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Start of Anglo-Sino Golden Age

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This week has been momentous in Anglo-Sino relations. The British Government has rolled out the red carpet for the visiting President of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Xi Jinping. Many of Britain's traditional Western allies have expressed «bafflement» at this warm embrace of Beijing – a rapprochement of sorts – after the deep freeze UK-China relations were placed in by the Chinese Government after British Prime Minister David Cameron unwisely met with the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in 2012.

Four of the Five Eyes, the post-WWII intelligence alliance of the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, have raised eyebrows at what they perceive to be an unprecedented and unseemly British «kowitz» to China's Communist Party leadership. Even the Prime Minister

David Cameron's former Director of Strategy, Steve Hilton (who left Downing Street in 2012 to found a «tech» company in California, but recently only a couple of weeks ago was back in Britain helping the Prime Minister write his speech for the Tory Party Conference) launched a crude, ignorant, bombastic and deeply offensive rant against the Chinese Government and Chinese people stating erroneously that China was a «rogue state» and egregiously «one of the world's cruellest, most corrupt dictatorships.» Hilton stated on BBC Newsnight that rather than engaging with China and building a constructive partnership based on mutual respect and mutual trust, Britain should slap sanctions on the «despots» of China. Clearly, all that Californian sunshine has gone to Hilton's head since he left London and exacerbated what was already a fevered imagination.



Britain's Western allies from Washington DC to Ottawa, Canberra, Wellington and its extremely important European partners such as Berlin and Paris, need not be so «baffled». This is a simple proposition. Successive British Governments, both Tory and Labour, have badly mismanaged Britain's finances and public services, national infrastructure, housing, education and economic planning (or the lack of it). They have pursued policies for the few at the expense of the many. While the excessive and botched «state socialism» of the 1960s and 1970s impoverished and weakened the nation as a whole, the free market fundamentalism of Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair concentrated too much power, opportunity and wealth in the south of England and London and the financial centres of Canary Wharf and the Square Mile at the expense of the rest of the United Kingdom.



Britain, thanks to reckless lassies faire financial and economic policies which climaxed with the Global Financial Crisis and Great Recession of 2008 onwards, is now bankrupt and needs critical foreign investment to spread wealth, opportunity and social mobility to every corner of the

United Kingdom, not just foolishly and dangerously concentrate it all in the south of England and London. Britain has famously been characterised by a geographical-class divide between North and South with all the highest paid jobs, opportunities for social advancement, better schools and better standards of living thought to be located in the South as opposed to the North. The North of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have been left to rot and waste away by successive British Governments. Now however, with the near break-up of the United Kingdom in September 2014 with the all too close to call Scottish referendum on independence, British political leaders like the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, have wisely realised this policy path is unsustainable and if continued upon will destroy what is left of the social fabric of «Britishness,» ripping apart the United Kingdom forever. Hence Chancellor Osborne's brilliant and visionary concept and plan of the «Northern Powerhouse», in part designed by Michael Heseltine.

Britain's national infrastructure from railways to the London underground is terribly outdated, creaking and falling apart. Prices for rail fares and tube journeys keep going up and up and up. Fares for trains and tubes in Britain are now some of the most expensive in Western Europe but the quality of service for the tax paying customer is shabby. The hard pressed British taxpayer rightly asks: «where is all the money going?» Certainly not into providing a better quality of service for the paying customer. Rip off Britain. Why is it that it is quicker to get from London to Paris than it is to get from London to Edinburgh? Ridiculous! Only the super-rich (increasingly a non-British international elite) can afford to lead a good life in Britain while ordinary people (whose parents and grandparents have paid taxes into Britain across the generations) are being, to quote Sir Keith Joseph ironically: "Priced out of the market." More like priced out of their own country of birth and history.

So Britain really has no choice. As Hillary Clinton said those who are not in control of their national finances are not in control of their national destinies. The UK needs desperately new sources of investment and cash to build a fairer and more balanced economy and regenerate the North and keep the United Kingdom from breaking apart with greater social cohesion. The UK is already paying a sizeable amount of national money into the EU and is closely integrated with the economies of the EU through the European Single Market. Europe is afflicted with terrible problems of debt, unemployment and lack of dynamism and innovation. Hence it is not an area of fresh, new markets and future global economic growth.

Enter President Xi of China. China is now the second largest economy in the world. China is the world's largest exporter and manufacturer and also the world's largest import market. While Western economies have racked up massive debts and deficits financed by immature and reckless spending on credit and cheap money pumped out by Western central banks, China has promoted a policy of fiscal discipline, prudence and savings, amassing huge financial reserves. The amazing policy of «Open and Reform» designed and implemented under Deng Xiaoping since 1978 has ushered in the most sophisticated, quickest and advanced development of an economy and society in human history.



From Amnesty International to Human Rights Watch, many hypocritical voices have lambasted China over its human rights record. Yet in the space of three decades the Chinese Government have lifted over 500 million people out of poverty, spearheading the most successful anti-poverty alleviation programme in human history. Some in the West believe human rights amount to being able to pop a piece of paper in a ballot box and exclaim they have taken part in a magical process called «democracy». In China, human rights are more about the right to a good standard of economic and social living. A good home. A good income. A good job. Financial, educational and social opportunity to better yourself and your family through hard work being rewarded, rather than the ability to jump up and down on a pulpit preaching to other people about the virtues of democracy, like the crazed freak circus that is the Henry Jackson Society.

Those in Britain who still believe Britain is a Great Power and can make do without engaging with the second largest economy in the world are deluding themselves. You could equate some of these people's delusions of grandeur regarding 21st century Britain to an old aristocrat, who once had a great country castle but went bankrupt and had to sell it off. Now they are living in a Council Estate but will not recognise, accept or admit their decline and change in status and circumstance because they are too proud. However, some British politicians, like the Chancellor George Osborne are pragmatic and wise enough not to still think and behave as if Britain was a great Imperial Power just off the back of a glorious victory circa 1945. As the pragmatic British statesman and foreign policy guru, Lord Palmerstone put it adeptly, «Britain has no eternal friends or eternal enemies, only eternal interests». Just as Britain, at the encouragement and blessing of the USA, entered what has now become the European Union, to act as a Bridge between the United States and Europe – so now can Britain play that historic Bridge Building role between West and East, between the United States, the European Union and China.

By becoming China's «best friend» in the West, Britain can play a critically strategically important international role, increasing its global influence and worth abroad as a Bridge between Washington DC, Brussels and Beijing, while at home benefit from Chinese largesse. There, in a nutshell, is why the British Government has rolled out the red carpet for President Xi. A strategic foreign and domestic policy triangulation worthy of Dr Henry Kissinger, the Architect of Détente and the historic «Opening» to China.