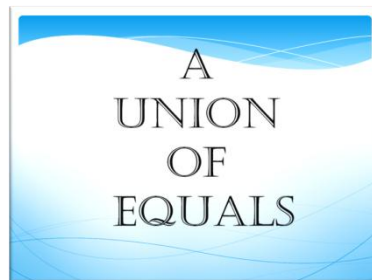
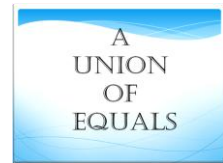


A UNION OF EQUALS

A Blueprint for a new and equitable Union between
England and Scotland

Summary





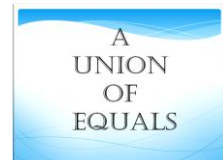
“The latest Ipsos Mori poll found that 59% of Scottish Voters want two referendum questions ... so the majority of Scots who currently favour a constitutional halfway house will have no clear way to register that preference with a single “clarity-creating” question”,

(Lesley Riddoch, The Guardian, 2012)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/apr/05/phoney-war-scottish-independence-goes-on>

“What is exceptionally troubling about the situation that appears to be developing is that debate could be stifled and the people of Scotland may not be provided with the opportunity to consider and debate all the options that are available to them. This is a dangerous game for all parties to be playing as there appears to be a growing groundswell of public opinion in Scotland that wishes to see a more open and extensive debate take place. Many people in Scotland wish to consider a wider range of options than just the two that some politicians wish to offer, the current Union or independence. There appears to be a real danger that politicians will hijack the debate and ignore the wishes of the people who will be impacted by its conclusions”

“It will be a Union that satisfies the desire of most Scots who wish for full independent control over their own affairs, whilst also meeting the desire of those who wish to maintain a Union between England and Scotland”



The Referendum on Scottish Independence is Driving the Need for Radical Change to the Relationship between England and Scotland

The Union between England and Scotland is not fit for purpose

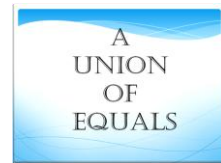
The Union is broken. It has virtually no impact on the people of England and it is of no importance to them; it is irrelevant. The effect of the Union on Scotland has been much more profound. It has had a devastating impact on Scottish development and the health of the Scottish economy; it has led to a steady decline in prosperity for the people of Scotland; it has provided Scotland with little long term value.

Radical change is necessary if the Union is to be preserved

Independence is the obvious solution to these problems for many Scots; however, many other people believe that the Union is worth preserving. To meet both desires, radical change is necessary. This radical change will not be achieved by simply devolving more powers to Scotland; rather, a substantial re-balancing of power between England and Scotland is required.

A new Union is required - a Union of Equals

This radical change should take the form of a new and equitable Union between England and Scotland in which both partners will have an equal voice. It will be a Union that satisfies the desire of most Scots who wish for full independent control over their own affairs, whilst also meeting the desire of those who wish to maintain a Union between England and Scotland. There will be clearly defined national powers and unified powers. Each nation will have full control over its own national affairs, and each nation will have joint and equal control over unified affairs. It will be an innovative Union built on tried and tested frameworks of government. It will be a Union fit for the 21st century and beyond, it will be a Union of Equals.



A Union of Equals - A Blueprint for a new and equitable Union between England and Scotland

