global politics.

Work Cited

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