



HIGHLIGHTS FROM SESSIONS

PANEL:

Will Europe Wither or Will it Weather the Gathering Storms?

The European Union has become more fragmented and the transatlantic relations have turned volatile. What is needed to reinstate confidence in Europe? Will political shifts restore Europe's status or will it diminish its influence in the Middle East?

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Moderated by: Mr. Nik Gowing, International broadcaster. Founder and Director, Thinking the Unthinkable

Panelists:

- The Rt Hon Alistair Burt, Former Minister of State for the Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- H.E. Michel Duclos, French diplomat, Senior Fellow at Institut Montaigne
- H.E. Philip Gordon, Former White House Coordinator for the Middle East
- Sir John Scarlett, Former Chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service
- H.E. Dr. Danilo Turk, Former President of Slovenia

The Rt Hon Alistair Burt, Former Minister of State for the Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The whole of the referendum process has dominated the British parliament. Dynamic between parliament, govt and potential people that appears to be toxic.



For me personally, I reached the point after 32 years I was told that if I voted to ask for an extension then I will not be able to stand in the next elections. I took the opportunity to say enough and I would leave.

It hurts that after 50 years of being in a conservative party to be told to leave by a government that is only there because it rebelled against prime minister Theresa May but that's politics.

I found a surprise that the UK has decided to leave the EU but that was the decision by the British people.

The way it was handled has damaged the perception of how the parliament handles the affairs.

Trading situation has weakened in the UK, diplomatic reach of the UK is going to be less, we have issues with defense and security because we won't be on the same table. EU will also be weakened. The EU is now mature, it faces a lot of challenges for the UK to have left it raises questions.

EU policy towards MENA is fragmented, it is not coherent. I don't think it is a process but political. It can decide where it is in relation to the United States, the Middle East peace process, the EU has not been able to step in to become a broker in the ME.

The EU has been right to stick to an agreement and try to make the JCPOA to work.

I think that the most likely outcome is that the UK will leave the EU, I don't know when but I think it's unwise to think otherwise.

H.E. Michel Duclos, French diplomat, Senior Fellow at Institute Montaigne

The development in Syria mounts to a defeat until recently we could think we were facing series of last battles, now since a few days we have lost the war. It doesn't mean it is the end of the world. Countries have been able to survive the loss after wars. But it is an important turning point for the west. Is the need to invest in security.



We should shift looking outward, we see that we have a lot of challenges that we can face only in common with other countries. The need to find a new way to work with the US and also with Russia and of course the big troubles in the Middle East. So now the job of the EU is much more about geopolitics than about internal matters.

With a new commission, whatever the difficulties, we have a good chance to tackle the real issues. Of course, in France, responsible people feel very sorry about the backset. It is true from a European point of view given the challenges and threats in the world, the worst moment from Britain to leave the EU.

H.E. Philip Gordon, Former White House Coordinator for the Middle East

The question is how much the things that we are discussing is going to interfere with Europe as a partner with the US, I am afraid they will.

Traditionally we have seen Europe as a key partner in our world affairs. You look around the world and we have expected Europeans as our main partner. It is a simple reality if Europe going to be massively occupied with these internal challenges then it won't be our partner. If it is going to be just be tearing itself internally then one can wonder about this transatlantic relationship.

What is certainly true is that this decade long process of increasing integration is simply over

The general trend was more towards economic integration, that seems to be over. Probably this is the first time in my professional career, will the EU survive in the next 10 years. Two years ago, it looked even worse, but it is still fair to ask the question about the stability of the EU going forward.

You also have to take into account the way the administration is taking this forward.

I do not think that Europe will benefit from the reduction of the US in the Middle East. That will undermine Europe role.



Sir John Scarlett, Former Chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service

Many aspects to the relationship between the EU and UK. It's an immense subject. My first thought that it was vastly complicated.

There has been very little or debate to the national security aspect of the UK departure. National security is a national sovereign issue under the Lisbon treaty. A big part of our national security area has been built on database- DNA management and so on.

As an intelligence and security player the UK is a very important player and as a single individual country is the most important player this will impact negatively on the EU and there is no easy answer to it, if we are not part of a treaty.

Europe is not a country; we have to be careful how we compare it as if it was Russia or China or the United States. We have not been able to turn our politics into actions.

Over many years there is a tendency to overstate and understate the basic resilience of the EU.

H.E. Dr. Danilo Turk, Former President of Slovenia

In Europe there was never a shortage for grand visions for the future, many of them ended very badly if they were ideology like the roman empire or military like napoleon. All that failed and it failed with huge dramatic consequences but then the EU was built by construction, step by step.

Brexit is very likely and if it happens it will weaken not only the UK but also the EU very significantly.

East European politicians suffered victimhood, that does not mean they are coming from the idea of leaving the EU. I suggest that there are three main priorities: 1) a fresh look of good definition of solidarity within the EU, solidarity meaning cohesions, migrations and we are part of the problem for leading the UK to the referendum to leave the EU. 2) there is a great need



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for the EU to figure out how to conduct their common and foreign policy 3) look foreign policy quiet seriously and look for partners who to deal with on subjects such as climate change.