THE OPENING ESSAY · PART III OF III

An Anglo Future

Seven principles for a new settlement.

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If the failed settlement survived because no one would defend the long term, a new settlement must be built by people who accept that they hold the nation in trust for those who come after them.

That obligation needs content. It is not enough to say that we owe something to future generations without saying what we owe and how a government should act on it. This essay sets out seven principles that give the obligation a practical form, and together they answer the three questions the failed settlement never asked: what we have inherited, who we are and what we owe to those who come after us.

The first principle concerns the inheritance itself and our duty as its custodians. The second and third concern who we are: how the nation incorporates those who join it and the equal law under which all its citizens live. The remaining four concern what we owe: an economy of abundance, the ambition to lead at the frontier of science, a state capable of acting and the independence to act as a sovereign nation.

None of this is a call to stand still. A civilisation survives not by remaining unchanged but by retaining the confidence and capacity to reproduce itself across generations, and the Anglo inheritance is itself an inheritance of change. A politics genuinely concerned with continuity must therefore concern itself with progress, and a politics genuinely concerned with progress must ask what it is progressing towards.

1. Inheritance and stewardship

Each generation receives something it did not create: a language, institutions, law, culture, accumulated wealth, landscapes, knowledge, customs and historical memory. The present generation is neither the owner of that inheritance nor merely its consumer. It is its temporary custodian, entitled to improve what it holds but obliged to pass it on.

For Britain, that inheritance is inescapably Christian. Christianity is not simply one private belief among many practised in modern Britain but one of the foundations on which the civilisation was formed, and it remains embedded in the constitution through the established Church of England, the monarchy and Parliament. Britain is therefore a Christian nation by inheritance, even though many Britons no longer practise the faith, and the state can guarantee equality before the law without pretending that every religious tradition played a part in creating the nation.

Legal equality does not require cultural neutrality, and equality before the law does not require equality of historical authorship. The public realm should confidently reflect the inherited national culture while protecting extensive freedom in private life.

Stewardship is also demographic. A civilisation that wishes to continue must reproduce itself, and families are the principal means through which language, culture, habits, memory and belonging pass between generations.

In 2025 the fertility rate in England and Wales fell to 1.39 children per woman, the lowest on record and far below the 2.1 needed to sustain a population without migration. Many people now have fewer children than they would like, and a society in that position has a civilisational problem as well as an economic one.

Government cannot manufacture families or prescribe how people live, but it can stop making family formation unnecessarily difficult. Most of the barriers are the failures described in Part One: homes priced beyond the reach of young couples, real wages that have barely grown, costly childcare, expensive energy and a rapacious tax system.

Demographic continuity of a historic people cannot be irrelevant to the continuity of the nation itself.

Restoring the conditions for family life is therefore not a separate agenda from economic renewal but one of its main purposes.

2. One people

If the nation is an intergenerational community capable of incorporating newcomers, the next question is how that incorporation happens. For over half a century Britain has given the wrong answer and drifted into a collection of communities that share a territory.

Multiculturalism has treated the nation as a framework within which distinct communities preserve their own identities, institutions and often their own languages, with the state recognising them as communities and dealing with them through their representatives. Integration and cohesion became the language of government after the disorders of 2001, when the Cantle report found towns whose communities were living "parallel lives". Whilst this was seen as a response to the failings of multiculturalism, the end state was the same. A population that shares an economy and a legal system without becoming one people is the thin civic nationalism described in Part Two, and its success can be measured in employment and language while separation deepens beneath it.

Assimilation therefore has to be our objective. Not multiculturalism. And not integration.

Assimilation is a process, and it does not follow automatically from residence, citizenship or the passage of time. Where social boundaries are porous, newcomers and their descendants enter common institutions, intermarry and raise children increasingly embedded in the receiving culture, and primary national identity converges across generations. That is what happened to the Huguenots in London and to the English, Irish, and Italian migrants who settled in the valleys of South Wales. Where boundaries stay closed, communities can reproduce themselves across several generations through concentrated networks, separate institutions, residential patterns and high rates of marriage within the group, so that decades of residence coexist with persistent separation.

