

Commonwealth Union: A Reference Design for a Union of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom

Frequently Asked Questions

James C. Bennett, May 2016

Quietly, beneath the radar, a new idea is gathering interest and support in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the smaller Realms over which Queen Elizabeth still reigns. It is the idea that these four nations, and eventually others in the Commonwealth, should form a new federation with free trade, free movement of people, a mutual defence guarantee and combined military capabilities where appropriate, and a limited but effective confederal entity carrying out infrastructure and other mutual development projects currently beyond the ability or willingness of any individual Realm to carry out. Once dismissed as a nostalgic reprise of Empire, or an impractical fantasy, more and more people are realising that in the era of the Internet and cheap global air travel, common language, law, history, and traditions of government count for more than geographical proximity. This FAQ presents one “reference design” of what such a Union could look like, as a basis for discussion. Others are possible. I am currently writing several books, non-fiction and fiction, based on this concept and its possibilities for the future. This will serve as an introduction to those works. If you find this interesting, I invite you to explore and follow further.

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1. What is the Commonwealth Union?

Commonwealth Union (sometimes called Commonwealth Federation) is the idea that several principal Commonwealth nations, usually including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and possibly others, should form a federation or confederation, insuring free trade and a customs union, common citizenship and free movement of people, and common defence and security services, acting as a single nation in dealing with other nations and international organisations. It is also sometimes referred to as the CANZUK union, after the initials of what will be its principal members. In this work the term “Commonwealth Union” will be used in that sense: A political federation having the character of a state, consisting of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and possibly other Commonwealth Realms — those states of which Queen Elizabeth is sovereign. It would be distinct from the Commonwealth of Nations, which would continue to exist and function as at present.

2. How does this relate to the Commonwealth of Nations?

It is distinct from the idea of the modern Commonwealth of Nations and its Secretariat, although all of the CANZUK states are currently Commonwealth members. Not all Commonwealth states today will want to join a Commonwealth Union, nor will all of them meet the likely conditions for membership. The experience of the European Union has demonstrated the problems of unions between nations with great disparities of development levels. The existing Commonwealth of Nations should continue its present worthwhile activities, and perhaps serve to assist less developed nations to become ready to adhere to the Union in the future. Ultimately there will be forms of associate membership which will provide certain mutually agreed benefits of Commonwealth Union membership to those countries of the existing Commonwealth of Nations which are in an intermediate stage of development.

3. Why bother doing this?

By all of the classical criteria save one, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand together possess far more of the potential for successful state-building than do the member-states of the European Union, or even any three or four of those states. They have a common majority language, a common legal system, a common parliamentary and political tradition, a common military structure and tradition, a common head of state, and a long history of working together, including the period during which the voluntary military collaboration of these powers was the sole force on the planet resisting armed and aggressive genocidal totalitarianism seeking to dominate the world. The single criterion they lack is geographic proximity. It is time to recognise

that this criterion is no longer an insuperable barrier to union. This is so because of the rapid, low-cost transportation made possible by aviation, the globally flat cost of communications made possible by the internet and web, and the distributed manufacturing revolution now in process, by which the world is transitioning from trade in physical objects to trade in designs, services, and software. A Commonwealth Union – a loose, distributed confederal form linking the above-listed and possibly other members – possesses all of the requirements for a successful state.

The whole of such a Union will be materially greater than the sum of its parts. Each of the core nations will gain from constructing the Union, including increased trade and prosperity, better security, and a wider role on the world stage. The Union's peoples will gain greatly by obtaining more options in mobility, more employment options, and greater scope for attaining their aspirations. Little or nothing will be sacrificed. Each member nation will have all it has now, but more will be added onto each.

4. I like being a Brit (or English, or Canadian, or Australian, or Kiwi) perfectly well, thank you. Do I stop being one if this happens? What will I be, then?

You will continue to be what you are. You will be what you have always been. You will lose nothing. But you will be more than you were before. The British Union of 1707, which formed the Kingdom of Great Britain, provides an example. Most English people have been happy to be British, as well, since 1707, without being any less English. The day after the Commonwealth Union forms, you will be what you were the day before. The nation you belonged to will be the same, except now part of a larger whole, the new Commonwealth Union. Over time, the people of the Commonwealth Union will experience the great events of their times together, and will work together and share in a new, cooperative project. As a result, a new layer of identity will naturally form over time. As this identity forms, people will not abandon their former identities, but they will have an additional, new identity added to them.

5. How will my life be different as a result of this?

In many ways, all beneficial. Some of these changes won't be apparent until well after they have happened. One effect will be to broaden the effective horizons of each and every man and woman in the Union. Young people in particular will have new and expanded scope for their lives. Consider for a moment the choices available as a practical matter for young Americans. They have at their disposal the greater part of a continent. They can choose among several of the world's great metropolises -- centres of finance, the arts, science and technology, and a government with global reach and interests. They can choose to live in one of hundreds of small or medium-sized cities,

including many university towns. They can follow almost any vocation or avocation imaginable. The great aspirational cities offer plentiful employment, decent state schools, and low-cost, spacious, new homes on easy terms for those wishing to start or expand families. They can choose climates and ecosystems from dry desert to humid rainforest, from sub-arctic conditions to full tropics, and anything in between. World-class surf or Olympic-quality alpine skiing are available within an hour's drive of several major metropolises. And all of this is available to every American at the cost of a drive or a cheap plane ticket. No passports, visas, work permits, or nosy interviews are required to access any of this. One gets on the plane, gets off, and finds work and a house. And if it does not work out to taste, one leaves and tries another place, or returns home, with little or no sunk cost in having tried something different.

All of these choices will be available, in even greater diversity and plenty, within the Commonwealth Union. At present these options are available only grudgingly and with substantial effort in dealing with the bureaucracy of the existing countries, with no success guaranteed. Giving the inhabitants of the Commonwealth Union these freedoms is merely a matter of demanding it. In fact, precisely this freedom existed two generations ago, and it could be restored with the stroke of a pen. The treaties to permit it could be written with a month's good effort.

6. Will the Commonwealth Union be compatible with British membership in the European Union?

No. The European Union is a customs union, requiring that Britain maintain walls against its sister nations. The Commonwealth Union is an option for Britain upon exiting the European Union ("Brexit"). It is hoped that the bulk of the free-trade and cooperation agreements that will be reached between Britain and the remnant EU (rEU) following a Brexit will become applicable, eventually, to the entire Commonwealth Union. Britain will be the largest single trade partner to the rEU, more important to it than the USA or China. It will be in the interest of the rEU to extend free trade to the entire Commonwealth Union, perhaps with some reserved areas.

7. Why will Britain want to join such a Commonwealth Union, after just having left the constraints of the European Union?

Creating the Commonwealth Union is fully consistent with exiting the European Union.

- First, creating a Commonwealth Union will shut the door permanently on any temptation to rejoin (whether officially or otherwise) the rEU once Britain has left it. Since Britain will always have substantial ties with Europe, the continent (as

opposed to the EU, the organisation), Europhile elements in the UK will always be seeking to engineer a return. A Commonwealth Union will effectively preclude that option.

- Second, many Britons believe that the UK is too small, demographically, economically, and militarily, to play the important role on the world stage they once had. Some mistakenly believe Britain can regain a larger role by membership in the European Union. For the past forty years, it has unsuccessfully attempted to use its European membership as a means of augmenting British influence on the world stage. The problem, however, is that Britain's values and policy preferences have often been at odds with those of its erstwhile European partners. There is no point contributing British money or military capabilities to a joint European effort if they are used to pursue goals tangential to, or entirely opposed to Britain's own interests. On the other hand, Britain frequently finds itself viewing issues similarly to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. For example, when Britain acts militarily, it usually finds one or all of those countries present and making a genuine contribution. In short, a Commonwealth Union will require far less compromise over goals or means, and deliver more desirable results, internationally, than either the European Union, or unilateral British action.
- Third, Britain today finds itself in many ways over-institutionalised for the set of tasks it has set for itself as a single nation. Its finance sector, diplomatic service, and (until recently) military and intelligence capabilities are still sized, in many ways, for a world-spanning entity rather than a smallish island off the coast of Europe. A Commonwealth Union will provide the scope of action for these capabilities and also will share the costs and benefits of those capabilities with its partners. The UK by itself today struggles to maintain strategic deterrent forces, meaningful conventional land, air, and sea forces, interoperability with advanced US capabilities, and an ability to project force outside of the European theatre. It ends up doing a bit of each of these tasks, and doing them only at the most minimal level needed to stay in the game. A Commonwealth Union will be able to afford this suite of capabilities, at a reasonably effective level, to the benefit of all members.
- Finally, the UK is demographically hemmed in by the dense population of the islands and the difficulty of meeting the aspirations of its people. Every other Anglosphere nation benefits from its aspirational cities, where young people find cheap decent housing, jobs, and the opportunity to pursue entrepreneurial creation. Phoenix, Dallas, Calgary, Queensland's Gold Coast – there is no real British equivalent, although the far exurbs of London serve that function to some degree. Free movement of peoples throughout the Commonwealth Union will make the

Australian and Canadian aspirational cities Britain's as well. The Britons moving to these communities to pursue their aspirations will still be contributing to the entire Union, to Britain's benefit. Thus Britain will retain a substantial portion of the investment it made in raising and educating these people, as it would if they emigrated to foreign destinations.

