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PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction and Moderator:

FIONA HILL
Senior Fellow and Director, Center on the United States and Europe
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speaker:

SIR ALAN DUNCAN MP
Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
United Kingdom

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. HILL: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd just like to welcome you here today to the Brookings Institution. I'm Fiona Hill, Director of the Center on the United States and Europe. And it's a real pleasure to be able to introduce to you Sir Alan Duncan, who has actually literally just got off the plane from Buenos Aires in Argentina. I'm actually amazed that he's looking quite so fresh and put together. I don't know what I would be looking like if I just got off a plane from Argentina. And he's in town for a series of meetings all over the place with members of the administration. And we're just delighted we were able to entice him over to Brookings.

Sir Alan is relatively new to his role as the Minister for Europe and he's going to today give us a brief presentation speech of an overview of the United Kingdom's current outlook on everything related to Europe, which of course has been somewhat fraught and contentious -- and I don't really have to stress that in this interjection, as well as the UK's relationship to the United States, which is obviously one of the features of his visit here, and some of the other global issues.

Sir Alan actually has a very interesting history, personal and professional history, that really I think serves him really well as a Minister for Europe who is also trying to look at Britain's global role. He was actually here in the United States as a graduate student, as a Kennedy Fellow in the 1980s at Harvard and did quite a few studies in the United States. And then he was in the private sector for many years, working in the oil industry before becoming a politician. He's been a member of parliament and he's also been a Special Envoy of the United States to the Middle East, most recently in part to Yemen and to a number of other places as well. So he already has a big broad perspective on many global affairs. We obviously don't want to have it too wide ranging in terms of our discussion today because we only have an hour as we've squeezed this in

in between all of his other meetings.

And I shouldn't blather on any longer, I should actually give Sir Alan the time to get here to the podium. I think we're in for a real treat because we're going to turn it straight away over to a discussion for you. So prepare your questions. Sir Alan, as I said is here for an hour with us and then has to rush off to another meeting. And I don't know whether there are any Argentineans in the audience, but perhaps a kind of quick reminiscence of your trip there, you never know might be of interest as well.

Sir Alan, thank you so much for joining us. It's a real pleasure and privilege to have you. Thank you for coming (Applause)

MINISTER DUNCAN: Well, Fiona, thank you very much for that warm introduction and thank you all this evening for coming to listen to what I have to say. And I have to say it's great to be back in Washington. I have, as Fiona referred to, been a frequent visitor to your shores starting 35 years ago this autumn, or should I say fall, when I was just beginning a wonderful year at Harvard. I was there when the Falklands were invaded. John Kerry was running to become Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts and Barack Obama had yet to come to Harvard Law School. But, of course, the relation between our countries goes back a very long way. In fact, today is the 396th anniversary of the day the pilgrim fathers set sail in the Mayflower from England to the new world. So perhaps we should start planning now for the big 400th.

So continuity and enduring commitments are very much my theme for today. And I'd like to challenge some of the myths being made about the UK since our referendum on membership in the European Union, or the British exit, which is now always called Brexit. The referendum result 12 weeks ago did actually come as a shock to many people. It was not the result we'd either wanted or predicted in government, but I want to reassure you that it's not going to be the disaster for the UK or the rest of the

world that some doomsayers are suggesting.

The referendum, the vote by the people, has given us a clear mandate, indeed an instruction, to leave the European Union. And so we as the government are charting a course to do just that. Now the British government, contrary to what you may have read in something like the *New York Times*, is very much the captain of the ship of state as we chart that course. And we believe that it is in everyone's interest to have an orderly, constructive, and smooth departure.

Let's not underestimate the changes actually that have already taken place. From a standing start on the morning of the 24th of June after the vote the day before, when David Cameron announced his resignation as Prime Minister, we've seen a significant overhaul of the machinery of government, the choice of a new Prime Minister, a major reshuffle of senior ministerial positions, the creation of two new government departments and changes to some others. And all of these changes were put smoothly into operation by our excellent non political civil service without any disruption to the running of the country. And we did that while also beginning the preparations for Brexit. But what come next is going to be a complex process. It's going to be a process that requires time, expertise, and a consistent approach, which is why the Prime Minister, Theresa May, is putting the whole of the British government behind getting the best deal. So we've created a dedicated department for exiting the European Union and a department alongside it, the department for international trade. And over the next two or three years we will negotiate the manner of our departure from the EU and start to construct a new relationship with our European neighbors. Now this will represent a fundamental change in our legal relationship with the EU, but not to our outward looking view of the world. What you will not see is the UK pulling up the drawbridge. We're not leaving Europe and we're not pulling back from the world. In fact, that would be

impossible culturally, historically, intellectually, and emotionally. We are a great European nation with global interests. And after Brexit we will be more vigorously outward facing to Europe and to the rest of the world than ever before, and the United Kingdom remains open for business.

