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Informace o písemných přijímacích zkouškách

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Anglický jazyk

Rishi Sunak's White House jolly can't mask the fact that Brexit Britain is a fading power

The Americans know how to make a prime minister feel special. It isn't hard. Saying "you are special" or words to that effect usually does the trick. It helps to say it in the White House, within earshot of the British press corps.

Westminster hacks and Downing Street aides, most of whom are unhealthily obsessed with US politics, love a Washington summit for the same reason that Harry Potter fans queue to visit the Warner Bros studio in Watford. Standing on the stage where the magic happens is its own reward.

That makes Rishi Sunak a cheap date for Joe Biden at this week's summit. The US president can bestow the normal diplomatic courtesies, while conceding nothing of strategic substance. Downing Street then tells friendly journalists that the two men bonded over baseball, or some other shared cultural enthusiasm, or that their wives did. The prime minister flies home with burnished credentials as the leader of a very important country indeed.

The bar for summit success has been set low. It helps that the prime minister isn't Boris Johnson or Liz Truss, whose bellicose Brexit methods sabotaged transatlantic relations. By negotiating the Windsor framework, easing frictions around Northern Ireland, Sunak atoned for the offence that Biden summarised crudely, but fairly, as "screwing around" with the Good Friday agreement. Sunak's mission to Washington is also mercifully free of unrealistic speculation about a US-UK free-trade deal. This was an obsession for Brexit enthusiasts. Opening new vistas of transatlantic commerce was meant to outweigh any downside to withdrawal from the European single market. The economics of that proposition never added up, but it was a comfort to Eurosceptics, whose paranoia about London's submission to Brussels fed a delusion of parity with Washington.

Donald Trump nurtured that fantasy. His successor has kiboshed it. Biden's economic strategy is based around lavish government support for domestic industries, tax breaks for investment and supply chains rerouted to assert US strategic primacy. That buries the model of globalisation that Brexit ideologues had in mind when mapping their buccaneering adventures on the high seas of international trade.

Sunak is a disciple of the small-state, anti-intervention school of conservatism. He finds Bidenomics perplexing for that reason alone. But it also highlights the terrible error of quitting the continental bloc in which Britain, by pooling resources with European partners, had a chance of keeping pace with the Americans.

If economic competition in the years ahead is going to be an arms race of industrial subsidy, the UK will be outgunned by Brussels and Washington.

True or false?

- 1) The Americans like their prime minister and think he is special. F
- 2) Harry Potter fans like to visit the Warner Bros studio in Washington. F
- 3) British journalists like US politics too much. T
- 4) Because the US president and UK prime minister both like baseball, the visit was a success. F
- 5) Boris Johnson and Liz Truss did not improve the US-UK relationship. T
- 6) Sunak comes to Washington to negotiate a free-trade deal with the US. F
- 7) Donald Trump was keen on a free-trade deal with the UK. T
- 8) Biden's economic strategy is based on globalisation. F
- 9) Sunak and Biden agree on their economic policies. F
- 10) The EU and Washington are prepared to subsidize their industries more than the UK. T

Find these words:

- 1) *n* the state or condition of being equal, especially as regards status or pay. PARITY
- 2) *v* confer or present (an honour, right, or gift). BESTOW
- 3) *v* informal decisively end or reject (something). KIBOSH

- 4) *n* a false belief or judgment about external reality, held despite incontrovertible evidence to the contrary, occurring especially in mental conditions. DELUSION
- 5) *n* a writer or journalist producing dull, unoriginal work. HACK
- 6) *adj* (especially in a business context) high-risk and adventurous. BUCCANEERING
- 7) *n* a body of people engaged in a particular activity. CORPS
- 8) *n* causing someone problems, especially by acting unfairly or indecisively. SCREWING AROUND
- 9) *adj* demonstrating aggression and willingness to fight. BELLICOSE
- 10) *adj* sumptuously rich, elaborate, or luxurious. LAVISH