

May has no-one to blame but herself

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It is impossible to avoid discussion of Theresa May's humiliation in Salzburg this morning. Every paper seems to be carrying the story. The lame and unworkable Chequers plan for Brexit has been resoundingly rejected. The recriminations and excuses have begun.

Most such accusations appear to focus on the question as to how May's advisers could have let her reach this point. Others suggest the EU is being utterly unreasonable in not bending to her wishes. Both suggestions are wrong from the outset.

The first assumes May does what her advisers do. But we know that she does not do that. She ran the Home Office on the basis of her own team, not the official one, and tried to do the same at Downing Street until that team had to be sacked for planning the last, disastrous, election for her. There is no reason to think she listens to her current advisers. If May can't think for herself she is not fit to be in office. I think she made this mess despite, rather than because of, her advisers.

And that's true with regard to her attitude to Europe as well. She is not a team player. And certainly not clubbable. The rules of engagement that come from the experience of participation probably pass her by. Many of the disasters from her time at the Home Office indicate that. And I strongly suspect that she does not recognise the need (I stress, need) for the EU to close ranks and stick to rules when under existential challenge, as it is from Brexit. Of course they were not going to move far from known behaviour patterns, which was why it was always essential to have followed one of them. But we aren't.

To put it another way, May has no one to blame but herself.

Her premiership has always been about kicking a can down a blind alley. She's nearly reached its end now.