8. Why will Canada join a Commonwealth Union?

Numerous benefits will accrue to Canada and the Canadian people when they join the Commonwealth Union. Since 1783, the northern tier of Britain's North American possessions have found themselves sharing a primary common characteristic, namely, a disinclination to become part of the United States. Throughout its history, from 1783 on, Canada has had to balance the obvious and ready-at-hand benefits of cooperation with the USA in trade and defence with its strong ties beyond the continent to avoid absolute dependence on the USA, and the threat of ultimately being absorbed. In search of this goal, Canadians have found formulae to permit coexistence between French- and English-speakers, have maintained the Monarchy, and have for much of their existence accepted, with various degrees of enthusiasm, an adherence, eventually voluntary, to the British Empire and Commonwealth. Canadian patriots like William Lyon Mackenzie, his grandson William Lyon Mackenzie King, and Lester Pearson explored different visions of international union seeking to balance Canadian self-government, American cooperation, and the historical tie to Britain. Pearson's vision led him to play a founding role in NATO, NORAD, and the United Nations, and to seek a North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement with Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson. Trudeau Senior's vision led him to champion international governance through transnational institutions. Mulroney and Harper pursued deeper economic cooperation with the USA through NAFTA while striving to keep the modern Commonwealth meaningful. Trudeau Junior seems to be swinging back to an emphasis on international institutions again.

Today, however, the traditional Canadian balancing act is becoming increasingly difficult. NAFTA and NORAD are successes, and the prospect of a "common perimeter" customs union between the USA and Canada is on the table. However, most of the transnational governance projects committed to under Trudeau Senior and his successors have failed to deliver any meaningful benefits to Canada, or much of anybody else. A successful Commonwealth Union will not replace NAFTA, NORAD, and other successful USA-Canada ties, but it will balance them substantially. Canada will no longer be overwhelmingly dependent on the USA for either its prosperity or its security: No other option can provide these benefits to Canada. Just as a Commonwealth Union will have value to Britain in closing the door on a return to absorption in a European

superstate, it will also close the door decisively to continental integration and Canada's absorption by the USA. Even more so than with the UK in regard to Europe, a Commonwealth Union will be sufficiently large, rich, and militarily capable to be an indigestible lump to the USA.

Looked at with cold realism, Canada today constitutes an expansive, mostly unpopulated region of the globe, possessing valuable natural resources in a world that is, despite ups and downs in world markets, increasing its needs for such resources. At present Canada is without sufficient military capabilities to guard against either a determined foreign encroacher or one of several potential sources of domestic strife. Over its history, Canada has relied substantially on external powers, successively France, Britain, and the USA, to maintain and make available *in extremis* the naval, military, and aerospace assets needed to guard what Canada claims. Canada's resource wealth is in effect an undefended treasure house.

Today Canada's claims include seabed resources stretching to the North Pole, yet it possesses neither the nuclear submarines nor Arctic-capable year-round icebreakers to reach these resources, let alone defend them. Canada is economically dependent on its ability to export hydroelectric power, petroleum, and minerals from remote parts of its territory through all-but-unguarded transport corridors subject to disruption, and its foreign customers, particularly the USA, are dependent upon their unimpeded delivery. Canada is implicitly and explicitly dependent on American action to defend these resources if they were threatened. In fact, Canada's assets are sufficiently critical to the daily functioning of the USA that it would certainly act unilaterally to restore them should Canada become incapable of or unwilling to perform that task. Moreover, the defence of Canada by the USA, in a crisis, will be conducted as America's military saw fit, not as Canada might want. The price Canada might have to pay would almost certainly be something that it would not want, including some loss of sovereignty.

Furthermore, even if Canada increased its defence appropriations substantially, it would be hard-pressed to build and maintain sufficient capability to provide for its own security. Modern, fully capable defence systems, that can stand up to the best opposing forces, have become extremely expensive. Nuclear submarines capable of operating beneath the ice-covered Arctic Ocean, for example, cost between one and two billion dollars each. Further, such submarines require a substantial investment in specialised facilities to service them.

It is clear that Canada can only achieve adequate defensive capabilities in collaboration with others. Therefore Canada must choose its defence partners, and build mechanisms which permit the best joint control of joint assets. Given the level of investments

needed, and the criticality of the decisions that might need to be taken, particularly with strategic nuclear systems, only full union with Canada's defence partner(s) will be adequate. Union with the USA would be tantamount to surrendering any chance of meaningful Canadian input. Canada would simply be absorbed into the United States under that scenario. Canada's experience with NORAD demonstrated that the USA will not give equal weight in decision-making to a partner that only contributes – and *can* only contribute – a tenth of the assets used in combined operations.

In a Commonwealth Union Canadians would contribute roughly thirty-five per cent of the effort, while Britain will contribute a bit above sixty per cent. Canada would be a full partner in such a Union and its voice would be heard in a way it never could be with the USA. A Commonwealth Union essentially constitutes the Golden Mean in this situation; it is large enough and rich enough to afford a full panoply of necessary modern capabilities, but small enough that Canada will be a meaningful and major partner in it.

9. Why will Australia join such a Union?

Numerous benefits will accrue to Australia and the Australian people when they join the Commonwealth Union. Of the great trio of motivations that might impel a nation to join such a Union — security, prosperity, and identity -- it is likely that security will be the principal motivator for Australia.

Australia is a mostly empty land filled with desired resources, without the means to fully defend them. Further, Australia is located in close proximity to a set of much poorer, much more populous, and less stable neighbours. Furthermore, Northeast Asia is already home to three nuclear powers (Russia, China, and North Korea) and has American nuclear weapons stationed nearby. Now that North Korea has been allowed to nuclearise, it is likely that South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, will do so. Each of these countries could easily build nuclear weapons, and could deploy them on relatively short notice – the so-called “one-turn-of-the-screwdriver” scenario. Currently, Australia depends on a US nuclear guarantee. However, given the indecisiveness and incompetence of recent US administrations, relying on this guarantee is simply irresponsible wishful thinking.

Australia's perception of its security options is heavily coloured by its experience in the Second World War. Historically, Australia placed its defence in the hands of the British Empire. Australia mobilised to a high degree in both World Wars, sending troops to the Western Front, the Middle East, and North Africa in large numbers. When Japan overran Southeast Asia in December 1941, Australia had stripped its continental

defences to fight for the Empire in North Africa. The fall of Singapore, ineptly defended and hastily surrendered by Britain, left Australia helpless. Japanese aircraft bombed Darwin and an invasion fleet probed the waters around Australia. Only the prompt arrival of American forces under Douglas MacArthur deterred actual landings. The lessons Australians learned was that an over-stretched British empire could not be counted on to guarantee their defence. America was the only power with sufficient forces and a permanent presence in the Pacific to effectively guarantee Australia's security.

The Commonwealth Union will not be, as some might fear, a return to the British Empire, only with a much weaker Britain at its centre. The lessons of the Second World War, understood correctly, argue for, rather than against, the Commonwealth Union as the best guarantor of Australia's security. The key problem in 1942 was not just that Britain was overstretched. More importantly for Australia, the decisions on the deployment of the limited resources of the Empire, including Australian resources, were made in London by a British government responsible to a British parliament, and not to Australians. Today, Australia faces a similar dilemma. It has only a security treaty relationship with the USA, and as such is only one of many "major non-NATO allies" (sharing that status with, among others, Argentina). Australia has no decision-making ability beyond consultation with the USA in the event of conflict. If Australia's interests opposed those of another "ally" of the USA, Australia would be at the mercy of decisions made in Washington. The US treatment of the ongoing Falklands issue is not an encouraging precedent.

That is where the Commonwealth Union option is superior to all other security solutions for Australia. A full political union, rather than a looser treaty arrangement, is preferable to the status quo. The Commonwealth Union is the only means of insuring the existence of a substantial, modern strategic and tactical force, organic to the Australian nation and with substantial Australian participation in the high command, and responsible to a parliamentary body with substantial Australian participation. The Commonwealth Union military will be committed to the defence of Australia, its regional waters, and its international claims and interests. It is the only way Australia can afford a modern, multi-element, organic strategic deterrent force, partially based in Australia.