It's also important to stress that there are still a great many areas in which our interests and those of our European neighbors will continue to coincide. The Scottish inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, once said that when one door closes another opens, and yet we often spend so long looking at the closed door we don't see the one that has opened. And I think perhaps that's what's happening right now with the referendum result. Many commentators are focused on the decision to close the door on our EU membership, yet there are plenty of other doors opening up for the UK, some that have been open all along and others that are yet to open, but will do so as soon as we have left the EU.

Now when the British people opted to leave they did not opt to withdraw from the UN Security Council or NATO, they did not pull the plug on our membership of the G-7, the G-20, or the Commonwealth. They did not sign away Britain's long-standing and hard won commitment to the values of freedom and democracy and the rule of law. Now we have a proud history as a trading nation and we've long been one of the strongest advocates of free trade. We remain the fifth largest economy in the world, the second fastest growing major economy in the world last year, and one of the top 10 in the world for competitiveness. So we have been and we remain an outward facing sovereign nation and I hope a force for good, and with a diplomatic network that is respected across the world. And we'll continue to put that network to good use reaching out to new trading partners and working with our international partners to find solutions to some of the world's most complex challenges.

So just in case some might think we're not playing our part in the world, let me just spell some out. For instance, our determination to support the stabilization of Iraq remains undiminished, we'll continue to work with the government of Kurdistan, the regional government there to encourage the necessary economic reforms to promote stability and give all Iraqi citizens, including those in the Kurdistan region, the economic opportunities they deserve. We'll continue to support UN efforts to find peace in Syria while at the same time working hard through our non humanitarian programs to advance political moderation and to lay the foundations for a political settlement after the conflict.

And already we are one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid to Syria. We have committed 2.3£ billion so far. In Yemen too we remain fully supportive of efforts to find peace. In Libya we remain at the forefront of international efforts to support the government of national accord, and we're boosting political participation and economic development and helping to counter the threat of Daesh and to tackle illegal migration and people trafficking. Beyond the Middle East we remain active bilaterally across a whole range of issues. In Sri Lanka, for instance, we are promoting reconciliation, accountability, and human rights after their civil war. And in Columbia we were a steadfast supporter of the peace deal and are continuing to work with the government, with civil society, and business to make that deal sustainable. We're providing diplomatic, financial, and technical assistance to peace building, including drawing on our experience in Northern Ireland. In Burma we've supported and encouraged positive change through sustained diplomatic and military engagement. So our bilateral engagement in major global issues will continue and, indeed, we want to deepen bilateral relations with many of our key allies and partners. And multilaterally too. We'll continue to work tirelessly with our partners in international organizations to promote and defend global peace and security and the rules based international system.

We take our role as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council very seriously indeed, and leaving the EU will not change that.

And our global engagement goes beyond foreign policy. Our membership of NATO is at the heart of British defense policy and our commitment to it remains absolute. We meet the target of two percent of gross domestic product on defense and spend 20 percent of our defense budget on major new equipment and research and development. We are a nuclear power. And the Prime Minister reaffirmed our commitment to the trident nuclear deterrent in July and we are a framework nation, both for NATO's new enhanced forward presence on the Eastern flank and for the very high readiness joint task force. We are the only NATO ally with this profile.

And our global and defense and security and peacekeeping commitments go further. We are the sixth largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping and British peacekeepers are deployed in six missions across the world. We remain a passionate advocate for the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. We were the first G-7 nation to spend naught .7 percent of gross national income on overseas development. We know that building prosperity for all is vital for long-term stability and that's why we're working hard to increase women's participation in all areas of life, to stamp out corruption, to reduce poverty, and to tackle climate change.

So it's clear that many doors that were open to use before the referendum remain open today. Our active engagement in the challenges the world faces remains just as important to us as it did on that decision day of the 23rd of June. It also means, of course, that when the day comes that we are no longer at the EU table we'll need to ensure that the United States, the UK, and the EU continue to work together in pursuit of our shared interests. As the long-standing friend of the U.S. and a great

European power we actually remain the obvious bridge between the two continents. And we will remain focused on the issues that affect us all, such as terrorism, Russian aggression, and illegal migration.