Success depends on conditions: the confidence of the receiving culture, the permeability of boundaries between groups, the scale and concentration of settlement and how far everyday life draws people into a common national society. The valleys absorbed their newcomers because the chapel, the union, the

school and the pit brought everyone into the same institutions. Where those institutions are weak, or where newcomers arrive in numbers large enough to build their own, the same process does not occur.

Immigration policy must therefore consider scale, pace, concentration and composition to ensure it remains compatible both with successful assimilation and with the demographic continuity of the historic peoples themselves.

But Britain is not starting from a blank sheet. Immigration has already occurred at a scale and pace that has exceeded the assimilative capacity of parts of the country, so reducing future immigration is necessary but not sufficient. Assimilation must become an active national objective rather than something we hope will occur with time, and the state should use the powers available to it to encourage assimilation, remove incentives for separation, enforce common rules, make permanent membership conditional before citizenship, facilitate voluntary return and exercise its exceptional powers of removal and citizenship deprivation where the law legitimately permits.

The first task is to strengthen the attraction of the common culture, since a nation uncertain of its own identity cannot expect newcomers to adopt it. Schools should confidently transmit British history and culture. Citizenship should mark membership of the nation rather than an administrative milestone. English should be the common language of public life, and national institutions, ceremonies and symbols should reinforce a shared identity rather than continually qualifying it.

Attraction alone is not enough, however. For decades the state has accommodated difference while placing remarkably few expectations on those who settle here, and that relationship should be reversed. Settlement and citizenship should require growing evidence of participation in the common society, and government should stop funding, organising or legitimising institutions whose effect is to entrench permanent communal separation.

The principle is simple. Private difference should be protected. Public separation should have zero tolerance.

One law must actually mean one law. Where practices conflict with legitimate laws governing marriage, education, public order or individual freedom, those laws should be enforced without communal exemptions or institutional timidity. Where the law is inadequate to protect the conditions of a common society, Parliament should change it through universal rules that apply equally to everyone.

There must also be consequences for those who reject membership of the national community while seeking its permanent benefits. Before citizenship, the state has considerable latitude to make settlement conditional on conduct, language, participation and respect for the law, and those who will not meet the requirements of permanent membership need not be offered it. Non-citizens who commit serious offences or otherwise meet the legal tests for removal should be removed rather than retained because governments have become reluctant to use powers they already possess. The powers Parliament provides for deprivation of citizenship should likewise be used where their thresholds are met rather than left idle through political squeamishness.

Most of those whose families arrived in recent decades are already citizens, many of them born here, and for them the question is not settlement but belonging. For citizens, assimilation works through the common institutions: schools that teach a common core, public services that operate in English and a

state that deals with people as individual citizens rather than through community representatives. The aim is that their children and grandchildren grow up with the same primary loyalty as everyone else, and that the state stops doing anything that pulls in the other direction.

The objective is not to police private identity or ancestry but to change the incentives surrounding incorporation. Assimilation should bring acceptance, permanence and full membership of the nation. Separation should cease to receive public subsidy, institutional recognition or an assumption of indefinite accommodation.

One law. One common public culture.

Britain can incorporate newcomers. It has done so repeatedly throughout its history. But incorporation cannot mean that the receiving civilisation is expected to adapt.

Those who come to Britain enter a nation. The nation does not enter into negotiation over whether it continues to exist.

3. Liberty under one law

Part One described the causes the left abandoned: equality before the law, free speech, democratic self-government and non-discrimination. They belong at the centre of a new settlement, because they are part of the inheritance rather than an addition to it.

Equality before the law means that the state deals with citizens as individuals. It does not sort them into categories, assign entitlements by group or manage outcomes between groups, and non-discrimination means exactly what it says: no one should be advantaged or disadvantaged by the state because of who they are. The same principle that refuses communal exemptions from the law also refuses group privileges within it.