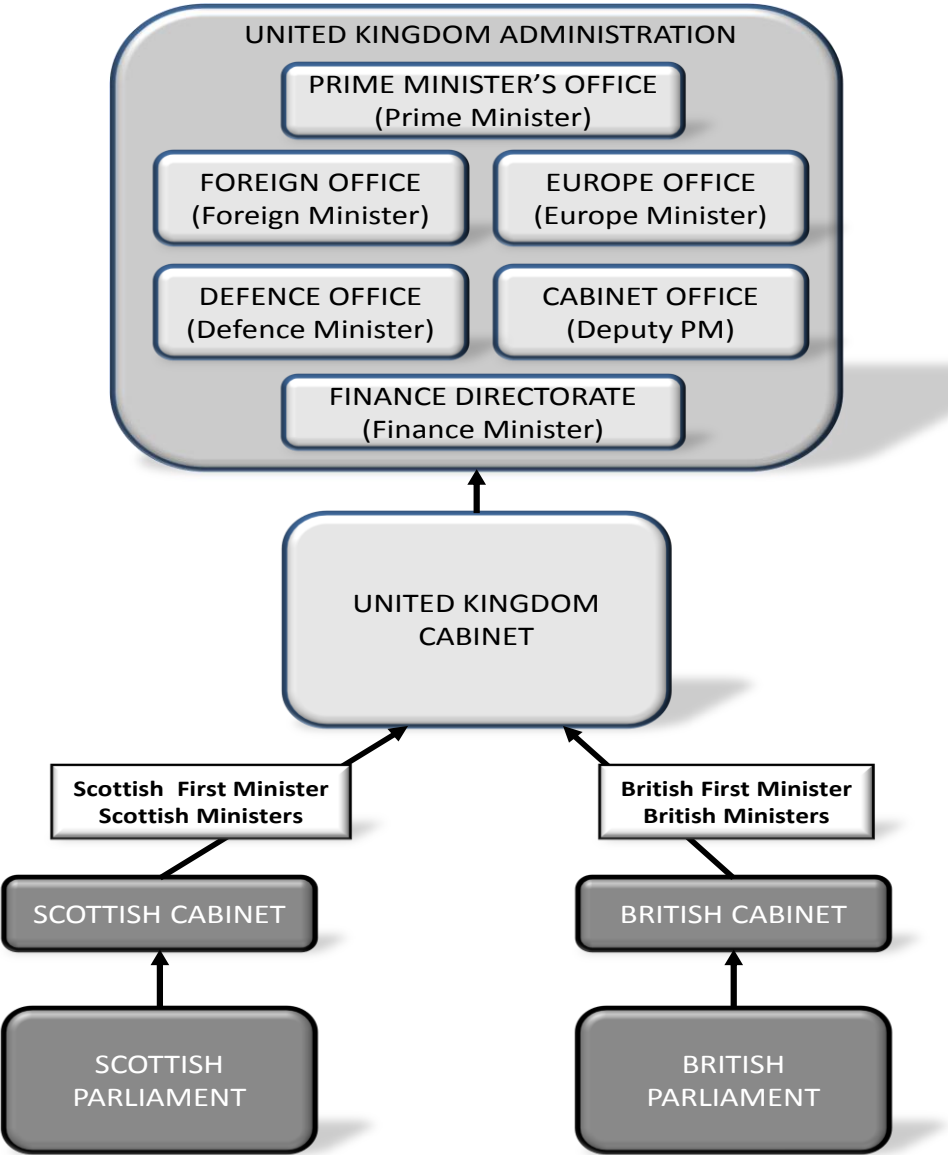
In July 1705, the Earl of Mar proposed to the Scottish Parliament an act for a treaty of Union with England (Fry, 2006). In presenting this draft treaty Mar stressed that the negotiation would be between equals, the two independent kingdoms of England and Scotland. Sadly, the Union treaty that resulted in 1707 was far from being a union of equals; it was a very inequitable agreement that saw all power and authority move to England. As Herman (2001) commented, “*by signing the treaty of Union, Scotland’s political class was committing suicide ... yet this was exactly what London and the Scottish commissioners expected them to do*”. The Acts of Union were passed much to the dismay and ire of the majority of the population of Scotland and many Scots considered it to be an act of treachery.

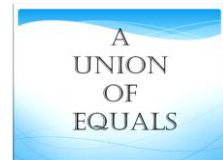
Like most marriages, the Union between England and Scotland has had its ups and downs. There have been successes and there have also been failures, but today the marriage faces, in the form of an impending referendum on Scottish independence, one of its greatest challenges and divorce is a very possible outcome. One of the root causes for this situation is the inequitable nature of the Union. Today, Scotland appears to be in decline and despite the efforts of the Scottish Government, United Kingdom (UK) Government policies appear to be doing more damage than good. Some would even argue that the UK Government appears to be turning a blind eye to the damage that its policies are doing to the development and prosperity of Scotland. This situation was commented on recently by William Rees-Mogg in the Times (Rees-Mogg, 2012) who observed “*the City of London has already overtaken Scotland as a force to be reckoned with in the UK ... Scotland is on the way down, while London is on the way up*”. The simple conclusion that emerges from this assessment is that the Union between England and Scotland is no longer fit for purpose.

For some, the solution to this problem is quite straight forward, it is independence; Scotland should take full control of its own affairs and destiny. For others, however, the solution is not so clear cut. Many Scots would prefer to maintain a Union with England but with many of the inequities of the current Union being removed. In the debate that is currently taking place on Scottish independence many politicians are attempting to drive the conclusion towards a straight yes or no decision. This could be a grave mistake. Many of the Scots who wish to see the Union change, not disappear, could well select the yes to independence option if there is no likelihood of significant improvement being made to the current Union agreement.

This presents a real dilemma for those who support the unionist cause. How can unionists persuade the people of Scotland that they should vote to retain the current Union when it is clearly not fit for purpose and is damaging Scotland’s development and prosperity? For Unionists the most sensible course of action would be to propose a new Union, a Union fit for the twenty first century and beyond, a Union that enables both partners to develop and thrive, but most importantly the union of equals that Mar envisaged in 1705. This blueprint provides the basis for such a Union, it proposes a confederated Union. It is built on principles and practices of government that are already tried and tested; it proposes radical change but not revolution. Above all else this blueprint proposes an equitable union between England and Scotland that will endure; it proposes a Union of Equals.

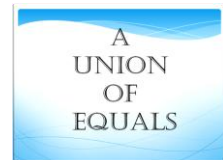
*Proposed Structure for United Kingdom Government in a new Union
between England and Scotland*





The Key Elements of the New Union

A new and equitable Union between England and Scotland	A Union based on fairness and equality; both partners will have an equal voice
A Union that will satisfy the desire of most Scots who wish for control over their own affairs	A Union that will satisfy those who wish to maintain a Union between England and Scotland
Each nation will have full control over its own national policy and legislation	Two national parliaments that will approve all unified legislation
Unified Defence, Foreign, and European policies and legislation	A United Kingdom Cabinet divorced from the lifecycle of national parliaments
A Union built on frameworks of government established in the European Union	A Union that could be extended to include all the nations of the UK
The answer to the West Lothian question	The end of contentious block grant funding for Scotland



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A full version of the “*A Union of Equals*” proposal can be downloaded from the A Union of Equals website