The Commonwealth Union is also the only way Australia can gain strategic deterrent capability without repudiating the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Australia will benefit from Britain's existing nuclear deterrent force becoming the Union's force when both nations form the Commonwealth Union. Australia will thus acquire a deterrent committed

unequivocally to retaliation against strategic attack on Australia, and other Union territory.

Commonwealth Union also enhances Australia's ability to be an economic player in the environment of the Twenty-first Century. The trade clout of a G-8 member within the top three or four in GDP is far greater than Australia's twenty-three million people can ever have for itself. Direct access to the Commonwealth Union market will provide Australia's growing high-technology entrepreneurial sector with a much larger domestic starter market, and with a much wider range of domestic technology capabilities to work with.

The late-Twentieth-Century economic plan for Australia, of becoming a food and natural resources supplier to an economically surging Asia (and particularly China) has probably reached its limits for the foreseeable future, and may in fact face substantial retrenchment. The Chinese economy has many characteristics of a bubble, with overvalued property developments, and enormous non-performing loans on its banks' balance sheets. China has a highly corrupt and opaque government-financial complex that does not seem to be able to admit the depths of its problems, much less take the painful and decisive steps needed to clear them. Australia's lopsided dependence on Asia is increasingly unwise, yet the search for alternatives has barely been discussed.

At the same time there is enormous untapped potential in Australia, particularly as new technologies begin to offer inexpensive, large-scale desalination and water purification. This will solve Australia's principal historical limit to population growth, a scarcity of fresh water. New hydrocarbon sources in Australia and the enormous hydrocarbon resources of Canada across the Pacific will reverse the Commonwealth Union's energy balance of trade, promising to end reliance on foreign energy sources and their cartel pricing. London and Toronto, working together with Australian finance and technical expertise, have the potential to finance and organise (and guard) a new generation of growth and prosperity for Australia that is not hostage to developments in an increasingly troubled and unstable Asian mainland.

Finally, Commonwealth Union will allow Australians to take advantage of cheaper global transportation and communications to conquer the "tyranny of distance" which has shaped their entire national history. Australians will be able to move with minimal transaction costs to a variety of climates and economic opportunities, for as short or long as they wish, without having to change citizenship or live with less than full rights at their destinations. Although the aspirational cities of Australia are likely to be destinations for substantial numbers of transmigrants from Britain, and to a lesser

degree Canada, the traffic will undoubtedly be two-way, and of benefit personally to many Australians.

10. Why will New Zealand join such a Union?

Numerous benefits will accrue to New Zealand and its people when they join the Commonwealth Union. Joining the larger union will secure New Zealand's independence and unique identity. Commonwealth Union will permit New Zealand to enjoy the substantial economic benefits of closer integration with Australia without succumbing to the temptation, present since the beginning of European settlement, of becoming merely one or more states in the Australian federation.

New Zealand, as a small nation, benefits by being part of a larger economic area, and by having the trade clout of a large and rich negotiating bloc and the security of a substantial military system committed without doubt or reservation to the defence of New Zealand as home territory. As nuclear proliferation accelerates in East and South Asia, this increasing danger will bring the problems typical of a world of multiple nuclear powers (of which these are a side effect) into greater focus, increasing the perceived usefulness of a Commonwealth Union for national defence and regional stability.

The Commonwealth Union will be the successor of the web of Trans-Tasman agreements between Australia and New Zealand on trade and movement of peoples. New Zealand's deep ties to Australia would therefore continue once Australia is part of the Commonwealth Union, even if, for any reason, New Zealand does not join as a founding member. New Zealanders already take advantage of Trans-Tasman movement in large numbers. Whether it joins at formation or later issues may arise, such as whether South Island might prefer to adhere to Union as a separate member, or whether Māoris may wish to seek a distinct status with the Commonwealth Union. (The question of distinct arrangements for aboriginal populations, such as Māori, Australian aboriginals, or Canadian First Nations, is discussed in a subsequent section.)

New Zealand will face two fundamental questions. First, is New Zealand better off on its own or as part of a family? Second, if a family, who is in that family, and how can New Zealand protect its distinct identity and way of life within such a family? Commonwealth Union provides a better answer to those questions than any other option.

11. Who else might join the Commonwealth Union?

Some communities will automatically become part of the Commonwealth Union. The Crown Dependencies and Dependent Territories of the four CANZUK nations (e.g., the Isle of Man, Bermuda, Norfolk Island, the Cook Islands, etc.) will automatically become distinct members of the Union along with the nations with which they already have relationships. (The one exception would be Gibraltar, because of its unique status under the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht. It would remain a special territory of Britain, but participate in the Union through Britain's membership.) These island communities, which are currently under-utilised, will give the Union a substantial additional maritime and seabed resources zone, as well as giving their peoples immensely greater opportunities.

The Union Constitution will provide for their representation and effective autonomy and self-government, consistent with their size and capabilities. The Swiss Confederation, for example, has a category of “demi-canton” for smaller areas with a distinct identity. It provides for equal rights within the Confederation but reduced representation. A comparable category, perhaps termed a “Minor Realm”, could be extended to the larger of the dependent territories (larger, in this context might be defined as a territory with population equal to the minimal size permitted for a Union Parliamentary constituency, which in the reference design presented in this work is 250,000 inhabitants). For territories with larger populations, the territory would simply become a Realm. Below that, down to some minimum threshold, it would become a Minor Realm. And, below that, a special arrangement would be created for very small populations, similar to the current British Dependent Territory. This will, incidentally, extinguish any remaining tinge of colonialism in the relationship of these communities. They will become members of the Commonwealth Union with full rights. There will be no “metropole” and no “colonies”, but a globe-spanning confederation of equals. Thus the oversight of the UN Committee on Decolonisation over these communities will be ended, if necessary unilaterally by the Commonwealth Union.

The Commonwealth Union will be a platform that will permit flexibility and negotiated arrangements with newly acceding members, or associate members. The other states of which the Queen is Sovereign, the other Commonwealth Realms, will be eligible to join the Union, provided they accept its terms of membership. With the exception of Papua New Guinea and Jamaica, these are all small states with minuscule populations. Many of the people from these lands have already immigrated to the CANZUK nations and have formed communities in their major cities. Their home nations lie in the Caribbean or the South Pacific, both areas in which the CANZUK powers already have presences, and in which many of the other Crown Realms can provide strategic locations.

These small, non-CANZUK Realms will likely seek membership in the Commonwealth Union, some as Minor Realms. As such, they will enjoy various benefits. These remaining Crown Realms are substantially poorer than the CANZUK states. Although the Union will not generally function as a transfer union, membership will automatically benefit the poorer Realms economically in a number of ways. The right of visa-free intra-Union travel and work, and service in the Union forces, will generate significant levels of remittances flowing back to Minor Realms. All Union citizens, including those of the Minor Realms, will have the option of service in the Union military. Minor Realms will benefit from Commonwealth Union military and civil spending and construction. Most of the non-CANZUK Realms are in semi-tropical or tropical environments. With investments in transport and communications infrastructure, these areas will be increasingly attractive for tourism and retirement. Retired pensioners would be able to draw their pensions earned in the big CANZUK states even while resident in the smaller Realms on a non-discriminatory basis, as if they were resident in their home nation, providing an additional income stream to the smaller Realms. A further safeguard against corruption and expropriation will be provided by a right of appeal to Union high courts.

12. Will the large, non-CANZUK Crown Realms be part of the Commonwealth Union?

The two large non-CANZUK Realms, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Jamaica will also be free to negotiate treaties for participation in the Union if they wish to do so. However, as a result of their comparatively large populations and substantial disparity of GDP per person compared to the CANZUK nations, they will likely be included as associate members, at least initially, according to terms of treaties to be negotiated with the Union government.

At around six millions, PNG has a significant population at a much lower income and development level than most of the rest of the CANZUK countries. Full free movement, if it were granted immediately, would inevitably generate a rush of emigrants poorly equipped for employment in the more developed CANZUK nations. At the same time immediate full membership would rapidly lure the educated minority of PNG citizens from their jobs for higher-paying opportunities in the CANZUK nations, stripping schools and hospitals of their staffs. Simultaneously, reciprocal free movement would bring into PNG a group of outsiders who would have to have full rights to buy land and establish businesses, which would in some cases conflict with local law and custom and generate friction, resolution of which would simply be beyond the institutional capabilities of PNG. An associate membership, with terms worked out in

consultation between the Union government and PNG, can provide immediate benefits and permit ties to evolve at a steady pace, with greater opportunity to anticipate and mitigate problems.

Jamaica is a more intermediate case. It has roughly twice the Gross Domestic Product per person, given as US\$5,004 (ranked 103rd worldwide) by the UN, versus PNG's US \$2,221 (ranked 137th). It has a substantially better developed infrastructure and its educational attainment is substantially higher. Large Jamaican diaspora populations live in the UK, Canada, and the USA, and many of them have adapted and prospered. Its culture, especially in music, is known worldwide and it is a powerhouse in a number of global sporting areas. It is not a nation to be trivialised or looked down upon.

