

Briefings for Brexit Podcast – Professor Gwythian Prins, November 15, 2018.

GWYTHIAN PRINS: I'm Professor Gwythian Prins, Emeritus Research Professor at the London School of Economics, but a member of the editorial committee of Briefings for Brexit, and also the academic board member of Veterans for Britain.

INTERVIEWER: And Professor Prins, you were a member of the Chief of the Defence Staff's Strategic Advisory Panel from 2009 to 2015. Thank you very much indeed for talking to the Briefings for Brexit podcast series today. As you say, you are on the editorial board of B4B. Let's begin with today. Theresa May is, as we speak, giving a statement to the House of Commons on her Brexit deal. Your reaction to it?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Well my reaction is that the date of today is not actually the 15th November 2018. It is the 10th May 1940 because I think that the collapse which has begun in this government with the resignation of Dominic Raab will be very difficult to stop and I hope that it will not stop, because what is now important is that we have a prime minister manifestly in office but not in power, who must now be replaced with somebody who can deliver the will of the people. We need now to do what should always have happened in the first place, which is not negotiate with the EU, because we cannot negotiate with the EU as we will discuss in just a moment, it's in the nature of the EU that it cannot negotiate. What we will do is that we will leave to trade with the EU as we do with the rest of the world on standard WTO terms. I do share the view of Jacob Rees-Mogg that it might be a good idea to offer an ex-gratia sum of money, perhaps £20 billion to the EU as we leave - not negotiating we're simply making it as an offer - and that offer will be conditional upon their good behaviour over the trans-channel crossings. On Briefings for Brexit, we have had a very sensible suggestion from a contributor that that money should be put into an escrow account and it should not be paid out to the EU until they behave according to the deal. And that's the deal. That's the only deal that I can see that is reasonable. So I would be in favour of us now doing what we should have done two years ago, which is that we simply return to the normal world and we move away from this rapidly collapsing European Union.

INTERVIEWER: Theresa May gave a statement to the media last night after her five-hour epic Cabinet meeting, when there was said to be ten or eleven dissenters to her Brexit deal. She said her heart and her head were behind this deal, that it was good for the UK and it was the best deal the UK could get from the EU. Do you agree with that?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: I think the premise of the statement is completely ill-founded. She says, because she believes it, that she has to negotiate with the European Union. I do not agree with that view, because she does not understand - and her civil servants do not understand, or do not wish to communicate to the public, which is a different matter - the true nature of the European Union. So let's deal with that. The European Union is so constructed that it is unable to negotiate anything. In Brussels they have a French saying for this: Il n'y a que texte - There is only the written text. And if you listen to Mr Barnier over the last two years, that's what he's been saying.

INTERVIEWER: The written legalistic text.

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Yes, the *Acquis Communautaire* as it's called. And that *Acquis Communautaire* is a special sort of document, because it has a one-way ratchet attached to it. Every piece of legislation that moves from national authority into the authority of the EU is banked and it never comes back. It's like going into a black hole, a sort of political black hole. So, the only thing that the EU was ever going to offer in a . . . in inverted commas, 'negotiation' is subordination to the EU's methods of operating, which mean staying within the EU but as a rule-taker, having lost any power over our own sovereign control. So the exact opposite of what the 17.4 million people voted for, the exact opposite. And as was pointed out by Dominic Raab in his resignation letter - which will go down in history I think as a significant document - something which no democratic state, certainly not the oldest democratic state, and let us not forget the world's second most important geopolitical power - which is what we are - and fifth largest economy, the most important European state bar none, to bow the neck and to agree to a vassal or serf relationship to a collapsing European political project is not tolerable. So she misunderstands the nature of the beast that she has been talking to. There is no deal to do. There never was, there never will be.

INTERVIEWER: Theresa May began her premiership by triggering Article 50, giving the notice of leaving, we're two years on from the 2016 June referendum which voted narrowly to Brexit. In the Commons just now, in her statement about her Brexit deal, she said it was, 'This deal or no Brexit.' Previously she had used the mantra, 'no deal is better than a bad deal', we've now moved the ground, it's shifted, haven't we: 'This deal or no Brexit.'