Free speech is the condition on which a free people governs itself. Every question in this essay, from immigration to religion to the powers of the courts, is one that citizens must be able to argue about openly, and a state that polices the boundaries of acceptable opinion has decided in advance which answers voters may reach. The remedy for speech that offends is argument, not prosecution, regulation or the loss of a livelihood.

Liberty in this sense is individual, but it is not atomised. People are born into families, communities, histories and nations they did not choose, and from which much of their identity and opportunity derives. The mistake of modern liberalism is not its defence of individual freedom, which should be fiercely protected, but its assumption that the autonomous individual is the only legitimate unit of political concern. The individual matters, but so do the family, the community and the nation.

The individual does not belong to the state. But neither does the nation belong merely to whichever individuals happen to inhabit it at a particular moment.

That produces a different concept of government from either libertarianism or statism. There should be a strong presumption in favour of personal autonomy, government should need a compelling reason to interfere in private life and families, communities, businesses, charities and voluntary institutions

should have substantial freedom to organise themselves. That freedom operates within an inherited order of common laws, institutions, norms, security and trust, which cannot simply be assumed and must be maintained.

A free society requires a civilisation capable of sustaining the conditions of freedom.

4. Markets and abundance

The same logic applies to the economy.

Markets decentralise information, reward experimentation and allow millions of people to pursue ideas without asking permission from a central authority, and they should remain the default mechanism of economic coordination. But markets are mechanisms rather than objectives. They cannot decide what capabilities Britain should retain, what dependencies it should accept or what it should leave to the next generation. The objective is national flourishing, and for a country like Britain flourishing should mean abundance.

Much of contemporary politics begins with scarcity and argues about how to distribute it. We should begin instead by asking why the scarcity exists.

Why should the country that pioneered the Industrial Revolution accept permanently expensive energy? In 2024 British industry paid the highest electricity prices of any member of the International Energy Agency that reports them, and no country can rebuild its manufacturing base on those terms.

Why should a country capable of building great cities make housing unaffordable for its children?

Why should infrastructure take decades to approve?

Why should technological progress principally mean importing technologies developed elsewhere?

None of these is a natural condition. Each is the product of choices, among them rules that prevent building, markets designed around scarcity and a state that has forgotten how to deliver, and choices can be reversed.

A confident civilisation does not merely administer constraints. It attempts to overcome them. Build homes. Generate energy. Construct infrastructure. Automate production. Invest in machinery. Develop new industries. Remove artificial barriers to enterprise.

An economy can grow simply because its population grows without making anyone richer, which is why productivity, output per person, real disposable income and productive national capability matter more than aggregate size. The instinct when confronted with scarcity should therefore not be to subsidise, ration or regulate it. It should be to build.

This does not give government licence to substitute political judgement for markets whenever politicians dislike an outcome. The presumption should always remain: markets by default, state intervention by exception. Intervention requires a reason markets cannot adequately account for, such as a genuine public good, a strategic dependency affecting national security, interests of future generations that present markets systematically neglect or a coordination failure that prevents a capability the nation has compelling reason to possess.

Even then, government should use the least centralising instrument that will work. The normal sequence should be: liberalise, coordinate, procure, underwrite, own.

Government should liberalise first, because much scarcity is created by rules and removing a rule costs nothing. It should coordinate where private actors cannot solve a problem alone, such as connecting new generation to the grid or assembling land for a new town. It should procure where the state is the natural customer, as it is in defence and much of infrastructure, and use that demand to build domestic capability. It should underwrite where private capital cannot price a risk, such as the first of a new kind of reactor, so that the state carries the risk without running the project. And it should own only where nothing else will secure a capability the nation cannot do without. Each step should be tried before the next, and most problems will be solved by the first two.

Government should protect capabilities rather than incumbents, welcoming technological disruption where it raises productivity even when existing arrangements are displaced.