Never the less its population is substantial enough, and its income disparity is deep enough, relative to the CANZUK states, that immediate unlimited free movement would have at least some of the same deleterious effects as in the case of PNG. On the other hand, at 1.6 million, its population is not that large. A transitional agreement, insuring that during an intermediate period, migrants from Jamaica to the CANZUK nations would have to have some reasonable qualifications for employment, while taking precautions against a "brain drain" out of Jamaica, might be adequate. Union police forces could lend assistance to Jamaican forces in cracking the criminal gangs that operate in Jamaica, Canada, and the UK, taking advantage of the communication lag between those countries' forces today.

13. Will the Commonwealth Union make use of "Charter Cities"?

The concept of "charter cities" as a development tool has attracted scholarly and popular interest in recent years. These are cities in developing nations where certain fundamental rights and protections are guaranteed by a power external to the local government. In practice, the idea of a foreign government thus limiting local sovereignty has raised strong objections because of its lingering twinge of colonialism. The Commonwealth Union government will be authorised to negotiate the terms of establishing such charter cities within the member states of the Union, or in the territory of associate members, or outside existing member-states but still under Union jurisdiction, e.g., just offshore from existing member territories. Such charter cities will be under Union jurisdiction, including defences. These charter cities will allow free movement and enterprise in a limited zone of land, perhaps in offshore island areas, for those communities which are not full members of the Union.

For example, the rapid advances in large-scale, low-cost water desalinisation are about to make development of urban areas on Australia's Asia-facing northwest coast far more

feasible than previously. A charter city or free zone on that coast, drawing residents not only from all over the Commonwealth Union but also from the current population of Hong Kong and other areas, would have the potential to supplant Hong Kong's historical function as a safe place under transparent administration of Common Law but within easy travel of East and Southeast Asia, and in the same time zone as Hong Kong. UK and Canadian financial firms might find it a convenient place for their principal offices in the Asian region, given the ease of moving personnel back and forth from their home offices. This might be on the Australian mainland, and part of Australia politically, or it might be just offshore, an independent polity enjoying direct membership in a Realm Union. In the latter case it would be contributing to Australia's economic well-being, and cooperating in the defence of Australia, but its inhabitants would not be participating in Australian elections or changing its political balance. There are many other possible locations and options for charter cities and free zones within a Realm Union.

14. Will countries that are not currently Crown Realms be able to join the Commonwealth Union?

Yes. If Commonwealth states other than Crown Realms, or states with no historical Commonwealth ties seek to join the Union or request associate membership, the Commonwealth Union government will be authorised to negotiate treaties governing the terms of associate membership. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and a requesting country will be admitted solely if it is deemed to be in the interests of the Union and its peoples. There will be no obligation to admit any such country to associate membership in the Commonwealth Union.

Associate membership treaties will be customised to the unique circumstance of each country that requests association. Associate membership will not necessarily grant all of the obligations or privileges of full membership. Some countries may seek an associate membership that puts them on a path to full membership. Accepting the Monarch as a common head of state will be an expected term of any treaty creating full membership in the Commonwealth Union. Conversely, some entities may prefer such an associate membership to full membership. Some states may seek membership primarily for defence in a hostile environment, yet retain the character of their local governments.

15. Isn't this just re-assembling the British Empire?

In the most important way, the Commonwealth Union will *not* be like the British Empire: Membership will be entirely voluntary, and democratically enacted. Of course, the Crown Realms together currently constitute a Union of the Crowns, as England and

Scotland did between 1603 and 1707. When the Dominions became fully self-governing in 1926, they continued to have a common law, language, culture, and many common institutions. Collectively, they continued to form a community, and were in fact all considered to be “British countries” with a common monarch. But the *de jure* union of the Crown Realms was unusually under-institutionalised given the depth of the historic and practical ties they shared. As a result, the current era has been one of excessive fragmentation among a community that has many common interests and many opportunities that can be seized only collectively.

16. Is the Commonwealth Union a completely new idea?

No. Around the turn of the last century there were a number of vocal, thoughtful advocates for a concept then termed Imperial Federation. These visionaries proposed transforming the Empire into a federal union of Britain and the settler Dominions. These advocates failed, for a number of reasons. One was that Britain was still far too dominant in numbers, wealth, and military power. Therefore, Britain would have dominated any Imperial Federation so overwhelmingly that the Dominions saw that they would have more real autonomy by becoming independent.

Another obstacle to Imperial Federation was that the technology of the day was not yet advanced enough to make it work. Advocates in the early Twentieth Century still remembered the era before mechanical transport and telegraphs. They correctly saw that there were enormous improvements in communications and transportation relative to earlier eras. The world, they thought, had shrunk so much that Imperial Federation could work. But in fact, the cost and time of transportation between Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand was still a deterrent to quick, cheap, and easy movement and communications between the prospective members of the Federation. But now technology, after a century, has caught up to the dream. The assumptions of cheap and easy communications between the parts of the CANZUK nations that were over-optimistic in 1916 have now come true in 2016. A Skype conference between London, Sydney, Auckland, and Toronto is not just cheap, it is free. And it is not just quick, it is instantaneous. Meanwhile, the disparities in population, wealth, and power among the four CANZUK partners are much smaller today.

The Victorian era was marked by the emergence of audaciously ambitious visionary figures such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Charles Babbage. Brunel envisioned high-speed trains and enormous transatlantic steamers, but was frustrated by having to work with iron rather than steel, and with low-pressure steam engines that strained to power the fast trains and massive ships he built. Brunel’s visions began to come true only a half-century later, as trans-Atlantic steamers finally caught up to the standards set

by his *Great Eastern*. Charles Babbage correctly understood the implications of machine intelligence, and envisioned an “Analytical Engine” a century or more ahead of its time. But he was frustrated by the limits of the technology of his day, trying to do with metal gears what we now do with semiconductors. As a result there was a lack of visionary support to afford the persistence that probably might have permitted Babbage to achieve a computer revolution a century early using mechanical computing engines.

Brunel and Babbage had their equivalents in the political sphere, the Imperial Federationists, men like the historian and writer J.R. Seeley and New Zealand Prime Minister Sir Julius Vogel. These men theorised that the “annihilation of distance” created by railways, steamships, and telegraphs permitted an unprecedented possibility: Turning the British Isles and its colonies of settlement into a new form of state. It would have been a globe-spanning federation of equal members governed by an Imperial Parliament. Although this vision excited a great many of the intelligent political thinkers of the day, it never came to pass, largely because the annihilation of distance offered by the technology of the day was still too incomplete to make such a scheme practical. As with Brunel’s ships and Babbage’s computers, the vision of the Imperial Federationists exceeded the available means.

The Commonwealth Union will be the political equivalent of the modern liner or computer, with the web and the jet aircraft providing the true annihilation of distance that steamships and telegraphs could not.

17. Wouldn’t the Commonwealth Union just be a “White Man’s Club”?

This would have been true had Imperial Federation, with the same membership, been concluded a century ago. However, all of the CANZUK nations have ended whatever barriers to non-white immigration they may once have had (Britain never had any). Between their aboriginal populations and the immigration of the past fifty years, all four nations have substantial nonwhite minorities. If the larger of the nonwhite Crown Realms, such as Jamaica and Papua New Guinea, chose to join, the Union as a whole will have an even more substantial nonwhite population and a number of units with nonwhite majorities. The Union could best be described as multiracial.

18. Is Commonwealth Union compatible with Canadian membership in the North American Free Trade Agreement and British membership in the European Economic Area?

Yes, provided that certain conditions are met. Version 1.0 of a CANZUK Union will likely consist of a number of customs and immigrations districts, and require document

checks for travellers, and origin-of-content declarations for movement of goods across district lines. CANZUK states would also have mutual recognition of standards; if an item were compliant to sell in one part of the Union it would be compliant in all, with a few common-sense exceptions. (Electrical goods would have to be usable with local power supplies, for example.) However it will not require visas or work permits for inter-district travel or employment, nor will it charge tariffs on inter-zone trade. This will be an interim step insuring that the close economic cross-border integration between Canada and the USA, and the UK and Europe, is not disrupted.

In order to move beyond to a Version 2.0, with domestic-like movement of goods, NAFTA and EEA or EFTA provisions will have to become applicable to the entire Commonwealth Union. The Commonwealth Union is larger in population and GDP than Canada by itself, but will still be smaller in both regards than the USA, or the rEU. Loss of free trade with Canada would be a substantial penalty for the US economy, as would loss of free trade with the UK be for the rEU. Therefore it will be in the economic interest of the USA to extend NAFTA, and of the rEU to extend its free trade area, to the entire Commonwealth Union. However, given the strength of EU and US protectionism, these developments might take some decades to accomplish.