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Yes. And I think you will find firstly two things, if I may correct what you just said: the result of the referendum was not narrow. Let's be clear about that. This was the largest numerical vote for anything ever in the history of British democracy. And the

margin was quite decisive compared to referenda around the world. This is one of the fictions which accompanied the Remainiac position, if I may give it its correct name, that is to say I call it that slightly disrespectfully, because these are people who disrespect the vote. These are those people who have been working day and night since June 2016 to overturn the will of the people. So they are the people who have perpetrated language such as ‘a narrow vote’ such as, ‘crashing out’ as the verb to describe leaving without negotiation. All of these things are indicative and they are mischievous. So firstly let's distance ourselves from that. Secondly, Mrs May is now, in political terms, a dead woman walking. She is the past. Frankly, I don't think it matters very much what she says, why she wishes to cling to an office in which she manifestly has no power is a question for psychologists rather than for historians or political scientists. I don't think she will long be there. So therefore let us attend to the interests of the country.

INTERVIEWER: But isn't . . . isn't that about the split in the Conservative Party rather than her leadership of it?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Well it depends what you mean by the Conservative Party. If you're talking about the Conservative Members of Parliament, there is indeed a split. If you're talking about the Conservative party beyond the M25, where I live, in *L'Angleterre* [*unclear*, 'Profound'?), I live in Herefordshire, I am surrounded by people who voted - take my county as an example - by almost 70 percent to leave the European Union. I'm surrounded by ordinary, decent English people and they voted to leave the European Union on a matter of principle. And this is the great difference in the two sides of the debate. The reason that the Remain side lost, and the reason that the Remainiacs will continue to lose is that they address the public as though this is a transactional deal about money. They say, ‘Oh you're going to be worse off,’ or ‘Oh, trade is going to be disrupted,’ or . . . they're trying now to frighten again with, you know, medicines are not going to be there, or aeroplanes are going to fall out of the sky, or you might have to pay more for your mobile phone calls . . .

INTERVIEWER: Or grow your own lettuces.

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Oh well that I'd be all in favour doing, we do that ourselves at home. But the point is simply this, let me make a practical example: four days before the referendum my wife and I bought a new greenhouse and it was delivered by some skilled workmen from Manchester. They came down. We live in the country, as I've told you, and we had in one of our fields, because we have horses, a big Vote Leave poster, so they knew

our views. And over coffee we said to them, when they said to us, 'We see that you're supporting Leave', we said, 'Well, what do you think?' And they supported Leave and they were very clear why. They said, because we asked them, 'We support Leave because we see the return of our sovereignty as the fundamental issue, and we know it may cost us money. And we're prepared to put up with sacrifice, because it's a matter of principle.' And that has been the thing which the other side, perhaps exemplified most egregiously by Matthew Parris in The Times who simply doesn't understand this, constantly talking as though you can bribe people by saying, 'Oh well, you'll be better off if you support our lot,' or, 'It'll all be economic chaos', which, by the way, it will not be. So I think that we're moving - and let's move now to why those 17.4 million people were so wise in their decision - we are moving, I think, fairly quickly now towards a situation in which we will do the right thing, which is that we will leave the European Union as instructed by the people and we will not do it on the basis of this 500-page surrender document. We will simply do it on WTO terms.

INTERVIEWER: If we look back, you, as one of the founders and editorial directors behind Briefings for Brexit, wrote about why you thought the EU was destined to break up: it was designed in another era and has spread its wings a bit too far since its original inception as a trading partnership. It's a hugely well-downloaded document. Take your mind back to that time when we voted to Brexit. Why are you so sure that the EU is breaking up, that Brexit is the right decision for the UK?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: You're quite right. That first piece, which I wrote when the website was new, I think still remains its most heavily-downloaded piece. It's certainly the piece which has attracted the most hostile trolling, which is a new word that I've learned, from Remainiacs who hated my analysis. And let me briefly just say what I explained. I'm a historian by origins and an anthropologist and I'm familiar with many other of my cognate disciplines, one of which is particularly relevant to this issue and funnily enough it's archaeology. There is an American archaeologist called Joseph Tainter who 20 years ago wrote an analysis of why empires collapse and the argument that he made was based on borrowing from the world of high finance. He borrowed the notion of increasing marginal utility. And he showed that if you increase the complexity of a structure there comes a point where the benefits which you get from that increased complexity turn from positive to negative. So you have a bell curve. I simply applied that thought experiment to the history of the EU. And when you do that it is perfectly clear that the EU has now moved very firmly into the zone of the risk of its own final collapse, the moment where we went across the top