The objective is neither a bigger market nor a bigger state. It is a richer, more productive and more capable nation.

5. Science and the frontier

Abundance alone is not enough. Anglo civilisation has never simply preserved what already existed but has explored, experimented, discovered, invented and built, and the country of Newton, Watt, Faraday, Darwin, Maxwell, Turing and Whittle cannot plausibly make technological caution one of its defining characteristics.

Artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, advanced nuclear power, quantum technologies, autonomous systems and space are becoming the foundations of economic and geopolitical power, and Britain should intend to lead in them.

It starts from real strengths. Its universities are among the best in the world and its researchers continue to produce discoveries that change whole fields, but too often the discovery is made here and the value is captured elsewhere. DeepMind, founded in London, was sold to Google in 2014, and Arm, whose designs power most of the world's smartphones, was sold to SoftBank in 2016. World-class research whose companies, intellectual property and industries migrate abroad is an incomplete success.

The task is to reconnect scientific inquiry, invention, capital, enterprise and national capability, so that discoveries become companies and companies can scale here with British capital behind them. That requires energy and infrastructure that permit production, and government procurement that supports strategic capabilities where necessary.

Technological sovereignty does not mean producing everything domestically. It means possessing enough scientific, industrial and technological capability that Britain remains an actor rather than merely a customer in the technologies shaping the future.

The Industrial Revolution transformed landscapes, industries, cities and human existence, scientific discoveries repeatedly overturned inherited assumptions and new technologies destroyed old industries while creating new ones. The civilisation survived these transformations because adaptation was part of its character.

The answer to decline is therefore not simply conservation. It is creation.

6. A capable and accountable state

None of this requires an omnipresent state. Britain already has one of those.

The contemporary state is large, expensive and intrusive, yet often unable to accomplish difficult things. It regulates extensively but builds slowly, and it consults, assesses, reviews and administers while infrastructure takes decades to deliver. The question is not whether the state is large or small but whether it is capable and whether it answers to the people it governs.

Democratic self-government means that questions of public policy belong to voters and to the representatives who answer to them. Over three decades many of those questions were transferred to courts, commissions, regulators and international bodies, and a government elected to act now finds that it cannot. Authority should return to those who can be held responsible for its use. Some functions should remain independent, such as the setting of interest rates and the judgment of individual cases, but independence should be the exception that is justified, not the default that is assumed.

Accountability without competence is not enough, however. A government that regains the power to decide must also rebuild the capacity to deliver, which means restoring the skills inside the state that were run down or contracted out.

Government should withdraw from areas where individuals, families, communities, voluntary institutions and competitive markets can act effectively, and it should become dramatically more capable where national action is genuinely necessary. Borders must actually be controlled. Infrastructure must actually be built. Defence procurement must produce military capability, energy strategy must produce energy, planning decisions must be made and the rule of law must be enforced.

A society with strong families, communities, businesses and voluntary institutions should need less continuous administrative intervention, not more. But when the nation decides collectively to accomplish something, the state must possess the authority and competence to accomplish it.

The objective is an older Anglo balance: a strong nation, a free society and a capable but bounded state.

7. Sovereignty and the Anglosphere

Britain became powerful partly because it was open to the world, and trade, ideas, people and capital have repeatedly strengthened the country. But openness is a strategy. It is not a moral absolute.

Energy systems, defence production, critical infrastructure, computation, communications and strategic technologies create dependencies that markets alone cannot evaluate. Sovereignty does not require autarky, but it does require enough capability to act independently when circumstances demand it.

The same realism should shape Britain's international orientation. The Anglosphere is neither an alternative empire nor an exercise in historical sentimentality but the wider family of English-speaking societies substantially shaped by the institutional and cultural inheritance of this civilisation.

The United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand share unusually deep linguistic, legal, institutional, cultural, intelligence and military relationships with Britain. Each will pursue its own national interests, as should we, but in a world increasingly organised around great powers and large

blocs these relationships are an extraordinary strategic asset. Defence, intelligence, artificial intelligence, scientific research, advanced technology, capital and trade offer obvious areas for deeper cooperation.

