

# The loss of Conservative leaders

My years in the Conservative party have seen several leaders destroy themselves politically through a fanatical commitment to the EU. The odd thing is they have adopted this stance when it has annoyed many members of the party and evoked strong opposition from some Conservative MPs. Worse it has done considerable damage to the country and its economy, leading to a loss of confidence by voters generally.

John Major destroyed his leadership by insisting on crippling the UK economy by putting us into the European Exchange rate mechanism. The resulting boom bust undermined the Conservative reputation for economic competence and put the party out of office for 23 years.

William Hague refused to take us out of the pro federal EU grouping of the EPP which annoyed supporters and added to his tribulations. His slogan of in Europe but not run by it was not convincing as it was not backed by a policy to get powers back. He won back just one seat in 2001 after the disastrous result in 1997.

David Cameron argued on the wrong side in the referendum and lost, destroying his Premiership. He could have stayed neutral or backed Leave and led us out in good order after the result. I never understood why he thought Remain would win or why he let them run such a nasty and negative campaign.

Mrs May appointed advisers who clearly wanted to recreate many of the features of our membership of the EU despite the vote to Leave. Her obstinate commitment to an unacceptable lock back in Treaty which the public has decisively rejected has led to the breakdown of her authority. Cabinet members campaigning to become leader need to now create the vacancy they crave by telling her she cannot continue. She will be the third PM victim of trusting the EU too much in ways which lose the trust of the UK people.

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## Mrs May's latest presentation of the Withdrawal (Delay in leaving) Treaty

Not a word or comma of the Treaty has been changed. The PM has long given up on any idea of renegotiating the Withdrawal Agreement. As it remains the same Agreement I trust Parliament will give the same answer, and vote it down. I will certainly continue to oppose it. Better still would be to get Mrs May to resign now. If her only policy is an Agreement the public and Parliament have roundly rejected, it is difficult to see the point of her staying in office.

Today she says she will table a bill and allow Parliament to amend it over

the customs union, single market, second referendum and the rest. Most of these things would need negotiation with the EU and fall later in the process if and when the Withdrawal Treaty is approved. It would be a deeply damaging way of negotiating our future with the EU, having made far too many concessions in the Withdrawal Treaty.

The suggestion that Parliament could legislate for a second referendum is a particularly damaging idea. Up to this point Mrs May has always opposed this with many good reasons to do with our democracy and the promises all made prior to the Peoples vote on the EU in 2016. I assume many more Conservative MPs will now join in voting against should this proposed legislation be brought back to the Commons.

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## My contribution to the debate on the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2019

**John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** This is a travesty of proceedings. This is a major debate about the future of our country. This is a massive bill, committing us to making huge payments to the European Union, which we voted not to make anymore. It of course warrants a debate on the Floor of the House and a full vote of this House. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Stone for the enormous work that he has put in. His case stands completely unanswered today by the hapless Minister asked to represent the Government on this occasion. My hon. Friend made it clear why he thinks the statutory instrument is defective, and why the proceedings pursued by the Government did not live up to the constitutional standards that we expect. There may well be a serious legal challenge in the courts following these proceedings.

I urge the Minister to go back to the Prime Minister and to think again. We did not vote in the referendum to delay our exit beyond two and a bit years, which was forced upon us by the rules and regulations of the treaty we were leaving. We did not vote to leave one treaty in order to sign up to two new and even worse treaties, the first of which has singularly failed to get through this House on three separate occasions and is universally condemned by most voters, remain and leave.

We need a Government that understand the mood of the British people. We need a Government that believe in democracy. We need a Government that understand that the British people voted with good purpose to leave. Almost three years on, they are appalled that we, their elected and collective representatives in this place, have collectively done everything in our power to delay,

prevent and impede a proper leaving of the European Union.