of the bell curve was the introduction of the euro, which was the greatest fatal mistake which the EU ever made. But why it will collapse in the way that I suspect, which is fast, is because it has many characteristics in common with its birth partner and that partner - not in terms of its ideology, but in terms of its structure - was the Soviet Union. Because a fundamental historical mistake which I and Robert Tombs and others have wanted to point out on the Briefings for Brexit website, is that many people believe, firstly, that the EU was a child of the Second World War. It was not. It was a reaction to the horrors of the trenches of the First World War in the minds of people like Jean Monnet. Secondly, that it was about trading, which it never was. This has always been a political project of federal union to suppress the nation states of Europe. And the lesson that was learnt with the collapse of the Briand Plan of 1928, which was a plan for a federal Europe, when it didn't work, was to move obliquely, always to move through another subject. The first one that was attempted in 1950, is my special area: defence. The Pleven Plan of 1950 was to begin to create a federal European state through a European army. That was not ratified. So they moved to the Coal and Steel Community, that was the first. Then we moved on to trading. So it's like a crab-wise advance, or if you want to take an English analogy, it's like grandmother's footsteps - that you move along and then as soon as the people look at you, you turn around and you have to freeze when the people look at you. Now, they did that up to the moment of the introduction of the euro which was an attempt to force political union through introducing, prematurely without proper preparation, a unified currency. The result of doing that has been fatal. It was like injecting a fatal poison into the bloodstream of the project and that is why it's collapsing, because out of that has come the sacrifice of a generation of young people in Greece, in Spain, in Portugal. And it has produced political reaction in Italy which is enormously powerful - the third most important country in the European Union - different from Greece, which cannot be therefore ignored in the way that it was so disrespected during the crisis of 2015. So my expectation is that irrespective of us, this project is in its dying phase. But it is important to state this clearly, because this is why Mr Martin Selmayr, who runs the European Union today, a German bureaucrat who took control of the European Commission through a *coup d'état* last spring, this is why he is so desperate to do us harm. He has to do us harm in order to deter other potential escapees from this collapsing project. And as Robert Tombs has explained very clearly, if your belief is that you have a revealed truth, which those who run the EU believe, what he calls - and I think it's a very good phrase - 'a vanguard myth', then that morally justifies you in overriding the will of the people anywhere else. Hence every time a referendum is held that you do not approve of, the people have to go back

and produce the right answer. That won't work with us. We are going to have to break out of this gravity force field and that is the issue for us today.

INTERVIEWER: Before we move on to your expertise on security and defence, critics and people who are in favour of Remain would take issue with you on that historical analysis, because they would simply say the EU has given us peace in Europe since the two world wars. But . . . don't answer that allegation, move instead to these negotiations where Barnier has kept - despite the fact people thought he would have difficulty and wanted to divide and rule them - his 27 EU partners together in terms of this deal, don't you think it's the UK that looks as if it's splintered and fractured not the EU?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Well I'm going to be disobedient, because I cannot let your observation pass. It is of course one of the great canards of this debate and it is historically completely wrong. The European Union was not the producer or the creator of peace in the period since the end of the Second World War. That was the result of the Anglosphere intervention. It is the Americans who created modern Germany. It is the Americans who paid for and have supported NATO and that is what has kept us safe. And for the British, our crucial alliance is the Five Eyes Alliance which we're going to come onto in a minute, which is our intelligence relationship with the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and ourselves. That is our most precious, fundamental security alliance and we, through the plan that Mrs May published last night, when you go into the defence parts of that plan you see that that is fundamentally betrayed. And so for me, this has never been - in terms now of your prime question - this has never been an issue about negotiating over trade or any of these small details. They are small details compared to the prime duty of government which is the responsibility, the night-watchman responsibility, of protecting you and me and everybody listening to this podcast from the enemy without and the enemy within. That is what we pay our taxes for, above anything else. And that has been betrayed by this government under Mrs May in this document, which is why that document cannot stand. And I'll explain in a moment why that is so.

