

When Brexit turns nasty

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It's not often that I agree with Gideon Rachman, who writes for the FT. This morning I do. He has [written a column](#) suggesting there is a third choice on Brexit. There are hard and soft varieties. To these can be added the train crash variety, which he thinks likely.

If we do Brexit, and one has to hope that politicians might still see sense as disaster looms, this is easily the most likely form. We already know Theresa May has said no to a £50 billion settlement with the EU. Rachman sees this as the first negotiating block and so likely to derail discussion that nothing much will happen thereafter. The consequence will be getting to departure point with absolutely no on the ground agreement on how trade might take place, with chaos then ensuing. And the cost will, for all the bravado of ministers, very largely fall to us simply because we will have no choice and other nations will. That gives them all the negotiating hand, whatever we say.

I am well aware that this will be dismissed by those who think leaving the EU is no more complicated than leaving the pub at closing time. The reality of the shock coming our way is going to be all the more severe as a result. As will be the on the ground political reaction, which worries me, greatly. And that's the point Rachman missed, concentrating as he does solely on the FT's normal areas of concern. My doubt is that the Tories will be able to manage or direct that anger, largely because they aren't proving competent at much else. That's when Brexit will turn very nasty. And why parliament needs to be prepared, now.