Now the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have made absolutely clear that once outside the EU we have no intention at all of narrowing our horizons, quite the reverse. We will be seeking to broaden them. And the Prime Minister set out her ambitious agenda to see the UK become the global leader in free trade when she attended the G-20 summit just last week. Now this will mean seeking new trading arrangements with new partners and it will mean strengthening existing political relationships. The United States is clearly at the top of that list. As I said earlier, the special relationship between our countries is something we greatly value, but not as a piece of history to be preserved for posterity. It's a relationship that continues to strengthen and deepen with the passage of time. I actually think that leaving the EU offers us the opportunity to make that relationship even stronger. We are already planning to open three new British government offices here in San Diego, Raleigh, and Minneapolis, which is a clear sign of our commitment to that relationship.

So change can be daunting. And there's no denying the fact that the outcome of the United Kingdom's referendum on the 23rd of June has brought out a seismic shift in our political landscape. But when the earth shakes the horizons do not move with it. No matter how momentous the change in our relationship with the EU our political horizons will remain as broad as ever. The UK is and will remain a committed engaged player on the global stage, promoting and defending peace and security and prosperity, and championing the values we have always held dear, which are freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

Thank you. (Applause)

MS. HILL: Feels like one of those dreadful ads, doesn't it, for some kind of mobile phone system, which actually I could use as a segue into some of the issues that are often on a European and American agenda. I mean strictly speaking you are the Minister of State, which is, you know, quite an unusual position at least in a U.S. perspective on the Americas. Now under current circumstances that's actually something that would also need defining in many ways. I mean what does it mean now to be a Minister for Europe when Britain is set to leave to the European Union, how is Europe going to be defined? And how also then, you know, will Britain engage with Americas, which also is itself -- it's not just a series of geographic or continental expressions, but has multi positive organizations. The UK has very close relationships not just with the United States, but with Canada, which is a member still of the Commonwealth, Argentina, which you referenced -- you said that you yourself came here first as a student against the backdrop of the Falkland wars. Obviously Argentina used to be one of Britain's oldest allies until there was of course a falling out of a very serious territorial dispute.

This is also all going to be quite complicated when one looks forward. So it's not just an issue as you rightfully pointed out in these global relations of the questions marks over the EU, but how do you articulate a new vision for a UK -- as you said, a bridge, a logical bridge, and you referenced the Mayflower -- I hadn't realized that today, who knew, is the 396th anniversary of that. That's actually, you know, again something to look forward to for the next four years for that anniversary. Maybe you can come back again in four years against the backdrop of the 400th anniversary. How do you actually present yourself as a British -- for what is just now a very varied and quite complex sort of organizational structures and of relationships?

MINISTER DUNCAN: Well, the answer to your first question is I'm going

to be very busy --

MS. HILL: I thought so, yes.

MINISTER DUNCAN: -- because I ended up being Minister of half the world and this means I'm probably going to spend much of my life on a plane travelling, as any self respecting Foreign Minister should.

Look, we're already part of a multifaceted complicated world, we're already members of multilateral organizations through the UN, NATO, and things like that, as well as having very strong bilateral relations. So in many respects a lot of the complexity you've just described, where you almost imply that this is suddenly something new to us, is in fact already there. All that's changing is that instead of being part of, if you like, the constitutional structure which is the European Union, which has been making a large body of our law, we are by leaving it restoring self government and we'll work with our European friends, neighbors, and allies, but in a different legal relationship. And that relationship will I hope remain positive and friendly and will see us, as I tried to say in my opening comments, fully and continuously as now involved in the defense, security, and interests of the European mainland, but we will alongside that be making our own law without having any law made for us by Brussels. But I hope we could do it in a way which retains cooperation and the trading interests and the interests of prosperity, which are essential mutually to all of those in the European continent. And it is that process of constructing, if you like, the new legal and trading relationships, which is going to happen over the next two or three years as we manage I hope efficiently and steadily our journey of departure from membership of the European Union.