INTERVIEWER: But in regard to Barnier keeping his 27 EU partners together, can you answer that? I mean the EU has seemed united, the UK has not been?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Well, I'm half Dutch and one of my other jobs at the moment is that I am the Senior Visiting Professor at the L'école Spéciale Militaire de St Cyr, because I went to school in France, I'm a [*speaking French, unclear*] as well. So I'm pretty European and I

do not see Europe in this unified form. I know from my Dutch relatives, and I know from my friends on the military staff at St Cyr that they do not see Brexit in the way that . . . a unified problem in the hands of Monsieur Barnier. There was a very interesting recent occasion in which Monsieur Barnier made a speech which one of my friends attended, at which many were present because Barnier, of course, is pitching to become the successor of Mr Juncker. And the extraordinary thing was that nobody listened to him. Nobody in the room listened to Mr Barnier, who was explaining what he'd done in the Brexit negotiations. So what I think you will find is that if you go to individual countries, you will find in the general population the equivalent of those people who voted for Brexit in this country. You will find in those populations similar division and very substantial levels of support. In the Netherlands - let me make it practical – on the morning of our vote, the first text message I received at 5 o'clock in the morning was not from anybody in England, it was from a friend of mine in the Netherlands who said, 'This is unstoppable, we are next,' and that is what those who are the *nomenclatura* – to use the Soviet term, correctly, this unelected bureaucracy in Brussels that is what they most fear. And that, as I revert to what I said in an earlier answer, is why they have to give us a punishment beating, to try and deter other nations. This is unwise because countries with a strong democratic tradition, like the Netherlands, will not accept that and in other countries much darker shadows now come forward because the reaction to trying to dictate, for example, to the French or to the Germans has been the rise of AfD and even darker forces on the far right. And of course, in France we have seen the rise and fall of Monsieur Macron, rather like a roman candle. He shot into the sky and filled it with sparks for a short period of time and now he's failing and guttering out. And we are seeing the return in the forthcoming elections, we suspect, of strength to the further right. So there is an irony here, because there was an idealistic principle among those at the end of the Second World War who promoted the European project, which was that they wanted to create buffers against a return to the world of the 1930s. The way that the EU has been constructed and works, which is in its nature autocratic and anti-democratic, is that it is producing exactly the opposite reaction in country after country.

INTERVIEWER: Defence: Theresa May in her statement to the House on her Brexit deal has talked about the security partnership with the EU continuing. You would have swift extradition procedures, there will be a sharing of data records and she said there would be close and flexible partnership, a close and flexible partnership on foreign and defence policies. From your security knowledge and from the articles you've written for Briefings for Brexit, do you agree that that can be achieved under this deal?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: No. It's based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the facts, not a matter of opinion. So let's take the two parts of what she said. The first part about data sharing and the arrest warrants and so on - Sir Richard Dearlove the former Master of Pembroke and before that the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, with whom I have been writing extensively on Briefings for Brexit, and I, have published on the website, now twice, explanations as to why the EU is the wrong address to which you should direct yourself for these issues. We joined then with General Julian Thompson who led the reconquest of the Falklands and with Admiral Lane-Nott who used to command the British deterrent force, in a letter to The Times on the 17th of October this year, in which we explained, the four of us, that the EU has nothing to do with defence and security and the British government should withdraw all of its papers. That means up to and including the now, I think, fatally flawed and doomed withdrawal proposal that she tabled last night to Cabinet. These should be withdrawn, because all relationships to do with security, defence, police matters either are the purview of NATO, or they are the purview of nation to nation relationships, such as we have for example with the French. But the EU itself should have no role. Why not is revealed in the fundamental misunderstanding that underlies the second of those sets of words which she used. Now, she said that she seeks 'a close and flexible partnership.' With respect to Mrs May she and Oliver Robbins - and whoever it is who is advising her on this - either do not understand, or we suspect, and it is much darker, are deliberately failing to communicate truth to the public and possibly to the Prime Minister. If you look at the EU's documents and in Veterans for Britain we have done this minutely, the documents which underlie the move towards the creation of a military EU have accelerated massively since we voted to leave the European Union. Now, as I explained in an earlier answer, the very first thing that the European projectors tried to do under Jean Monnet was to create the Pleven Plan of 1950. So this is not something that's a flash in the pan, it's a long time coming. Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty sets the principles for creating a military identity for the European Union. This, as Mr Juncker said in a speech, is the Sleeping Beauty of the Lisbon Treaty, which is now being woken up. And it was woken up specifically in two documents: The European Defence Action Plan and the Defence and Security Implementation Plan of November 2016. If you look at those documents, and all of the documents which then flowed from that through five European Councils from 2016 until now, all of which British officials waved through on the understanding we would not be subject to them because we are leaving the EU, they are creating a ramified military EU identity, which is in its nature inherently hostile to the United States and to NATO. And don't take my word for it, that is what Monsieur Macron explained in exactly those terms, in his

