

Mundell urges Sturgeon to drop referendum threat “once and for all”

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David Mundell has urged Nicola Sturgeon to take the threat of a second independence referendum off the table once and for all.

He called on the SNP leader to use her party conference next week to make a clear statement abandoning plans for a second vote on removing Scotland from the UK.

If she fails to do so, he says electing Ruth Davidson as Scotland’s First Minister will be the only way to guarantee lifting the threat of another divisive referendum.

In his speech to the Conservative Party conference in Manchester, Mr Mundell said:

“The arrival of a dozen new Scottish Conservative MPs at Westminster in June confirmed something Ruth Davidson has been saying for a long time now.

“Scotland is NOT the SNP.

“The myth was all too easy for the nationalists to peddle when they held 56 of Scotland’s 59 seats.

“But no longer.

“It was never true and the election proved it.

“Indeed, the election showed just how badly out of touch Nicola Sturgeon is with public opinion.

“Instead of addressing the declining standards in Scotland’s schools, instead of tackling the pressures and missed targets that dog Scotland’s NHS, instead of building our way out of Scotland’s growing housing crisis, Nicola Sturgeon subjected Scotland to a year of political game-playing as she sought to turn the EU referendum into an excuse for a second independence poll.

“I’m glad the election result finally forced her to put her constitutional campaign on hold.

“But for how long?

"Nicola Sturgeon is already saying she "doesn't know" when she wants to hold another referendum.

"Not if. When. The truth is this: For the SNP, it will always be about securing another independence referendum.

"Forget the democratic decision of 2014.

"Forget the busted economic case for tearing Scotland out the UK.

"Forget the fact that people in Scotland do not want it.

"Just keep fanning the flames of grievance.

"We're told a second independence referendum is on the back burner.

"Well, it's time Nicola Sturgeon took a fire extinguisher to it so Scotland can get on with what really matters.

"I hope she takes the opportunity to do so at her party's conference in a few days' time.

"If she won't, we will.

"No-one else. Week in week out we see Scottish Labour flip-flopping on the constitution.

"The only way to guarantee the threat of a second independence referendum is swept off the table once and for all is to install Ruth Davidson as Scotland's First Minister."