MS. HILL: I'm going to bring the audience in because I know there's going to be a lot of questions and I see a lot of colleagues here in the audience who might want to touch on some different aspects. I mean one of the most obvious ones that

relates to what you've just said is the future of TTIP, which several years ago if you'd been here at Brookings we would have been having endless discussions of TTIP. It's been somewhat sidelined by recent developments in both the United States where trade has not exactly been the most popular topic of discussion except as a political football, but also obviously has become quite contentious in Europe as well.

But let's just leave that for the moment and I'll try to bring in -- because we only really do have half an hour. Some of the people in the audience -- yes, we have a microphone which I'm going to ask to be passed around. I'll just take a couple of questions at a time to give you some time to think about how you might want to respond to these.

QUESTIONER: Yes, my name is Edward Campbell; I'm not affiliated with anything. I wanted to get something a little more nitty-gritty. I thought your overview of what was going on and how things were going to stay the same and how things were changing was very, very good, but I wanted to ask this question, to what extent is greater prosperity and acceleration -- beyond what otherwise would occur as part of the EU -- to what extent is that goal or that aspiration present in the minds of the British and you and others?

MINISTER DUNCAN: The British people you mean?

QUESTIONER: The British people, yes.

MS. HILL: Yes. Thanks. A question here at the front. And, again, if people will just identify themselves. And then I'll come back over again.

MR. REILLY: Thanks. Tom Reilly, Brookings. Minister, thank you for coming this evening. I just have a two-part question on the U.S./UK relationship. You said in your remarks that the UK is still a natural bridge between Europe and the United States, and that proposition in the past has been because Britain is in organizations and

forums that the United States is not a part of, and namely the EU. So I was wondering if you could (inaudible) what you see that role as a bridge as being after Britain leaves. And then just to flip it around are you looking for any sort of U.S. involvement in the Brexit negotiations or do you see a constructive role that the United States can play in the coming years?

MINISTER DUNCAN: Thank you.

MS. HILL: I'll just take one more and then we'll -- I just want to make sure we can get enough people. I will remind you of some of the questions. But the gentleman in the yellow jacket who had his hand up before.

QUESTIONER: Sorry, I have a bit of a cold. My name is Julian Goldstein; I'm actually a high school student.

MS. HILL: Oh, great.

QUESTIONER: But I was wondering particularly, you know, from you and the I guess the British people's perspective on the fact that Scotland or, you know, most of the Scottish area had voted to remain in the EU. And basically what will be the British law makers -- you know, what is their approach to linking and continuing a United Kingdom?

MS. HILL: Thanks. Great set of questions. Did you manage to make notes at all?

MINISTER DUNCAN: Okay. Yes, I've made notes, so unless jetlag overtakes my brain I think I can do the three.

MS. HILL: Yes. Very good.

MINISTER DUNCAN: To answer the first question, in choosing to leave the EU the British people were not saying that they wanted to pull up the drawbridge, be insular, and be protectionist. What they were saying I think, if one can interpret what any

referendum means in the minds of the people, is I think two strands that dominated it most. One was the question of self government, where people wanted to take back control so that their one parliamentary democracy made their body of law and not a second one in parallel. And the second was that there was growing concern, which I think generated a lot of feverish opinion, about the loss of control over our borders and the movement of people. And these two combined, along with general disaffection, which often takes place in elections, to bring about the result that we saw.

But it did not in my view signify that the British people wanted to be insular and protectionist, not at all.

On the second question, the bridge as one aspect of what I was describing, Europe is not just the EU. It is countries within it with whom we already of course have strong bilateral relations. I mean just because we're a member at the moment, and have been, of the EU does not mean that we don't have strong bilateral engagement with France and with Germany and with all of the other 27 countries in the EU. But there is around the other 27, at the moment a total of 28 countries, the organization of the EU, and it's just that organization that we are leaving. So in terms of the United States looking at us you're thinking of other countries in NATO, you're thinking of what we are doing talking to countries in the Balkans, talking about the Russian threat to Ukraine, things like that, all of that will continue and will I hope see us in a role where we are in a very close friendship dialogue and sort of working relationship with European countries and the United States.

So you should not think from the U.S. that Europe is only the European Union. That is just a structure, a super structure if you like, over individual countries within it.

And finally I think a very pertinent, if I might say so, question which of

course all politicians rather wish you hadn't asked (laughter) about Scotland. Look, they had their referendum and voted to remain part of the United Kingdom. You're quite right that in the EU referendum a majority in Scotland voted to remain, but then you can take other parts and say some voted to stay, some didn't. The fact is this was a United Kingdom referendum and Scotland will remain part of the United Kingdom and it is the United Kingdom that is leaving the European Union. But in our negotiations, in our discussions, it is essential that we who are Ministers in London fully take into account and work with our devolved assemblies in governments, in Scotland, in Wales, and in Northern Ireland. And Scotland will be fully included in the discussions we will be having over the next two years because their interests are as important to us as are the whole interests of the United Kingdom.