speech at Verdun, just a few days ago, during the celebrations for the remembrance of the 100th anniversary. So when you look at the documents in detail as we have done, you see that they follow the standard EU practice, which is that everything is related to everything else. And so if you join one part of this organisation - for example, Mrs May is very keen to join the European Defence Procurement Area, because she thinks that that's the way in which she preserves British jobs in the defence industry. Wrong - because by so doing, she automatically subjects this country to the global plan of the European External Action Programme, in other words European Union foreign policy. Everything is linked to everything else like a spider's web. So you cannot be part of one part of this. There is nothing flexible on offer. The only thing that is on offer in this area is complete subordination to PESCO - the Permanent Structured Cooperation of which we are not a member. We would be subject to it in defence and security, but as a rule-taker in defence. Now, pause and think what that means. The enormity of that. What this Government is proposing, Mrs May's government, is that we are going to make a surrender of British sovereignty in the national security area, more extreme than any defeat since the fall of Singapore in 1942. And I use my words carefully. Because there would be an absolute loss of control over the key levers of British defence and security and this is the result of a technical note issued by the government on 24th May this year which - and this is a constitutional outrage - reversed all of the stated decisions upon which British officials had waived through the permissions to create the military EU. We'd said, Mr Fallon said, we didn't want to be a dog in the manger because we're not going to be part of it - fair enough. Suddenly, on 24th May we have a paper from Her Majesty's Government saying we reverse all of that and we want to be members of all of this, but in a subordinated role where we will not have any executive control.

INTERVIEWER: Isn't that an argument to remain - our defence policy? I've heard what you've said but aren't we destined outside of Europe to become an island with nukes? That's how some people have termed it. We can't defend ourselves. We haven't spent enough on defence over the years. You wrote about the Galileo Project and how you wanted the UK to break away from this satellite navigation system. But I'm just bemused as to how we would defend ourselves outside Europe, when we haven't spent enough money on defence. We have renewed Trident, but there's a lot of cynicism over whether that's rusty and whether it works properly or not. But come on - we can't defend ourselves?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Forgive me, this is Project Fear on steroids. No, we have not spent enough on defence. Yes, of course we can defend ourselves in the Anglosphere alliances

which conform to global Britain. The key alliances upon which we depend - and let me be very clear about this - do not have anything to do with the European Union. They do have to do with some European countries who are members of NATO, but our primary relationships are with Anglosphere countries, English-speaking countries around the world like Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Countries that are not English-speaking which are close allies like Japan, for example. This is the world with which we do most of our trade. This is the world of the future. This is the world to which the British economy is supremely well-attuned because we are an economy unlike the Germans who are very much a 20th Century economy that bashes metal and makes motorcars. We make ideas; we make services; we are attuned to the future, not to the past. So, yes if we do what any responsible government is morally obliged to do - which is to put our money where our mouth is - all prime ministers say the first duty of government is the defence of the realm, that is true. Therefore it follows that it is the first call on taxpayers' money. Your money and mine. Before it's spent on anything else: health services, education or anything else; the first thing you are obliged to spend money on are the night-watchman functions. So, of course we could do that and we should. Now, the notion - let's revert to this and nail this one absolutely . . .