Britain should remain globally engaged, but as a sovereign nation that knows what it is, what capabilities it requires and what interests it intends to advance.

How the principles fit together

These seven principles are not a list of separate commitments. They describe one nation from its foundations outwards, and each depends on the others.

The first answers what we have inherited. A nation that knows what it holds in trust has the confidence to ask newcomers to join it, and without that confidence assimilation fails however well it is designed.

The second and third answer who we are. One people requires one law applied equally to every citizen, because a law that refuses both communal exemptions and group privileges is what makes joining possible. Assimilation fails where the receiving culture lacks confidence, and it fails where the state treats people as members of communities rather than as citizens.

The remaining four answer what we owe, and they connect directly back to the first three. Cheap and abundant energy allows industry to produce, production at scale raises output per worker and higher productivity raises real wages. Rising wages and plentiful housing allow young people to form households and raise the families they want, and those families transmit the language, culture and loyalties on which the nation depends. A growing economy with affordable homes also makes assimilation easier, because people who share workplaces, neighbourhoods and prospects are drawn into a common life.

The same productive base pays for defence, sustains the capability that allows Britain to act without permission and supports institutions strong enough to resist capture. A capable state is what allows borders to be controlled and infrastructure to be built, and so it underpins every other principle.

Run the chain in reverse and the past two decades come into view. Energy scarcity constrained industry and weak productivity held down wages. Stagnant wages and unaffordable homes delayed families, and fewer families deepened reliance on immigration at a scale that strained assimilation. A state that could neither build nor control its borders lost the confidence of those it governed, while dependence on imported energy, capital and technology weakened sovereignty.

A nation that cannot build cannot house its young. A nation that cannot house its young cannot reproduce itself. And a nation that cannot reproduce itself will not remain independent for long.

A civilisation that ceases to create eventually becomes incapable of preserving what it already possesses.

Receive, Improve, Transmit

This is a governing philosophy that provides a test for government.

Does this strengthen the ability of the civilisation to reproduce itself?

Does it increase the inheritance available to the next generation?

Does it expand national capability or deepen dependency?

Does it create abundance or administer scarcity?

Does it strengthen a common national culture or encourage fragmentation?

Does it expand individual agency or unnecessarily extend administrative control?

Does it enable Britain to shape the future or merely adapt to decisions made elsewhere?

We must ask the larger question:

Are we increasing the capacity of this civilisation to flourish across generations?

Sometimes that requires conservation. Sometimes liberalisation. Sometimes state action. Sometimes restraint. Sometimes openness. Sometimes a boundary.

The instrument is secondary.

The objective is not.

Ultimately, the new settlement is the politics of stewardship.

We did not create the civilisation we inhabit. We inherited its language and landscapes; its laws and liberties; its Christian inheritance and institutions; its accumulated knowledge, wealth and technology; its culture, traditions and historical memory.

We inherited a country built by people we will never meet. And we hold it only temporarily. That creates an obligation between generations.

The present generation is entitled to change its inheritance, but not to treat it as though nothing existed before us and nothing matters after us. We should judge ourselves partly by what we leave behind.

But continuity does not require immobility. The Anglo inheritance is one of exploration, invention, enterprise, adaptation and construction. To inherit that tradition faithfully is not merely to preserve what previous generations built. It is to recover their confidence that the future can be made.

That is the distinction between nostalgia and inheritance.

Nostalgia asks us to admire what our ancestors achieved.

Inheritance asks what we are going to achieve ourselves.

Our task is neither to dismantle our inheritance nor preserve Britain as a museum to its former greatness. It is to hand on a civilisation stronger, more prosperous, more capable and more confident than the one we received.

Receive what was handed to us.

Improve what we inherited.

Create what does not yet exist.

Transmit something greater.

Sources

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