The Committee should vote the statutory instrument down. It should unite in condemning the procedures being pursued. It should recognise that it has been packed to do the Government's work, which the public do not want it to do. I hope that the Committee does the decent thing and surprises us all. I fear it will not, but I trust that people outside this House will note that some of us came to make the case they wish us to make. Some of us stand up for democracy, and we are appalled by the proceedings.

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## A short Committee meeting with a big consequence

Sir William Cash, I and others opposed the delay to our exit from the EU when the government embarked on it. We complained about the way the government agreed to the delay on the terms offered by the European Council and rushed it through in UK law by a Statutory Instrument that was not even debated. Yesterday, after much delay and argument, the government allowed Sir William a ninety minute debate in a committee where there was a secure opposition and government majority to approve the Statutory Instrument anyway. I am grateful to him for securing this debate and for submitting an important legal case about the way the government pushed through delay to our exit.

Many of us attended the Committee though we had not been included as members of it because we wished to put the case against delay, and to support Sir William's legal case concerning the imperfections of the Statutory Instrument which in his view made it void. In the Commons any MP can attend and speak at a committee, though only those made members of the committee can vote. Time did not permit speeches from most of those wishing to speak, though a series of lively interventions made sure the case for exit did not go unheard. I was allowed a couple of minutes at the end of the proceedings.

I said that it was sad day for Parliament when something of this magnitude fell to be debated in a small committee over just 90 minutes, As it entails the spending of additional £7bn or more on EU contributions, and submits us for many more months to EU laws and requirements, it should be debated by the whole House and voted on by every MP. I drew attention to the growing gap between many members of the public and Parliament over honouring the referendum decision. Many voters believe MPs should keep their pledges from the 2017 General Election when both Conservative and Labour promised to get us out of the EU by 29 March 2019 in accordance with the laws Parliament passed and the wording of the EU Treaty. I explained why our democracy needs us just to get on with it, to leave. When we voted to renounce the EU Treaty we did not vote to lock ourselves into two new Treaties.

The conventional media decided to ignore these heated and important exchanges

between pro Brexit MPs and the combined ranks of the Conservative and Labour establishments. Labour simply failed to speak up for leaving and would not oppose the government.

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## Safer junctions and better traffic flows?

I had a good meeting on Friday with Councillor Pauline Jorgensen of Wokingham Borough Council and her officers dealing with roads and traffic. She has ideas to cut congestion, improve safety and get the traffic flowing more smoothly. These things do take some time to design, plan and put into the budget.

I talked to her about various ideas for junction improvements as much of the delay and danger occurs at road intersections and where people need to cross the traffic as pedestrians. She is keen to make a difference to her portfolio as Executive member for roads and transport.

I would be interested to hear from constituents their ideas for how local roads and junctions could be improved, both by short term fixes and by longer term more substantial improvements. I have passed on some specifics to the Council for consideration. The general ideas that might help include

Short term/lower cost changes

Change light priorities to give more prominence to main roads with heavy flows

Change traffic light sets with single direction flows into sets allowing both direction flows for more of the time

Introduce good traffic sensors on all light sets, allowing reversion to main road as green for off peak, with red on the main road only when there is traffic on the side roads coming into the junction, and allowing flexed times for busy routes proportional to traffic.

Change road painting to allow segregated right turn lane where space permits

Indicate left turning on red by filter light where possible

Extend two lane queues where space permits rather than one lane

Ensure there is plenty of parking, avoiding parking on main roads in ways which impede flows. .

Encourage schools to make safe arrangements for car drop off and pick up of pupils off the main road

### Short term dearer proposals

Replace light sets by roundabouts where possible

Create safe bike and pedestrian routes off the main highways

Have sufficient safe pedestrian crossings geared to light phases at light controlled junctions.

### Longer Term proposals

Extra road bridge over east west railway line in Wokingham as on the current plans

Improved capacity on Earley peripheral and at Loddon roundabout

More by passes of villages as with Shinfield, Arborfield and Winnersh.

Completion of a good east -west vehicle route for local traffic

Extra capacity on A 329M/A3290