MS. HILL: Thanks very much. I'd like to take the hand right at the back. There's a gentleman back here. Yes. Sorry, I can't see properly. Thank you. No, the gentleman behind and then we'll come forward to you as well.

MR. KELLY: Yes, thank you. David Kelly, Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS Johns Hopkins. Thank you, Mr. Minister. My question concerned how the Brexit might affect the UK's position on the Ukraine crisis, especially as the sanction regime is decided at the EU level. I believe that today Foreign Secretary Johnson was in Kiev and I saw two points concerning the account of his visit. First he restated his view that the EU precipitated the Ukraine crisis, and, secondly, that the UK will remain steadfast on the sanction regime. I will not dare asking you whether the EU causing the Ukraine crisis is the view of the whole British diplomacy or just a personal view, but rather we've been trusted in getting your insights on how the sanction issue might work. It's unlikely that the sanctions will stay before the UK leaves the EU, but if it is the case what would be the outcome? Would the UK set up its own sanction regime or would it actually

be possible to still stick with the EU sanction regime?

Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks. Can you hand the microphone to the gentleman who stood up just before you just so I'll give you the chance? Yes, thanks. Thank you.

QUESTIONER: Sir Duncan, my name is Haiton Doo; I am a high school student from China and my question concerns the UK-China relationship after Brexit. Since Britain is an important of AIIB, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a lot of Chinese corporations and individuals have been investing in UK since UK is China's best gateway to enter EU economy, but after Brexit a lot of investors are quite unpleasant to see the result. And I wonder what types of actual actions will Britain be taking in order to restore faith from the investors as well as letting them feel safe investing in UK for mutual benefits?

Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks. It's actually -- I just have to say, it's very nice actually to see so many high school students here. I think we can actually say we're having a bit of impact already on the global role in the future by your participation. So thanks very much. And also thanks for having the courage to stand up and ask questions, which I know is not an easy thing in this kind of auditorium.

MINISTER DUNCAN: Not very easy to answer either. These are very good questions. (Laughter)

MS. HILL: No, they're actually very good questions.

MINISTER DUNCAN: You're clearly top of the class.

MS. HILL: There is a gentleman here in the green shirt. Yes, thank you.

MR. FORTNAM: Hi. Thank you, it's Brett Fortnam from Inside U.S. Trade. And I'm glad I'm not the first to mention TTIP today. My question is, you know,

for the next two or three years while the UK is negotiating leaving the EU the TTIP negotiations are at least for the time being, you know, they're still happening. After next week we'll see. But if -- what is the relationship that the UK is going to have with those negotiations seeing as it will continue to be a commission competence, but the UK would seemingly have an interest in docking onto that agreement if it does happen afterward?

MINISTER DUNCAN: Okay. On Ukraine, the Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, of course is in Kiev today. I haven't spoken to him because I just whizzed in from Argentina. We've been sort of opposite sides of the world. I'm not sure he will quite have said what you say he said, but the issue actually applies as much to the third question as to the first, that for the next couple of years we remain a full part of the European Union and as such are a full part of the actions and discussions that the European Union is having. And so the position of the UK will only be different once we have left, which will be a process over the next two or so years. So in terms of Ukraine sanctions we remain a full part of that. And even if we were not in the EU quite what the sanctions regime would be as between us and the EU is obviously purely a matter of speculation at this point. But let me be clear, as Foreign Secretary will have made clear in his visit today, we strongly support Ukraine and the sanctions that are trying to protect Ukraine from what's happening there. So I don't think it will be right to try and look two years ahead and speculate on what the set up would be because we don't actually know what the challenges would be in two year's time.

And with TTIP we will remain of course in the EU. And if there's a TTIP deal then that will affect and govern EU's trading relations with the U.S., but once we've left the EU it will be for us bilaterally to work out what our trading relations would be with the U.S. And that's what we are going to have to become engaged in as a serious and you know large endeavor. But of course at the moment there is no trade deal anyway.

So leaving doesn't disadvantage us at all.

