

Funding the Future

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The [Guardian](#) has reported that:

Theresa May is struggling to summon enough political courage to admit there will be difficulties in Britain's exit from the [European Union](#), according to the head of the senior civil servants' union.

Dave Penman, general secretary of the FDA, said the prime minister's inability to talk openly about the complexity of Brexit could lead to a breaking point in Whitehall as staff struggle with an immense workload on limited resources.

They added:

Penman, who represents senior civil servants, who cannot speak directly to the media, said May appeared to be leading a government that could not cope with any discussion about problems of implementation, as it was interpreted as a criticism.

"It is pure politics that is defining the Brexit debate and forcing May to say this is not a big, difficult job, and it is all in hand. Ministers lack the political courage to admit how complex and time-consuming this will be.

"When anyone pops their head above the parapet — former permanent secretaries, ex-cabinet secretaries, [the Institute for Government](#) — and says this is going to take a long time and its complex, they are immediately shot down and accused of betraying the will of the people.

"The politics around Brexit are the biggest risk to Brexit. The government is clearly in a situation where they are trying to deny the complexity of it," he said.

I am entirely convinced of this. The government is in total denial of the scale of the political issues it faces.

The first of those issues is its own forthcoming political crisis when people realise that any viable Brexit deal will mean that many of the things they thought they were voting to change, like immigration, will continue to happen.

The second of those crises is on economic policy: Brexit is going to impose massive direct and indirect cost on government that will challenge Tory budget sensibilities to their core. There appears no appreciation of this, let alone a plan to deal with it.

And the third is the threat of appearing incompetent. The chance that there will be a Brexit solution in two years is remote. When that becomes apparent the government will look hopelessly out of control, largely because it will be.

The Brexality of the next few years is that they will be chaotic. I applaud Dave Penman for saying so. I hope people are taking note. I am quite sure that was not the will of the people. Nothing will persuade me that they voted for chaos for no gain but that is what they are likely to get.