19. Will the Commonwealth Union accede to the rights and benefits of defence treaties, like NATO and NORAD?

Probably. It will be in the best interests of all parties for NATO to admit the entire Commonwealth Union as a member, given that the two largest components are already members. Ideally, Commonwealth Union membership would require that NATO extend its defence guarantees to all Union territory. This would require negotiation of an annex to the existing NATO treaty. In the event that NATO did not extend its guarantees outside of the existing NATO operating area, the Commonwealth Union will still participate in NATO activities within the area covered by the NATO treaty. Extension of NATO to include Australia will effectively supersede the US-Australia mutual security treaty. If NATO converted itself into a global-oriented organisation, it might also consider admitting other capable members, like Japan and South Korea.

A Commonwealth Union that developed a globe-spanning military capability as described in this work would be a very powerful and useful addition to the existing NATO capabilities at a time when NATO is rearming. The Commonwealth Union's emphasis on space, cyber, and highly mobile capabilities means that its power could be brought to bear on a NATO adversary both in the European theatre and wherever else it might be vulnerable, such as the Pacific.

Similarly, Canada's membership in the highly successful North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) should be extended to the Union as a whole. This will require negotiation with the United States. However, the USA will gain significant benefits from including the entire Commonwealth Union in NORAD. North American security will be enhanced by making Commonwealth Union Caribbean territories available for a South Warning System of radar stations protecting North America, parallel to the existing North Warning System in Canada and Alaska. Certain US early-warning facilities in Australia and the UK that already effectively serve as NORAD facilities would also be formally integrated into the NORAD system.

20. Will there be a Union Constitution?

There will have to be, at a minimum, a constitutional treaty establishing which powers each constituent state was ceding to the Union, what financial obligations will be assumed by each party, which powers of taxation were being ceded to the Union, and which were being retained by constituent states, and designating the decision-making structures of the Union. Terms of affiliation and disaffiliation will be explicitly set out. In order to generate the widest possible consensus for the establishment of the Union, it will be advisable to confine the Union's jurisdiction to external affairs (foreign relations and security, primarily) and the internal functions needed to insure the efficient functioning of the Union, such as finance and intra-Union transport. A short bill of rights will establish the rights that the Union will guarantee to all its citizens, and what the Union will be forbidden to do to them. More elaborate codes of social guarantees or social issues will be left to the component states to define for themselves. It is anticipated that the different member states will follow different domestic policies, and there will be no attempt to impose harmonisation or uniformity.

21. Will there be a Commonwealth Union parliament and prime minister?

Yes. It would be possible to maintain many of the functions of the proposed Commonwealth Union with a looser confederal or treaty organisation form. However, the prospect of the creation and use of Union military forces, which over the long run will be inevitable, requires a Union-level government. Only an elected body has the accountability and legitimacy to authorise and oversee the use of armed force. Similarly, although most other governmental activity is expected to take place at the level of individual nations or states and provinces, enough activity will take place at the Union level that genuine fiscal responsibility must be exercised at the Union level. This can be done only by a directly elected parliament with budgetary responsibility.

The Westminster tradition is common to the founding members of the Commonwealth Union. Therefore, a functional Parliament will be created with relatively little contention regarding rules and procedures. The Union Parliament might have a House of Commons with one member for every 250,000 inhabitants, giving about 400 members for a CANZUK union, and a revising Senate with from one to four members nominated from each fundamental constitutional unit (nation/state/province). The Cabinet will include the Union Prime Minister, an Attorney General, a Finance Minister, a Defence Minister, a Transport Minister, and an External Relations Minister, but perhaps not many more.

22. Is a Commonwealth Union government necessary to create full free trade among its members?

A Union-level government is necessary to facilitate free trade among its members in a manner that will be accepted as legitimate by the peoples of the member states. Recent years have demonstrated the limits of action by intergovernmental agreements and international organisations where there is no responsible legislature to hold them to strict account. The international arbitration bodies, or tribunals, of organisations such as NAFTA, or the proposed TPP and TTIP in the Pacific and Atlantic regions respectively, perform a valuable function in protecting cross-border investors from arbitrary favouritism. However these bodies have also attracted much criticism and suspicion because there is no directly-elected body with real authority to oversee them. The Commonwealth Union will permit much more effective common trade and investment than a trade area like TPP or TTIP, or than a union among disparate legal systems like the EU. A Realm Union parliament, and the courts established under it, will share a common language and law, and a common cultural foundation for ideas of fairness and legitimacy. It will thus have the moral authority and acceptance than the current trade agreement tribunals lack.

23. Will there be a Commonwealth Union court system?

Yes. Most criminal and civil law will remain in the hands of existing state, provincial, national and federal courts, exactly as before the formation of the Commonwealth Union. However, there will be a Union-level court system. There will be Union Courts located at various locations throughout the Commonwealth Union. The Union Courts will have original jurisdiction as provided by any treaty, including the Union Bill of Rights, as well as Union level legislation. There will be Union Appellate Courts to review rulings of the Union Courts. There will be a Union High Court that will have discretionary jurisdiction over significant cases on appeal from the Union Appellate

Courts. There will be Revenue Courts to enforce collection of Union taxes, as well as a Court of Revenue Appeals.

There will be a Constitutional Court to interpret and adjudicate disputes between and among member-polities of the Union, and between such polities and the Union itself. This may or may not be combined with the High Court to create a Supreme Court with both functions. The Constitutional Court will also have jurisdiction over disputes between governments within the Union, including disputes relating to the terms of all intra-Union treaties. The Constitutional Court would also referee negotiations pertaining to the division of any unit of the Union.

The terms of any treaty admitting Associate Members may require the operation of Union operated courts on their territory, or the right of appeal from the local courts to a Union Appellate Court. All such arrangements will be treaty-specific.

The Commonwealth Union treaty will specify the power of the Union Parliament to establish courts. Judges in the Union Courts will be appointed by the Crown, on the advice of the Union Parliament. They will be paid by the Union treasury and will have life tenure.

24. Will there be a Commonwealth Union police service?

There will be a Union-level police service to enforce the orders of the courts, to investigate violations of Union-level law, including violations of civil rights under the Constitutional Treaty. Nonetheless, most law enforcement activity will be handled locally, exactly as it is now, in the member states of the Commonwealth Union.

One lesson to be learned from other Federal experiences is that local self-governing entities and corrupt power structures will try to overstep the bounds of their authority by informal abuse of local court and police power. A Union police force, entirely independent of local chains of command, is needed to enforce the rule of Union courts and to counteract any such local abuses.

25. Where will the Commonwealth Union's capital be?

Well, not London. At least, not exclusively. London will remain the capital of Britain, or the capital of England if Scotland detaches itself from the United Kingdom at some point. The lingering memories of colonial dependency suggest that some effort be made to avoid the suggestion that Commonwealth Union is merely a re-creation of

Empire, which weighs against locating a sole permanent capital in London. Solutions to the capital question might take one of several possible forms:

- **Co-Capitals.** One answer is to have several co-capitals, perhaps three, with a spread of Parliamentary, administrative, and judicial functions. The three principal capitals of Westminster, Ottawa, and Canberra would be the most likely candidates on the grounds that much infrastructure is already available, and although some people and functions will have to move, many will not. Functions might be divided geographically, as South Africa divided its functions between different cities, or the Parliament might rotate on some annual or longer period. Although this will bring to mind one of the EU's more pointless wastes of resources, the shift of its assembly between Brussels and Strasbourg, there is more justification for it in the Commonwealth Union case, where the parts of the Union are genuinely distant from each other. It might also be possible to reduce costs considerably by making the Union Parliament paperless from the start, as much of the cost of moving the European Parliament is in moving its large volume of paper files.
- **A new capital as central as possible to all.** This approach would pick a city with no current capital status at all, and designate it as at least the meeting-place for the Union Parliament. A Western Canadian location, for example, would be somewhere near a population-weighted centre of the Union and be within reasonable great-circle distance of all. Calgary's good existing airport infrastructure, large amount of build-able land on its periphery, and proximity to large water supplies and beautiful mountain scenery suggest that somewhere within easy use of its airport might be a good candidate. Alternatively, if Belize chose to join the Union, it would also be reasonably central, boasts sunny, snow-free weather year-round, and excellent beaches. There may be an advantage in choosing a capital that is not on the soil of any of the Big Four.

Whichever model is chosen, it will be advisable to follow the Australian model of treating the capital city or cities as independent, self-governing capital districts which will relate to the Union as if they were constituent units, ceded to the Union for the duration of their status as capitals. If they ceased to be capitals they will be retroceded to their original jurisdictions.