MS. HILL: Let's see, did we do something --

MINISTER DUNCAN: Oh, I didn't do the AIIB and China. Sorry.

MS. HILL: The AIIB, yes, that's right.

MINISTER DUNCAN: Look, we were a founder subscriber to the bank and we very much value our relations with China. Certainly when George Osborne was chancellor he tried really to make an effort to build up a very strong commercial relationship with China, which is one of the reasons we were a founder subscribing member to the Bank. And I think that we will remain, I hope, a very, very good springboard for any kind of business that wants to trade in Europe to do so from the UK. For instance, our financial services sector is unrivaled and it's not just membership of the EU that makes people want to invest in or put their headquarters in the UK, it's language, it's English law, it's liking London as a place to live, it's communications links, and indeed it perhaps goes back to the point that it is a very good location for looking both to Europe and to the United States. So there are many, many other factors supporting investment in the UK than just our current membership of the EU.

MS. HILL: Good. There's a question with the lady here and -- actually two together here. And then in front of you.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Mr. Minister, Diana Negroponte from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. In your opinion what is the legal obligation of the referendum? Is it binding of itself or does it require a vote of parliament? And if that vote were to take place when do you anticipate that occurring?

MINISTER DUNCAN: Can I just answer that straight up? Forgive me for cutting in on you, Fiona, but this is such an important question. Let me be clear, the people have voted in a referendum and that means that we will leave the European

Union. And it is taken by everybody and should be as an obligation which is binding because that is how the people voted. And you cannot, as with elections, just go back and say I didn't like the result and therefore I don't accept it. This was a proper democratic process with a clear question and proper campaigns, and the result was to leave, and leave means leave.

MS. HILL: Well, that was very clear. (Laughter) Okay.

MS. BATES: Thank you. Sir Alan, my name is Jen Bates, I am a dual citizen of the U.S. and UK. I'm wondering if after Brexit has been completed might we see a closer union of what I call the English speaking peoples, the U.S., Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, to include of course freedom of movement for people?

Thank you.

MS. HILL: There are a lot of English speaking peoples now. You didn't include India as well.

MS. BATES: True. India, right.

MS. HILL: And then the gentleman here at the front, just in the second row.

: I'd like to follow up on the question that was just asked about the role of parliament. When you invoke Article 50 will there be a parliamentary vote? And if there is, will members of the House of Commons feel that they can vote independently or they are already bound by the referendum? If there is not to be a vote to what extent does this represent a new trend of abdicating government by parliament, and to be replaced by government by referendum?

MINISTER DUNCAN: Okay, should I do those two?

MS. HILL: Yes, please.

MINISTER DUNCAN: I don't think the world is as straightforward as the

concept that's been suggested, replacing the EU with what might be called the ESU, the English Speaking Union. Our relationship with all of these countries matters and they will become, as I hope it will, stronger after we leave the EU because on many matters we will be able to do things bilaterally -- which before we were constrained from doing, for instance, trade negotiations were a competence passed to the EU collectively -- than when we were in the EU. So all of these countries are important and it may well be that some bilateral strengths and dimensions to our relationships will be reawakened and strengthened by our departure. And, you know, it's a bit like the open door versus the closed door concept I was referring to in my speech. You know, let's go for the positives, let's take opportunities, let's see everything as an option for making things better rather than something which is going to come at a cost.

No, it does not require a parliamentary vote to invoke Article 50. Under the Lisbon Treaty, which is one of the many treaties which have formed and expanded the European Union, the Treaty contains clauses which lay down the process for any member state that wishes to leave. And under Article 50, if invoked by the departing government, it basically says this starts a process of leaving and if after two years you haven't had any agreement or anything, you've left, but if in the course of the two years you reach agreements and things like that, then they will govern the new relationships for a country which has left. It does not require a vote in parliament to say -- I think the point is a democratic point. This membership of the EU has bugged Britain, if you like, for four decades. Some people have loved it, other people have hated it. It's risked splitting parties, it's split families, it's been something which has never settled into a structure which has been so widely accepted that it does not remain controversial. And that is why we ended up having what has actually been a second referendum. We joined in 1973, we had a first referendum in 1975 under the then labor government of Harold Wilson

about whether we stay in it because if he hadn't had that referendum his party would have split. And so I think the vote of the whole country on this occasion trumps the vote of parliament. And if the country votes to leave and then members of parliament say we don't accept the verdict of the people that, I would suggest, is what causes democratic difficulty and would be seen by everybody as an unacceptable conflict between the people and parliament.

