

Trumped America and Brexit Britain are both calling the bluff of the established order



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Brothers in arms?

Is it "Brexit plus plus plus", as Donald Trump himself described his own victory before he had won?

There is no pointing talking about detail yet. We know virtually nothing about what President Trump will actually do; nor does he. (Come to think it, we still don't know much about what our final Brexit arrangements will actually involve, either.)

It could be that a Brexited Britain and a Trumped America will build the new Anglosphere trade community of eurosceptic dreams, but don't bank on it.

What is common to both cases is the break for freedom. It was said that no woman could be Prime Minister of Britain, but we chose Margaret Thatcher. No black man could be President of the United States, but America chose Barack Obama.

In some ways, a vote for Donald Trump, as for Brexit, is a bigger defiance: it questions the policy assumptions of the whole post-1945 system.

In June, a majority of British voters decided that it is not self-evidently better – though we had been taught it for 50 years – to be governed by a partly foreign bureaucracy rather than our elected representatives.

On Tuesday night, a majority of American voters decided that free trade feels like a bit of hoax and NATO's commitments don't mean what they say and global climate-change agreements damage America and an economy run by bankers and central bankers is not bringing good wages for ordinary workers and 'diversity' doesn't offer much if (as is still true of most Americans) you happen to be white.

The Brexit view is a good deal more coherent than the Trump one. Brexit's leaders, for example, want to open up world markets rather than put up new tariff walls. But both share a desire to bring power home to the nation's own citizens. Both recognise that everything is different now.

Part of the great bluff of the Washington elites and their Europhile cousins is that there is only one sensible way of doing things and they, being the experts, can tell the rest of us what it is. But since 2001 in relation to security, and 2008 in relation to money, their way doesn't look so sensible.

Does Mr Obama's deal to let Iran off the hook about nuclear weapons feel outstandingly rational? Does Angela Merkel look wise to have let in 1 million Middle-Eastern immigrants? Does reinforcing the euro seem like the way of the future after its imposition has impoverished the younger generation right across southern Europe? A growing constituency calls the bluff of the established order.

Once you start on this road, establishment disapproval only makes you feel stronger. Why vote for an elderly groper with strange hair and no political experience? Why incur the anger of the 27 other EU member states by Brexiting?

Partly because of seeing the pursed lips of the powerful when you do so. The only person who piped up to say the emperor had no clothes was a child: being electoral naughty boys proves to be fun.

It is not within the power of electors to run their country. It *is* within their power to point out to the self-righteous mighty when they are wrong. That is what has happened, first in Britain, now in America. By that logic, Mrs Clinton had to lose to Mr Trump.

I can think of at least one difference between Brexit and Mr Trump's administration. The former will be led by a woman who didn't even vote for it, the latter by the man himself.

The British situation may be the better, because it is less likely to inspire false hopes. It wouldn't take all that many errors for Mr Trump's vision to turn into Brexit minus minus minus.

