

*A Time for Audacity:*  
*How Brexit Has Created The CANZUK Option*  
James C. Bennett, 2016, available on Amazon as a Kindle book

Kwan, born in Hong Kong, 1994,  
today, in 2036, lives in New Victoria, Australia



HK Democracy Demo with Colonial Flag

In one of New Victoria's high-rise office buildings, the Asian Trade Statistics Service Pty. Ltd. has an office suite on the seaward side. In it, Kwan, a slender, short woman entering middle age sits at her desk, positioned to enjoy the ocean view. The walls are decorated with the usual collection of framed diplomas, certificates, and photographs, mostly of the expected variety. One picture stands out. In it, a young woman sits at the edge of the roof of a high skyscraper in a densely-built urban environment. She is simply clad in shorts

and T-shirt, but on her face she wears the mask of the grinning, mustachioed Guy Fawkes that once was seen only at English Fifth of November revels, and a generation previously was a staple of youthful political demonstrations.

A similar mask — actually, the very same one — is fixed to the wall on the left side of the photograph. In the young woman's hand, stretching out over the chasm between the skyscrapers, is a flagstaff flying the Blue Ensign, with the Union Jack in the canton, and in the opposite quarter, a shield, supported by a lion and a dragon, and bearing three Chinese junks under sail — the old colonial flag of Hong Kong. At the bottom of the canyon between the buildings, a great crowd surges through the streets, and above the crowd is a sea of the same Hong Kong flags, and many banners inscribed in English letters and Chinese characters in equal proportions — the slogans of the Hong Kong Democracy Movement.

The young woman in the photograph, of course, is Kwan in her youth, and the photograph was taken on July 1, 2014, at a mass demonstration of the Movement. She keeps it now in its position of honour as a reminder of the great odyssey that brought her from the roof of a skyscraper in old Hong Kong to an executive suite in a skyscraper in a new city off the coast of northwest Australia, under a Blue Ensign that echoed the old colonial flag she once had waved in defiance. To the right of the photograph is a framed Hong Kong colonial flag, cousin to the one in her hand in the photo.

Kwan, like many of her fellow Hong Kong demonstrators in the photo, continued to protest in various ways in the years that followed. However, the fate they feared for Hong Kong continued to creep in year after year. China enjoyed the golden eggs of the Hong Kong goose too much, and was not so stupid as to chop its head off. They continued to hope that Taiwan could be coaxed and pressured into reunification, and so long as that hope remained alive, they knew that Hong Kong's fate would be viewed by the Taiwanese as an indicator of their own fate under Beijing rule. Besides, the fate Hong Kong once feared — to be reduced to the Mao-suit-clad clones of the Cultural Revolution waving Little Red Books — was replaced by a more subtle outcome. They would be slowly drawn into the modern Chinese system of state crony capitalism, where favoured families and dynasties used a combination of state bank loans (that would never be repaid), state contracts, and state pressure on competitors to prevail. Instead of visible repression, critics and opponents of this system would be gradually ignored and excluded from the public arena.

This was in fact the fate of Hong Kong in the late teens and twenties of the century. As Kwan left university and began to build her career as a business analyst, she found that she did well enough, but many opportunities that might have been hers had a way of fading away without any indication of why. Comparing notes with her colleagues in the dissident movement, however, it became clear that having been active with the Democracy Movement as a student remained a long-term barrier to high advancement in

Hong Kong. The most timid, the ones who kept quiet, learned to express the “love for China” that was the key to advancement.

Although she loved her Chineseness and loved Hong Kong, Kwan began to visit other countries with large Chinese emigrant populations and began to consider them as candidates for emigration. She had developed considerable knowledge and skills as an analyst of East Asian business, and found that she would not have a problem getting a job, or immigration status, in any of the big business centres on the Pacific Rim. Most other cities seemed cheaper and less crowded than Hong Kong, except perhaps Tokyo, so that was not a problem. The North American Pacific cities — Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, were appealing for their vitality and large Chinese communities, but the litigious business culture and unwelcoming immigration and tax authorities of the USA were off-putting. Vancouver was better in those regards, but it was still a long aeroplane journey to most of the business centres she would need to deal with in person. Singapore was appealing in some ways, but, having come from one isolated city-state, she was not eager to move to another one that was effectively un-defendable against any hostile power.

When she had first considered Australia, her work would have required her to be based in Sydney or Melbourne. Although not as distant as North America, it was still a long flight to Tokyo or Beijing from those cities, or even back to Hong Kong or Singapore. Even before Union, Australia felt much safer — more distant from the PRC, with a decent military, and with more likelihood that the USA would honour its defence commitments if needed. After Union, it felt even safer, what with the Trident deterrent force on patrol in the Pacific, and Australians frequently holding the Union Defence or Foreign Ministry portfolios. But still, the distance was a concern.