INTERVIEWER: An island with nukes?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Yes. This is simply a grotesque example of the declinism which has bedevilled the civil service and many parts of the ruling class for two generations. The reason that we are talking today about this surrender document, which I think is, as we speak, going to collapse in the next 24 hours or so, along probably with Mrs May and be replaced with a proper prime minister who can deliver what the people instructed, is that we have had since the 1950s within the establishment, call it loosely its name, of which people like us, you know, Cambridge professors are supposed to be members - there has been a view that Britain is either incapable of, or morally has lost the right to run its own affairs, because there's a sort of anti-imperialism that runs through this, but an essential declinism that says we can't do things on our own. And, of course, since Suez, a strong streak of anti-Americanism. So therefore you've had in the civil service people who first supported Edward Heath in getting us into the relationship with the European project on the basis of untruths - because Edward Heath knew perfectly well that it was a political project, not a trading project. And then, having got there, they hammered in all the tent pegs to try and make sure we could never get out. Hugo Young, you may remember, the late Hugo Young, wrote a very interesting book called This Blessed Plot. He was a strong Europhile and so he approved of what the civil

service did in those years, in the 60s and 70s. He explains there precisely how they tried to lock us in to the European project in exactly the same way that the successor civil service is trying to do so now. So let's please get away from the notion that we are somehow small and incompetent. And let me give you some facts on this. In November of last year the Henry Jackson Society, which is one of the London think tanks, did a geopolitical audit of the top eight powers in the world - geopolitical audit means not just looking at guns, not just looking at so-called soft power, not just looking at any one metric, but a whole basket of metrics. And when you look at all of those metrics together and they're all calculated out and you can look it up on their website, you find of course that the United States is by a long margin the world's dominant geopolitical power. But when you look in the rank ordering of the eight main powers in the world, who comes number two? It's not China, it's not Russia, it's not Germany, it's not France, it's not India, it's not Japan. It is the United Kingdom. We are the second most geopolitically competent power in the *world*. Now let's be a little bit grown up about recognising that we have these strengths. Let us banish the declinism of this frame of mind which has infected the creation of the document which was presented so contentiously to Cabinet yesterday. It is based on the premise that Brexit is a damage limitation exercise, that nothing could be better than to be in the EU nothing, therefore . . . given that, reluctantly, we have to leave the EU, that what we have to do is to try and mitigate damage. This is completely back to front. Staying in the EU would have chained us to a collapsing structure. We, through the good sense of what Edmund Burke so beautifully called The Wisdom of Unlettered Men, people like the people who put up my wife's greenhouse, coming down from Manchester, they know in their guts what the interests, the patriotic interests of this country are. They don't need to have degrees from the University of Cambridge to be able to know that, and they certainly don't need to be members of the civil service. In fact that's a disqualification - that seems to be something which blinds you, because it creates this declinist miasma that descends upon your eyes. No. We have every capability to be able to reconstruct ourselves as a powerful and competent power across the spectrum, including in the defence area. But - and here let's come to something very dark: during the course of last year, into my hands came from, actually, the Political Editor of The Sun Harry Cole, a very disturbing document. It was the transcript of a secret tape recording that was made at my former university, the London School of Economics, of a young man called Alastair Brockbank, who is the defence adviser to Oliver Robbins, who is the Prime Minister's current . . . the current Prime Minister's principal adviser on Brexit, and the author of the Chequers deal that was written behind the backs of her ministers, who then resigned, as we all know. Now, in this tape - which was made under the Chatham House Rule, but which is quite

correctly broken by The Sun newspaper because it's so important, you hear this young man who is two heartbeats away from the Prime Minister saying several things which are constitutionally astonishing. The first is that he explains openly an intention to hoodwink the British public who voted to Leave with pretence, with what he calls 'fluffy language' which will seemingly conform to the mandate to Leave. But in the defence area, the language and the technical agreements - which I have just indicated to you in the earlier answer - will all lock us into a subordinate role in defence and security under the emerging military EU. He actually states it. The tapes are called 'the Kit Kat tapes.' And the reason they're called the Kit Kat tapes is that on it you also hear another official, another civil servant, a woman called Victoria Billing, and she says it's like a Kit Kat bar, you have a shiny label on the outside which seemingly conforms to the will of the people to leave the EU, but inside you've got a chocolate bar which is constructed to keep us engaged with . . . it is in fact *Hotel California*, as I argued in one of my pieces on Briefings for Brexit - and you'll remember the Eagles' song, 'You can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave' - or BRINO as people now call it - Brexit In Name Only. This is no accident. This is an explicit intent by civil servants. And in the letter of 17th October, Sir Richard Dearlove, the former chief of the Secret Intelligence Service and I and my military colleagues, stated in terms that this is improper behaviour by civil servants. It produced, I will tell you, a . . . a firestorm. We were attacked then immediately. Not one, not two, but three former cabinet secretaries felt obliged or were obliged to write letters to say how wrong we were. But this is something deeply rotten at the heart of the modern civil service and that is something which, let us be charitable, has led Mrs May astray. She is clearly not a lady of much imagination or much courage herself. She has relied on officials . . .

