In a referendum on June 23, 2016: 51.9 percent of the British electorate voted in favor of the UK’s withdrawal (Brexit) from the EU. The reasons are varied, and many were surprised by such ‘unintended consequences.’ However, Britain is setting a new global strategy to escape the regionalism of integrated Europe by choosing traditional ‘splendid isolation.’ Nonetheless, Britain could not immediately leave the EU; it must first conclude a withdrawal agreement in accordance with the procedure in Article 50 of the Treaty on the European Union. In this process, strong opposition within British society will pose great challenges, accompanying numerous other barriers to overcome. Following the Supreme Court ruling on January 24, 2017, the UK government recently completed the required parliamentary approval process before initiating Brexit negotiations with the EU. This paper concludes that Britain is indeed coupable of opting to return to nationalism based on sovereignty rather than peace, coexistence, and solidarity in Europe.

Keywords
Brexit, United Kingdom, Britain, European Union, Referendum
I. Introduction

On June 23, 2016, British voters made a historic decision by referendum to withdraw from the European Union (“EU”) with 51.9 percent votes in favor of Brexit. (Table 1) At that time, most expressed their surprise to these ‘unintended consequences.’

Table 1: Results of the Brexit Referendum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (Leave the EU)</th>
<th>No (Maintain EU membership)</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The debate on Brexit was ignited by the election pledge of former Prime Minister David Cameron. In 2013, Cameron pledged to hold a referendum on the UK leaving the EU. Two years later, on May 7, 2015, the Conservative Party won a clear victory in the general election. During the campaign period, Cameron reiterated his determination to fulfill the pledge. Subsequently, on June 9, 2015, the House of Commons passed the European Union Referendum Act (2015) for holding a referendum on the UK’s withdrawal from the EU by a landslide vote of 544 to 53.

Despite this decision, the British showed sharply divided opinions on Brexit. Britain had to suffer severe internal disturbances due to extreme political and social conflicts and confrontations. On June 16, 2016, a week before the referendum, a member of the Labor Party, Helen Joanne (Jo) Cox, who was strongly opposed to Brexit, died after being shot and stabbed multiple times by a right-wing fanatic. This incident seemed to trigger a surge in British public opposition to Brexit. However, even her tragic death did not decisively turn the direction of the British public opinion against Brexit. In the referendum on June 23, against all expectations, more than half of the British electorate voted in favor of Brexit.

The referendum’s results sent shockwaves not only through the British community, but also through the other 27 EU member States and countries around the world. British citizens who opposed for Brexit, accused Cameron for the situation

---