26. Will the Commonwealth Union use a common currency?

At first, no. There will be no hurry to establish a common currency. It might take a long time for the cycles of the various Union member economies to converge, and there is no real reason to force them to do so prematurely. There will be a Union Accounting

Unit (UAU) used to fix Union departmental budgets and taxation and contributions from the member states. The UAU will probably be calculated as a basket of the Union currencies weighted by population, GDP, or some mix, with possibly a commodity element to add stability. The Union Treasury will be responsible for calculating the value of the UAU, according to a transparent and open process. The UAU will be permissible as an alternative denomination for domestic and intra-nation transactions and accounts, with no capital gains taxation being levied on gains when converting one unit into another.

27. How will the Commonwealth Union be financed?

The Commonwealth Union will have taxing authority, to be defined in the Constitutional Treaty, which may include direct taxes, such as income, sales, or resource taxes. Direct taxes will most likely be limited in extent and number by the Constitutional Treaty and most individuals will not see a direct Union levy. The Union government may also impose mandated contributions from member states.

The Union will not be a full transfer union and it will not undertake wealth transfers between regions, groups, or generations. Any such transfers will remain at the national or basic levels.

Being aware that there is no free money, and that additional taxes drive investment, productive individuals, and commercial activity to alternative venues, the Constitutional Treaty will specify that total taxation levels should not be increased significantly. Specifically, lower levels of government will be expected to reduce their overall taxation proportionately, in compensation for the Union taking on some tax expenditures that lower levels formerly bore.

As part of the Constitutional Treaty which will need to be struck to form the Commonwealth Union, the Union government may assume and refinance part of the national debts of member states, particularly the parts generated by past defence and major infrastructure activities and projects, as those will become primarily Union activities. In return, the member-states might cede their far offshore and seabed resource rights and liabilities to the Union, as it will take on the primary task of defending and exploiting them.

28. Will there be Commonwealth Union armed forces?

Yes. Each national force now existing will remain in existence. The traditions, identities, loyalties, and histories of individual services and units are assets that should not be

dispersed or eradicated in a drive for supposed efficiency. Equipment, standards, training and pay grades will gradually converge. All-Union units will be established first in highly specialised and expensive capabilities where individual nations could afford few or no capabilities, for example advanced aircraft, space satellites, strategic forces, etc. Additionally, the Union forces will specialise early on in highly mobile forces: Airmobile infantry and armour, the large, long-range transport aircraft needed to move them intercontinentally in a hurry, and amphibious assault ships. There will be a Royal Union Navy and Air Force, and eventually one or more Union Regiment(s) in which any Union national could serve, composed of appropriate combat battalions and support units. The national forces will have primary responsibility for national defence and close-in naval defence, and will remain under national command except in general war and other specific situations provided for in the Union constitutional treaty. Union forces will have the primary role in the conduct of overseas expeditionary operations. The Union forces will also be responsible for long-range defence and for defence of the seabed and polar claims of the Union. A maritime constabulary force, the Sea Guard, will complement the national coastguards and have responsibility for deep oceanic resources and environmental protection, operating under civil command in peacetime and as part of the Union Navy in time of war and emergencies.

29. Who will be the Commonwealth Union's Head of State?

The Queen and her successors will be the Sovereign of the Union and Commander-in-Chief of Union forces. The functions of the Crown will be carried out in each nation, state, and province by Governors-General, Lieutenant-Governors, and Lords-Lieutenant as they are today, with the difference that there might be a Governor-General of the United Kingdom as well, or its constituent nations if any of them assumed direct membership. The royal palaces and estates will be considered a distinct Union territory. Regardless of the various philosophical arguments for the merit of monarchy or republics as a system, the fact remains that the Realms currently have a common head of state, and it seems problematic to take an issue that has been resolved, namely how to determine a common head of state, un-solve it, and then have to solve it all over again. Further, the track record of constitutional monarchy is in general very good, and the new Commonwealth Union is fortunate to have this form of government as its birthright.

It might be advisable to establish several comfortable residences for the Royal Family in the various distant parts of the Union, and encourage the younger Royals to systematically spend several months a year in them, making them more accessible to the people of the more distant realms. It will not be presumed that the current Monarch, or her immediate heir, should be required to disturb their routines in this manner.

30. Will the Commonwealth Union be a nuclear power?

Yes. The Union will be the successor to the United Kingdom for the purposes of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and thus will inherit its rights and responsibilities under that agreement. The strategic nuclear forces of the UK will become part of the Union forces, and its nuclear retaliatory guarantee will extend unambiguously to all Union territory. The existing forces will be redeployed in order to respond to the most likely needs on an all-Union basis, with new logistical infrastructure developed over time to support such deployments. These forces will be funded and staffed on an all-Union basis. In addition to renewing and maintaining the Trident force for another generation, the Union will develop complementary strategic capabilities that, unlike Trident, could be deployed without the permission of any other power.

31. Will the Commonwealth Union assume the foreign relations responsibilities of the member nations?

These functions will be divided as appropriate. A Union external relations service will exchange ambassadors with major powers and key international organisations. The Union will inherit the UN Security Council Seat of the UK, which will reinforce its case for retaining that seat. The Union will press for retention of General Assembly representation for individual member-nations as well, on the precedent of the separate representation for Ukraine and Belarus while they were still constituent states of the USSR. National ambassadors and High Commissioners will continue to be exchanged with neighbouring nations and ones with which particular interests are shared, and each nation will retain an independent Consular Service. However, the Union service will take over representation to nations where there is no particular national interest, or a low volume of business. The Union consular services will serve all Union nationals. Sub-units that assume direct membership might then exchange High Commissions with other Union member-states, as many seem to want the validation of such recognition.

32. How will free movement of people be facilitated within the Union?

The Union Ministry of Commerce will promote the free movement of people, funds, information, and goods within the Union. Visa-less travel within the Union boundaries for law-abiding nationals will be instituted immediately; passport-less travel will be introduced as a Union travel card is developed and implemented. Social services will be made reciprocal, so that British NHS, Canadian Medicare insurance, and Australian and New Zealand health insurance coverage will be effectively interchangeable, with a system for internal cross-payments between individual systems to prevent benefits tourism. Cross-recognition of professional credentials will be implemented. Credit rating systems

and other personal financial records will operate on an all-Union basis. Educational records will be made easily transferable. The Union Ministry of Transport will develop and encourage transport links between parts of the Union both for lower cost and higher speed and convenience.

33. How will trade and commerce be facilitated within the Union?

Corporations formed in any Union jurisdiction will be permitted to register and operate in any other Union jurisdiction without discrimination. Mutual recognition of product standards will permit any good or service qualified to be sold in any Union jurisdiction to be sold in any other, save for items or classes of goods or services specifically banned without discrimination of origin. Any form of tax-supported state aid, or tax-supported procurements will be open to all Union entities without discrimination. Disputes regarding trade discrimination between units of the Commonwealth Union will be heard and resolved in Union courts. If the UK remained a member of the European Economic Area, and Canada of NAFTA, without expanding membership to all Union states, then tracking of origin of goods between customs districts will be required, at least on an interim basis.

34. Could Scotland or other political units join the Commonwealth Union directly?

Yes. One of the purposes of the Commonwealth Union is to facilitate what the European Union claimed to be able to do, but couldn't. One stated purpose of the EU was to return power to local communities as much as possible, while handling a small number of common issues at a broad, European level. However, the European fetish for homogenisation and uniformity worked against that at every turn, as did their fundamental distrust of the national populations of their member-states. The Commonwealth Union does not seek uniformity or the creation of forced harmonisation, rather it seeks to exploit similarities where they already exist. Thus Scotland or any (or all) other basic constitutional unit(s) (e.g., British nation, Canadian province, Australian state) can become a direct member of the Union by act of the unit's legislature, or through a petition of an adequate percentage of voters, either of which would trigger a referendum for direct association.

Assuming an affirmative vote, separation negotiations are then entered into by the separating entity and the entity it is leaving. These negotiations would be refereed by the Constitutional Court of the Union. It would hear testimony, take evidence, and make binding rulings over all disputed matters in course of the separation negotiations. A fair division of assets and liabilities would be assigned according to pre-standing guidelines,

to be established in the Union Treaty. Units may also vote to leave the Commonwealth Union altogether, subject to the successful negotiation of an Agreement of Association providing for common services and privileges, as well as safeguarding the rights of minorities opposed to separation. Union courts would have jurisdiction to enforce the terms of all such treaties.

Additionally, distinct sub-units of the separating entity will themselves be entitled to sub-secession by referendum, subject to the same set of procedures for division of assets and liabilities.