So there will not be a vote on Article 50, and once it's triggered that two-year process is underway.

MS. HILL: I wonder if I might ask an impolitic question listening to this. Well, you are now in this position as the State Minister that covers Europe, I mean how would you and other members of the British government view the utility of the European Union in Europe? And this is obviously a really loathe and terrible question to ask. But one of the real risks of a Brexit, taking aside all of the issues that have been laid out for the United Kingdom is that this leads to the unraveling of the European project. From this side of the Atlantic this has been a great concern because the United States tends to see the European Union as a security project, not just as an economic entity or a customs union, which is of course where the United States was often at odds with the view from the United Kingdom. And the one we've had in previous positions here on the stage at Brookings, other European leaders, they've made it very clear. We had once, some people in the audience might remember, Guido Westerwelle, the former Foreign Minister of Germany, who made a very impassioned plea for the future of the European Union going back to his own history and his own childhood and his own experience as a youth about how much that importance of integrating Europe was for the future looking back to Europe of the 1970s and then obviously back to World War II. That obviously has not been a major feature of the debates inside of the UK. So how might you want to see the

future of Europe now?

I'm not sure that that was necessarily a question that might -- people want to be from the audience, but I do think it begs the question about what role the United Kingdom see itself playing in keeping together the European Union if it has value for other bilateral partners in the future?

MINISTER DUNCAN: Well, we do not want to see the disintegration of harmony between neighboring countries on the European mainland. But the European Union has become not just wider, it's also become deeper and is making more and more of people's law. And this goes down well in some countries, it doesn't go down so well in others. So even without the United Kingdom leaving I think that there would be quite a serious debate going on in the EU about how it develops further, and with the threat of the rise of very nasty right wing parties in some countries, this concern is being reawakened.

I think that the EU has done some very important positive things. I think that the access to a market of 500 million people has definitely added to the prosperity probably of all countries within it. And I think that on the security point you mentioned, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union membership of the European Union or potential membership of the European Union has given a high degree of comfort and security to former East European countries who wish to look over their shoulder and worry about their future and develop their economies from closed economies to open economies.

Now we don't in any way want to see that going backwards. It just in the minds of the British people came to the point where they said this isn't the structure that's for us, but it doesn't mean that we are in any way keen to see it collapse or disintegrate. We're not there saying, ha ha, we've gone, we hope it all crumbles, we got out. It's

nothing like that. We want to remain a responsible partner of every country in the EU and indeed of the EU itself. And it's in that positive frame of mind that we will be looking at all of the negotiations and the process of departure, which I've been describing this evening.

MS. HILL: Let me put it back out to the audience. We've got about 10 minutes before you have to leave to your next appointment.

The gentleman here. Actually there's two of you together, so I'm going to take both of you so I don't have to -- because I can't see very well.

QUESTIONER: Hi. My name is Louie Gandon and I am a high school student here.

MS. HILL: Again?

QUESTIONER: Yes, a lot of us here today.

MINISTER DUNCAN: Everyone is playing truant; they're all there.

MS. HILL: I think school is out actually by now. (Laughter)

QUESTIONER: Anyway, I would like to press you a bit further on the issue of Scotland. You were just very firm that the UK just voted to leave the EU. Well, Scotland was very clear, they voted to remain, as did Northern Ireland. And in the wake of the referendum the key leaders in the FNP were very clear that if the UK leaves the EU Scotland is not leaving with it. What will you do to keep the UK together, to prevent the breakup of the UK? And if the UK falls apart how will that affect the rest of Britain's relation with the EU and the world?

MS. HILL: Well, those are sort of tough questions. We'll see if the person sitting next to you has an equally tough question. Yes, please stand up and --

QUESTIONER: I'm Andrew Maw; I am also a high school student.
(Laughter)

MS. HILL: We've got all the audience stocked here, you see.

MINISTER DUNCAN: It's fantastic. It's good, it's really good.

QUESTIONER: So my question for you is in the recent Brexit referendum there was a lack of youth representation in some areas and some suggest that this youth representation --

MS. HILL: Lack of youth representation in some areas?

QUESTIONER: In voting, yes. And some suggest that this youth representation would have made quite a big difference. In the future what should the government of the United Kingdom be doing, along with civil society, to address this issue of underrepresentation in youth voting?

MS. HILL: Well, we don't under represent it here for a change.