INTERVIEWER: Others say she has courage.

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Well I don't think she has courage. I think that she is a person who has shown herself to be stubborn. That's not the same as courage. But the reason that I have lost any confidence in her occurred at the time of the Chequers deal. She authorised her official, Mr Robbins, to write a secret document behind the backs of David Davis and Steve Baker, who were her ministers in the department, they didn't know about the document. It was shown to Mrs Merkel it was shown to Mr Rutte and to European leaders before it was shown to [*fragment of word*] . . . this is intolerable. You cannot do that. So this is a prime minister who has betrayed her ministers and she does not deserve power. So I'm sorry, I won't have that language. Mrs May has lost any right to be able to hold the high office that she holds.

The only issue now is how quickly she can find it within herself, in a dignified way, to step aside.

INTERVIEWER: I have to put up defence of the British Prime Minister and of the British civil service, because people don't like the civil service being attacked for carrying out what has been a very complex negotiation over the past two years, even though some people are wondering why it was the civil service in negotiations with Barnier, not politicians such as Raab himself. But just finally, your *Hotel California* metaphor, Professor Prins - so it looks as if, if this dream scenario comes to pass - and who knows what's going to happen over the next few days, it's a very precarious political situation the Prime Minister finds herself in – but we will, if all events that you describe come to pass, be able to leave *Hotel California*?

GWYTHIAN PRINS: That was what I wanted to explain to the readers of Briefings for Brexit. In my '*Leaving Hotel California*' article - that's the title of the article, it's one of a pair which describe how we could do it, in the defence and security area. But since we're coming to the end of this most interesting conversation, let's go back to the central point in the defence and security area. We are faced, if we do not pursue the course of action that I and Sir Richard Dearlove have advocated in the work that we have published on Briefings for Brexit, if we do not do that we put at risk our Five Eyes Alliance. Please understand what that means. I was in Washington just a few weeks ago explaining all of this to senior people on Capitol Hill. They were completely dumbstruck. They had no idea that the British government had done this sort of thing, because it's so far beyond their expectation of what their closest ally in the world might do. And they had two reactions. First, 'This is a material threat to American national security', because GCHQ - which by the way the Americans put a lot of money into, our signals and secret intelligence analysing centre near Cheltenham - that is integral to American national security. So there would be a real hit to American national security. Secondly, since they do not trust countries like the French, for example - and with good reason, because when I worked in NATO I saw the unreliability of French presidents and the French officers, I know why the Americans would not trust them, and we do not trust them by the way with systematic access to our secret intelligence, we give it to them on a case-by-case basis which is fine, but if we were to follow what Lord Robertson has recently argued, which is to set up a structural intelligence relationship with the French as Sir Richard Dearlove . . . please look. I'm a mere professor. He used to run the Secret Intelligence Service. He's a man who's run and used this material. He explains that that would

be a fatal stab at the heart of Five Eyes and it would make everybody listening to this podcast much less safe. Now, this has only come into the discussion because Mrs May in her desperation to try and obtain the impossible, which is some concessions from an EU which, as I explained, throughout this this interview, is incapable in its nature, in its DNA, is incapable of negotiating anything, it was never going to offer her anything - in order to try and get something she has offered the crown jewels of our national security. That is intolerable and it must not stand.

INTERVIEWER: And it looks as if it's not going to stand.

GWYTHIAN PRINS: And I think it's not, so in this sense, although we are going a very, very agonising pathway towards the restoration of British independence, we are going to take back control, which is what 17.4 million decent ordinary English people, Edmund Burke's people, those people who showed the wisdom of unlettered men. That's what they told the government to do. That's the government's job: not to debate it, to do it. I hope they now will.

INTERVIEWER: On WTO terms.

GWYTHIAN PRINS: Absolutely. Of course.

INTERVIEWER: Professor Prins, thank you very much indeed for talking to the Briefings for Brexit podcast series today. As we said, you've been a regular contributor to The B4B journalism. You're a member of the B4B editorial committee, as well as being an academic board member of Veterans for Britain. Thank you very much.

Thank you. It's been a pleasure.