On those initial visits to Australia, she was barely aware of the existence of its Northwest. She would see occasional media reports of the new Union transport and energy projects slated for the area, and as a business analyst she was aware of more and more investment going there. The introduction of large-scale nanomolecular seawater purification in the New Victoria project first came to her notice as a big deal, even a transformative development. The contracts for the New Victoria airport, with its 5,000 metre main runway, similarly struck her as a sign that something was going on.

But it was not until she had a meeting with one of the big London-based financial firms at their newly-inaugurated New Victoria office that she saw how close the Northwest was in flying time to most of the cities she dealt with. Hong Kong was five hours, as opposed to Sydney’s eight, even with the old-fashioned subsonic aircraft. Singapore was a little over three hours, as opposed to Sydney’s seven. Jakarta was a mere two and a half, as opposed to Sydney’s six and a quarter. Davao in the southern Philippines was a mere three hours, which undoubtedly accounted for the large number of Filipinos in blue-collar jobs and the prevalence of Filipino restaurants, which oddly enough reminded her of being in Los

Angeles. In brief, she saw that a great many of her business trips would be shortened significantly over a location in eastern Australia.

From the moment she landed, she had seen the telltale activity of a frontier being developed. Already, a second runway was under construction, and the main terminal was being expanded. Almost every person she dealt with at the airport, the hotel, and the little services she patronised seemed to be run by somebody who had just moved from somewhere else, and every street seemed to have as many buildings under construction as finished. Every building she entered seemed to smell of freshly-poured concrete or fresh paint.

But it was not until her business had been concluded and she was dining with her hosts that she started to see the scale of what was happening. Most of the office's personnel had just been transferred from London, and of course they appreciated the ease of the move — medical and school records from London were fully compatible with local ones, while the price of housing was a fraction of what they had experienced in the old capital. After they finished dinner, which not by coincidence had been at a newly-opened branch of an excellent Hong Kong restaurant, the party moved to one of the hosts' home, a spacious bungalow near the sea, with a salt-water pool in the rear garden. Although the day had been hot, the evening breeze had begun to cool things down, and drinks on the patio near the poolside made a pleasant end to the evening. To her shock, the entire cost of the house was less than the tiny high-rise flat she owned in Hong Kong.

The next day, before she left, she had begun to price properties in New Victoria. She found an agent, a Hong Kong emigre, who specialised in serving her fellow emigres. They flicked through images and visited several model flats and houses in new developments — almost all the available stock was new construction, since so many people were new and so few had sold yet. She realised she could easily afford a small flat without selling her current property back home, and many Hong Kong people had done so merely in order to establish a foothold overseas “just in case”. In fact the high-rise development she bought into was, like many, particularly aimed at Chinese buyers, not just in Hong Kong but in the PRC and Taiwan as well. Size was not so important, but the fact that the flat required almost no maintenance that was not taken care of in the condo fees, and was wired so that it could be controlled remotely by digital command, were all attractions to overseas buyers. After comparing a few options, she quickly signed for her final choice.

The agent also assisted her with citizenship issues. She had checked into Union immigration rules when she had looked at Vancouver as a possible location, and she knew that on their points-based system, modeled on the old Canadian and Australian systems, she should be able to qualify fairly easily. However, the agent also informed her about a provision of the New Victoria Immigration District Act. As she had been born before the handover of Hong Kong to China, she had the status of a British National

(Overseas), a status that her parents had confirmed by having her registered as such at birth. The Northern Australian Immigration District had more open rules for immigrants than the Union at large, and one such rule gave Union citizenship to BN(O) status people who agreed to abide in the District for five years, at which time it became an unrestricted citizenship.

The rules did not require that one physically reside in the District continuously during that time, only that a residence be maintained, and that any work undertaken in the Union be based in the District. Thus it became the perfect solution for Hong Kong people who wished to maintain a foreign foothold and foreign passport in a relatively nearby and accessible place. Not surprisingly, New Victoria developed a large Hong Kong element early on, and the restaurants, shops, and other effects of that emigration convinced Kwan that she would be comfortable and happy there. Victoria was a double pun for most of them, reflecting not only the Australian state that bore its name, but the district of Hong Kong as well. She began to move more and more of her business there, and found that as London and other global financial firms accelerated the move of their Asian business operations there, demand for her particular skills grew as well. Soon she found that her stays in New Victoria grew longer, and her returns to Hong Kong began to resemble visits. And, perhaps the final indication, she begins talking to her parents about them buying property in New Victoria as well.