35. What about other kinds of political units, such as Canadian or Australian aboriginal populations?

The Commonwealth Union may become a useful tool in resolving certain current political standoffs in Union nations. Canadian First Nation activists have often objected to dealing with Ottawa as Canadian citizens, feeling that their original treaties with the Crown entitle them to deal directly with the Crown rather than the Canadian federal government as the Crown's agent. Legally, this is not a universally accepted argument, although the tribes can argue that they never consented to the change in agents. However, their political point is stronger. It is true that there is a difficulty in the Canadian government claiming simultaneously to be the government of majority and aboriginal Canadians alike, and to represent the majority in negotiations with the aboriginals. It may be that separating the two roles, with the Union taking the role of guardian of the common interest, and the Canadian government being the representative of the majority population, may present opportunities for resolution that do not currently exist. Therefore, Aboriginal nations (including Canadian First Nations, Australian aboriginals, and New Zealand Māoris) might all have the same ability to establish (or, in some cases, re-establish) direct relations with the Crown, with the Union government as its agent.

The Union will consist of many populations with various historical relationships to the land on which they currently live. It is now widely accepted that aboriginal populations have certain historical rights in the lands they have consistently occupied. (This is complicated by situations in which various aboriginal populations have overlapping or conflicting claims.) A series of treaties and agreements in various Realms have created additional specific rights and obligations, both in reaffirming title to aboriginal groups, and in ceding title to the new communities formed by colonisation and immigration. These new communities in turn strengthen their rights by raising successive generations on the land, which then becomes a patrimony specific to that community. Other communities establishing themselves under various sovereign regimes also establish

legitimacy by successive generations of occupancy. The formation of the Union and the ratification of its Constitutional Treaty will create a new, and overarching form of legitimisation, and creates a framework for resolution of conflicting claims with as much mutual satisfaction as realistically possible. Thus, for example, in the case of Quebec voting to assume direct membership in the Union, various measures to insure the rights of the various aboriginal, francophone, and anglophone communities would be developed.

Aboriginal communities might be extended a form of sovereign recognition similar to that offered Minor Realms, as appropriate to the size of the community, subject to the constraints of the Union Constitutional Treaty and Bill of Rights. It would also guarantee their access to the outside world, both by Union reserved administration of the transport corridors to their lands, and by the Union Ministry of Transport undertaking an aggressive programme of road building and other means such as ferries to provide the transport infrastructure to end the physical isolation of aboriginal communities, which is frequently a problem. In return for these guarantees, the aboriginal communities in turn agree to permit Union corridors to transit their land when needed, with appropriate safety and environmental reviews and safeguards.

36. What about the USA?

Some parts of the US government will be unhappy with the idea of the proposed Commonwealth Union. In particular the State Department, which strongly supports the European Union, has discouraged Britain's exit from the EU and will probably oppose the formation of any alternative arrangement that will close the door on its possible return. These elements of the US government in general prefer to deal with a disparate collection of countries that are one-fifth the population of the USA (as is Britain), one-tenth (as is Canada) or smaller. A strong, prosperous Union possessing a third the population of the USA will obviously command more respect in negotiations.

These same characteristics, on the other hand, will make the Union a more welcome and effective partner to other parts of the US government. The US armed forces, for instance, will welcome the increased strength and greater interoperability of the Union's forces. Creation of the Commonwealth Union will make it easier to maintain interoperability of Commonwealth Union and US forces, as the Commonwealth Union will be more able to afford to maintain up-to-date, compatible defence systems, which is becoming a problem with the individual national forces.

The politics of admitting the entire Commonwealth Union to a comprehensive free-trade agreement with the USA, as a successor to NAFTA, will be complex, as will the

politics of a free-trade agreement between the wider Union and the rEU. However, in both cases the value of the trade with the existing Union partner (i.e., the UK and Canada, respectively) argues that it will eventually happen. The American people will most likely welcome the advent of the Union as a reliable and capable ally in a world where reliable friends are scarce.

Some subset of the US population might find parts of the Union an attractive alternative domicile, for instance if it promised greater transparency and secure recognition of rights in English-speaking Caribbean and Pacific retirement locations. Additionally, if the Union restricted extradition in cases of prosecution on vague charges of economic crimes, and extended ordinary discharge of debt to items not dischargeable under US rules, like student debt, the aspirational cities of Canada and Australia might begin to serve as default frontiers for sections of the young, well-educated US population.

In the end, however, a Commonwealth Union will likely inherit most of the individual strands of institutional relationships that already tie the US to the CANZUK nations. If that happens, the US and the Commonwealth Union will themselves effectively end up in a loose confederal relationship that is probably about as close a link as will ever come about. Although the USA is quite close in many ways to the Union nations, its political traditions and narratives are substantially more divergent from those of the Union than the Unions prospective members are from each other.

37. Why should the Union be introduced as a full state entity at an early moment, rather than gradually take on more characteristics of a state, in the manner of the European Union?

The European Union was introduced slowly and gradually because the majority of the populations of its initial member states would not have supported its ultimate goals had they been openly announced. Thus its founders' intentions were not widely disclosed, and each measure was introduced without requiring public consent or debate. This dishonesty and hostility to popular sovereignty has been one of the major causes of the EU's dysfunctionality.

Commonwealth Union must take the opposite approach. It does *not* seek ever closer union. The maximal extent of its aims -- a loose confederal state linking the Westminster democracies for collaboration in economics and defence, and built on the common political heritage of its member-states -- must be clearly communicated, and in this goal is the centre of its programme. Commonwealth Union is in fact an inoculation against the centralism of a geographical block like the EU. Distance, in this sense, is not

a bug but a feature for this Union. Rather than the tyranny of distance, patriots concerned about the continued self-governance of their nation can regard the dispersion of the member states as the “guarantee of distance”.

The logic of trade and security leads inexorably to a union having, at least minimally, the character of a state. A trade zone will eventually require protection, and the rapidly-rising cost of cutting-edge military hardware makes military integration desirable, and in the long run, essential, to remaining competitive. An integrated military, particularly one charged with maintenance of a nuclear deterrent, requires a legitimate unified political authority to make critical decisions about its use. Such an authority will have, *de facto*, the character of a state, at least minimally. Consider the prospect of deciding the response to an imminent crisis, one possibly requiring the immediate authorisation of military force, being decided by a conference call among at least three prime ministers, one of whom is almost certainly assured of having just been woken from deep sleep.

Additionally, the Union government having the *de jure* character of a state will also remove any issues about compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and will strongly suggest that the Union should inherit the British seat and veto on the UN Security council.

The existence of joint military forces inevitably raises the question of who will command and control them, particularly when those forces have nuclear weapons. A confederation with the character of a state is the only acceptable answer to the problem of command. This must be admitted from the start, and early creation of a state entity is desired to implement the purposes of the Union as soon as possible.

Just as the undemocratic character of the decision-making mechanisms of the European Union have undercut the legitimacy of that organisation, the opaque and distant processes of the international trade regimes have undercut the popular acceptance of those entities. Tribunals constituted under their rules make decisions with real impact, yet they are distant from oversight and do not rest on the sort of clear statements of state principles that characterise the court systems of the great democracies of the English-speaking nations.

Just as a proper legislative body constituted by direct elections fought by the familiar and well-understood parties of the Westminster democracies must oversee and authorise the Union’s military and intelligence actions, so must such a Parliament oversee any court system adjudicating the issues of intra-Union trade. The ability to form such a Parliament and government over its constituent member-states is a rare and unique characteristic that will set such a Union apart immediately from the European Union or

any of the big transnational or multinational entities that today make so many of the critical decisions affecting modern life. This asset should not be hidden or minimised, but rather should be brought into being at the earliest possible opportunity. Somewhat counter-intuitively, the very sentiments that cause people to rebel against the increasing centralisation of the EU work to advocate an effective, genuinely sovereign Union Parliament at the earliest date.

38. How can such a Union be forged, and what role does a Grand Bargain play in its formation?

The short answer is the classic one: “Events, dear boy, events”. That is to say, changes of this magnitude do not happen because people think it is a good idea, they happen because governments and electorates have pressing needs arise for which conventional solutions do not seem to be adequate. What those needs are is driven by events, and what events will drive tomorrow’s needs, we cannot predict with any accuracy. Often when several nations confederate, different nations have different needs as well as ones in common, and thus a complementary deal becomes possible — a Grand Bargain that solves problems together that could not be solved separately.

The great unions of the English-speaking world offer some lessons as to how and why political units come together, and what sorts of bargains have been struck to make them work. England and Scotland had shared a crown for a century, and had flirted with Union many times in those years, without forming one that stuck. Cromwell’s Commonwealth achieved unity briefly but the baby of its version of Union was thrown out with the bathwater of Puritan rule at Restoration. It took a deep, nearly existential political and fiscal crisis in Scotland in 1706 to forge a lasting Union. At that juncture Scotland’s effective bankruptcy from the failure of the Darien enterprise combined with England’s ongoing sense of vulnerability to a French invasion through Scotland, which had been given explicit form through the ongoing Jacobite insurrections and France’s maintenance of a Jacobite government-in-exile. The Grand Bargain at that point included England’s bailing out of the Scottish investor class and stabilising its financial system with English guarantees, while forming a unified government that would firmly close the door to French or other foreign adventurism.

