

# Is the incompetence of May and Trump deliberate?

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I argued yesterday that the UK is [now rudderless](#) because of May's willingness to change policy on a whim in an attempt to retain power. Her ability to shift position for no other reason than appeasement of whoever appears her most immediate threat is quite extraordinary.

Unless, of course, it is compared with Trump's ability to deny the meaning of all he says, even when he cannot deny having said it. Yesterday he claimed the comments made about Putin on Monday were all just a mistake. Who doesn't, after all, say 'would' when they mean 'wouldn't'?

Leave aside for a moment the idea that both are just expedient. Leave aside too the idea that they are people of such little principle that they can renege on themselves without a moment's hesitation. Dismiss too any suggestion of incompetence. Maybe all such ideas are far too convenient. And come to that, just exactly what May and Trump may want believed.

Suppose instead that the aim really is instability: that they read Naomi Klein's 'Shock Doctrine' and thought they'd get themselves some of that.

I've never wanted to believe that there were those who would create chaos for its own sake. But if you really wanted to destabilise liberal democracy, why wouldn't you do just that?

We know democracy is in retreat, and not just as an ideal. The pretence that it exists in Russia is just that; i.e. a pretence. Within the EU it is in retreat in Poland and Hungary. The two party systems of the US and UK have always been vulnerable. Suppose they fall? And suppose the fall is already in planned progress?

I don't want to accept this possibility. But there have been other possibilities in my life that bitter experience has required that I address. The possibility that the process of democratic failure in the UK is much further advanced than I had thought possible is one that I have to, at least, consider possible. The time has come when it would be

negligent not to do so.