It was also in New Victoria that Kwan met her husband. Also a consultant, in his case a specialist in import regulation into the USA, Travis was an American who had grown up in Phoenix and who had spent many years flying between Los Angeles and Asian business centres. As New Victoria had started to grow, he found that its short flights back to his customers were increasingly an attractive alternative to the long trans-Pacific ordeals on which he had cut his teeth. Accustomed from childhood to heat and desert views, and happy to have the ocean at his doorstep at a fraction of the price of Los Angeles property, Travis began to spend more and more time there as well. It was in fact on a flight to Singapore that he chanced to sit next to Kwan, as they discovered that they had a surprising number of interests and outlooks in common, while their differences made them mutually intriguing. When, the following week, they found themselves on the same flight from Hong Kong back to New Victoria, they took it as a sign, and soon both decided to make New Victoria their headquarters.

Like Kwan, Travis discovered that he had a shortcut to Union citizenship, in his case the fact that his mother had been Canadian by birth. As she had grown up in the USA, she had not mentioned it very often, but he discovered that, unlike the US authorities, the Union immigration services would work hard to bring a person they considered likely to benefit the Union into the family, and made it easy to recognize his inherited Union citizenship. As Travis started to meet more American transplants, mostly in his search for a Mexican restaurant that served decent enchiladas, he discovered that a non-trivial percentage of New Victoria's population was in fact Yank, and particularly Yanks from

the Southwestern states. Accustomed to the heat and desert living, entrepreneurial by nature, and increasingly tired of the wearing litigation and ever-more-complex and frustrating American tax and regulatory system, many were finding the New Victoria Immigration District a welcoming new home. New Victoria's cultural mix began to include both Hong Kong and Mexican cuisine, and a professional baseball diamond joined the cricket oval in the city's sporting complex. A concerted effort was made to introduce the maguey cactus to the Kimberly, with the hopes that local distillation of tequila might soon commence.

Travis and Kwan are undecided about having a family, as their businesses keep them very busy. However, the cost of living in New Victoria is low enough that Kwan has the option of taking a few years off, if they want to go that route.

As she sits in her office, enjoying the sea view, she sometimes looks at the picture of her twenty-year-old self and contemplates the twists of her life. She still misses Hong Kong, although enough of what she had liked about it has relocated itself to New Victoria. It is only eleven years now to the fifty-year limit of the Chinese government's constitutional guarantees. Kwan is still part of the descendant organisations of the Democracy Movement. She knows that the guarantees have already been eroded, although they were not entirely ignored. However, Beijing's pronouncements on the question of extending them have been vague and uncertain. They swear that they will do nothing that "will undermine the city's prosperity." But they refuse to say exactly what the new arrangements would or would not be, although they have stated that they would extend the guarantees, "with just a few changes." Occasionally she feels guilty about abandoning Hong Kong and feels that she should be there fighting for it. But more and more she finds herself thinking of New Victoria as her home, and Australia, and the Union, as her country. She looks at the picture of herself in her mask and with her flag. Then she looks at a recent picture of herself and Travis at the beach in New Victoria, with the Union flag and the Blue Ensign of New Victoria, so similar to the old Hong Kong flag, flying in the background. She wishes Hong Kong well, but she feels safe and happy in her new home.

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The book contains three sections:

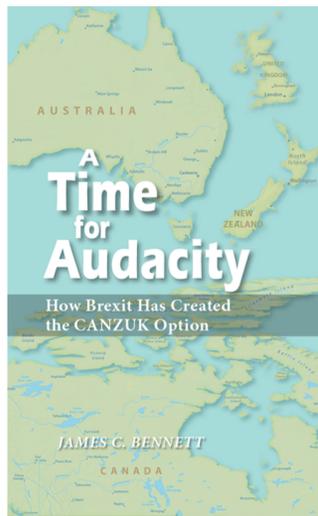
- 1) An introductory essay by the author;
- 2) A FAQ, comprising a reference design for the proposed union;
- 3) Stories of life in the Union, year 2036.

The thirty-seven questions answered in the FAQ, and the introduction to the first edition (pre-Brexit): <http://explorersfoundation.org/archive/jcbennett-cu-faq-1.0.pdf>

The current, second edition, of the book is post-Brexit, with a new introductory essay.

*A Time for Audacity:  
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post-Brexit second edition, published on Amazon 24 Feb 2017  
the difference (substantial) between the editions  
is the introductory essay and the title



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Reviewed by [Andrew Roberts](#),  
Amazon, June 18, 2016

“Highly impressive, well-researched and well-written.  
Bennett is virtually the creator of the modern Anglosphere concept,  
and this book superbly sums up its attractions for the United Kingdom.  
As important as it is timely.”  
5.0 out of 5 stars