It opened up England and its colonies to Scottish emigration and government employment. Significantly, it granted Scotland autonomy in law, education, and religion, helping to preserve Scotland as a distinct society within Union. The British Union was a conspicuous success, and withstood the major tests of the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite risings. After the 1745 rising, the Union embarked on a road-building programme that

transformed the Highlands from an almost colonial feudal backwater into an integrated part of British society.

The British Union coincided with, and almost certainly contributed to, a rising prosperity and growing international strength and influence. The pains of Imperial growth, particularly the absorption of Canada after 1763, led to attempts to rationalise a new Imperial structure, which in turn sparked a rebellion in the American colonies. After independence had been achieved, the thirteen initial colonies forced a loose and weak confederal government under the Articles of Confederation to promote free internal trade and provide for a common defence. Yet it proved inadequate to these tasks. Its Congress was made of appointed delegates from each state legislature, which gave it little legitimacy to speak for the whole of the United States, or to raise revenue to carry out its tasks properly. States began to erect barriers against interstate trade and foreign powers began to negotiate with internal factions to undermine the national project.

Some states, alarmed at these trends, sent delegates to a meeting in Annapolis, Maryland in 1786 to discuss possible amendments to the Articles of Confederation. This meeting issued a report calling for a larger meeting in Philadelphia that met the following year. Meeting in closed session, they realised that the Confederation Congress was deadlocked and incapable of reforming itself. Therefore, rather than proposing amendments within the Confederation system, they wrote an entirely new Constitution which was then put out to the individual states for ratification. They adapted the British Union's formula of a strong Union legislature with local autonomy in social issues like religion, law, and education. Having a much larger geographical area than Great Britain, however, they considered, and then rejected, a unitary state, instead choosing a federal system similar to that of the Netherlands. The Constitution's Grand Bargain was multifold. But its core was the assumption of the individual states' war debts — large and mostly in default — in return for the states turning over their claims on Western territories to the new Union. Additionally, the constitution provided for Union enforcement of free trade among the states and Union funding for internal transportation improvements.

American independence also produced a surge of settlement in Canada as American loyalists fled north to take up the land given them in compensation for their losses. A series of provinces were established. For decades, a movement to federate the smaller provinces on the Atlantic coast produced a series of meetings which discussed various plans, but never managed to push the federal idea to conclusion. Finally, a new meeting was called in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 1864 to take up the question of a Maritime Provinces Union once again. Leaders of the two major parties of what is now Ontario and Quebec, in a bold move, showed up and proposed a Union of all Canada.

Again, a Grand Bargain was called for, and one was delivered to cement Union. It included the assumption of provincial debt by the new Union, future revenue-sharing of Federal revenues with the provinces, and again an ambitious program of infrastructure improvements, starting with a railway between the Atlantic coast and interior Canada, providing for the first time an ice-free, year-round connection between interior Canada and the outside world that did not run through foreign territory. Subsequently the infrastructure guarantee was extended as the Pacific enclave of British Columbia was invited to join the Canadian confederation with the promise of a transcontinental railway within ten years. As the only other comparable railway had just been finished in the United States, taxing the much greater resources of that nation, it was a particularly bold promise, but one that was eventually made good.

Finally, the Australian Federation was driven by many of the same concerns, including a genuine security concern as German, and then Japanese colonial ambitions in the Pacific began to loom larger in the Australian vision. Intercolonial competition and rivalry was strong, with each colony levying customs barriers against the other. Transportation infrastructure was developed on a colony-by-colony basis, with each colony choosing different and incompatible railway gauges, creating a mess that is still not fully resolved. It was not even entirely clear what entities the federation would consist of, as some New Zealanders wished to be part of it, and many Western Australians were reluctant to join. An early precursor of Federation, the Federal Council of Australasia, (an intergovernmental consultative body without administrative or budget powers) even included delegates from Fiji, but not New South Wales or New Zealand.

Australia's final Grand Bargain included the familiar elements of an infrastructure promise, in this case a transcontinental railway to link Western Australia with the eastern states by land. Fiscal compromises included revenue-sharing measures between the state and federal governments, and, as with Canada, a guarantee of a mix of equal representation by population in the lower federal house, with equal representation by region in the upper house. Another element of the Grand Bargain, as was the case in the USA, was the location of the Federal capital in a neutral location. The ten-year process of negotiation and approval by state-by-state referenda culminated with the initiation of Federation in 1901.

From these examples, it is possible to draw some general conclusions about the process of forming a CANZUK or Realm Union. These include:

- Union will be discussed and debated, but will not move forward until a core of competent and dedicated leaders in the different potential member-polities begin to see that Union is a solution to immediate, real-world needs of their own communities,

and accept like-minded leaders from the other polities as peers and fellow-collaborators. A new cross-border politics will then emerge, as Unionists begin to feel a greater bond with fellow-Unionists in other nations than with anti-Unionists in their own.

- Likely principal drivers for the Union solution will be security, prosperity, and identity. The latter will emerge as people begin to prefer Union to other possible identities, such as European, North American, or Asian-Pacific.
- A Grand Bargain will include fiscal measures which may include assumption of some or all national debt by the new Union, in return for contribution of certain assets, such as offshore or remote natural resource rights. The Union will then take over the obligation to protect and patrol seabed and offshore resource areas. Solutions in other federation processes will be studied as models, such as the USA's split of offshore resource rights between state and Federal governments.
- Large-scale transport infrastructure projects, particularly ones which facilitate or lower costs of travel between parts of the Union, may be taken up by the Union. These might include development of transport corridors across the UK, Canada, and Australia, including upgraded rail and motorways, and long-distance pipelines. These corridors will be Union reservations, regulated, maintained and policed solely by Union entities, to prevent local governments from blockading or blackmailing other Union members by blocking or threatening access.
- Upgraded airports capable of serving as long-distance intercontinental hubs for major Union cities will also become Union projects. Without taking a stand on the specific merits of the proposed Thames Estuary Airport, it will be noted that such an undertaking is the sort of project that, if chosen, will logically be a Union responsibility. Such airports should also anticipate the needs of the next generation of hypersonic transport.
- Fixed links between Union members separated by straits of water will also be Union projects where feasible, over time. A Belle Isle Straits fixed link between Newfoundland and Labrador might be one such, a North Channel fixed link between Scotland and Northern Ireland another. Fast, high-capacity ferry services will be facilitated until such links could be built, and in cases where a fixed link would be infeasible at that time.
- In addition to improving fixed links in populated territories, development corridors will be created in frontier areas. A Mid-Canada Corridor project and a Northern

Australia project will be early targets, gradually establishing a new transcontinental link at high latitudes in Canada, and improving those in Australia's Top End. These will also provide expanded road access to currently isolated aboriginal communities in both Canada and Australia. Certain projects contemplated in Quebec's Plan Nord will also become Union projects, including a rail line to the mining regions on Ungava Bay, permitting summer surface transportation to Nunavut, and possibly beyond to Greenland, integrating that territory economically to the Union.

- If free movement between Realms becomes successful, substantial numbers of Union citizens will take advantage of it. These newcomers will, in sufficiently large numbers, begin to affect local demand for jobs, housing, and services. Many existing urban centres in the Union have substantial limits on how rapidly these demands can be fulfilled, particularly as green belts, land use policies, land title disputes, and similar features limit the degree to which new supply can be added. The Union government will not have, and should not have, the power to intervene in local affairs to change such policies. Rather, the role of the Union should be to encourage the emergence of "aspirational cities", particularly in currently underpopulated areas, where they can grow to provide jobs, housing, and services to newcomers from across the Union and beyond. This includes supporting the transport corridors and infrastructure to make access easy and cheap, and to provide the political structures for autonomy. Charter cities, already discussed, could provide many of the new aspirational cities, which might become separate, autonomous members of the Union. This will give such cities two valuable benefits: The autonomy needed to grow and prosper; and also insulating the existing nearby populations from the political disruption of so many newcomers becoming voters in their own jurisdictions.

Such a Union will have plenty to keep itself occupied, while leaving the government of everyday life in the familiar hands of national and state/provincial polities. At the same time it will be promoting access of the Union to all its people, and increasing general prosperity and opportunity thereby. In doing so, it will closely follow the precedents of the Grand Bargains that propelled the great Unions of the English-speaking world to prominence and prosperity over the past three centuries. Unlike the European Union, it will be going with the grain of the traditions of self-governance its member-nations share. As such it is far more likely to succeed, and avoid the political traps into which the EU has fallen.

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The Facebook page for the Anglosphere, featuring posts from James C. Bennett, Iain Murray and others: <http://www.facebook.com/Anglospherists-289168004467874>

“Brexit and Beyond: Why Americans Should Support British Exit From the European Union, and What Could Come Next”, by James C. Bennett, April 2016: <http://explorersfoundation.org/archive/jcbennett-brexitandbeyond.pdf>