(Laughter) Let's try and find an older member of the audience. Just over here. Or not so old a member of the audience, the lady in front of you.

QUESTIONER: Hi, actually I'm also -- I'm Maggie and I'm also a high school student.

MS. HILL: Oh, okay. So I -- this is great. Youth in politics is already in action.

QUESTIONER: I have two questions; they're kind of unrelated. The first one is I know you just mentioned you wouldn't look forward to a complete unraveling of the European Union, but if that were to happen might Britain consider joining a looser or less forceful version of the EU, perhaps just a trade union or just a customs union?

And my second question is how might the result of the Brexit referendum affect the possibility of a full Irish reunification?

MS. HILL: These are all great questions that obviously have no immediate answers, but I bet you feel like you're back in that nightmare that people have of the high school exams, right? (Laughter)

MINISTER DUNCAN: They've all been doing far too much homework. This is putting me in a very difficult position.

MS. HILL: But I'm thinking about recruiting for the next generation of Brookings scholars here, you know. So this is --

MINISTER DUNCAN: Good. Can I say, first of all, it's fantastic to see so many students here. And I have to say the quality of the questions is spectacular. And it's a real --

MS. HILL: I hope your teachers are here to witness this.

MINISTER DUNCAN: It's a real nuisance for me because you're putting me on the spot, but the quality of the questions is really very impressive.

Look, on Scotland again, I say again this was a United Kingdom referendum and I don't think the United Kingdom will fall apart. We are, as I said earlier, going to engage Scotland and the other devolved government fully in the processes of our discussions. We have enormous respect for Scotland's wishes and they have, because of their wishes, become a government with the most extensive devolved powers one really could imagine.

So I am a strong believer in the United Kingdom and I think that the United Kingdom will not fall apart.

On switching across to Ireland -- I'll come to youth in a second -- there is very close cooperation now between Ireland as such an area, and Northern Ireland, the six counties of the North, and we are working very hard to make sure that cross border movement and all that kind of stuff can continue very smoothly. You are right to identify it as a complicating factor, as a consequence of leaving the EU, but we have time to work this out and it's one of the things that we will be working out.

On the question of youth representation, I think that question is a valid

question if you're electing people or something like that, but this was not an election, it was a choice of all the people and everyone of voting age had an equal vote and was entitled to exercise it. I think it's true looking at all the results that there was a greater proportion of younger people who wanted to remain than older people, whereas perhaps 20 years ago it might have been the other way around when older people said we think this is important so we don't have another European war. But their view shifted I think towards concerns about self government and migration.

So however one defines youth, had as much democratic participation as any other segment of society.

MS. HILL: I know you have to leave fairly shortly, so is there anything that you would like to say in listening to all of the questions and that you feel perhaps is still somewhat misunderstood from the perspective of the U.S.? I know you've only just flown in from Argentina. Actually it would be interesting to hear about what the view was like, you know, further afield on this, particularly coming from Argentina, which was such an important old ally of the United Kingdom and then more of a difficult relationship today.

MINISTER DUNCAN: If can bring those questions together. I mean I think it's just reinforce the point that when people sort of are looking at the UK at the moment, and some saying well what on earth is this going to lead to for the UK, both for its own prosperity and for its relations with the rest of the world, I would like to leave you once again with the impression I've been trying to make all evening, which is we are not, as a result of this referendum and the decision to leave, going to turn in on ourselves. We are going to remain an outward looking country and we will need to reinforce the efforts we make to look outwards, to trade, and to develop bilateral relations in more depth and more extensively than we have perhaps over the last few years.

So in terms of the U.S., and indeed with all countries in the EU, this is

going to be a massive diplomatic and outward facing effort by the UK. So this is something we need to turn into a forward step not a backward step, and that is what everyone in the government under Theresa May is going to do over the next few months and years.

MS. HILL: Well, thank you very much for joining us. I hope that you will have a very successful trip here. And I also would like to extend a standing invitation to you to come back again and we'll revisit this, perhaps with our high school students then as college students shortly, presumably in international affairs. And we're very pleased that they could come here today. Hopefully before the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower, but thank you for pointing that out. But we really do appreciate your frankness and candor and the opportunity to put some hard questions to you. And good luck with the rest of the visit.

Thanks so much.

MINISTER DUNCAN: Thank you all very much.

MS. HILL: Thank you. Thanks.

MINISTER DUNCAN: Thank you. (Applause)

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