

## What next? My guess

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What now seems a very long time ago, [on 19 June 2016](#), I wrote about what I thought would happen in the event that the country voted for Brexit. Of course, I did not get everything right, but I did predict that we would end up with a torrid blue on blue mess as a result of Tory infighting, and that is where we now are. I also predicted that we would leave, and that after doing so - which would be calamitous - there would be a need for a coalition dedicated to:

- \* Electoral reform
- \* House of Lords reform
- \* EU readmission on revised terms
- \* A national economic plan.

That government would, I suggested, seek a mandate for no more than two years. Then there would be new elections and a referendum on the terms for re-admission to the EU.

I happen to still think that is what may well happen in the longer term on this issue - I predicted this for 2020. But we have to get there first. So what might happen before we get to such a position?

I have to say, I can offer no more certainty than anyone else. As I write the country is expecting Michael Gove's resignation, and the demise of Leavers in government as they abandon the mess that they have created. But what happens thereafter is speculation. But, given that I have never ducked from such activity, I am going to offer my guess.

First, just about every Tory Leaver will leave government. That might include Gove, Hunt, Mordaunt and Javid, each fancying their chances as May topples.

Secondly, May will topple, but will stay as interim prime minister as that is what the rules require.

Third, the Tories will suffer infighting of a sort never known. Who might emerge as Leader is anyone's guess. I do not rule out Dominic Grieve except for the fact that the membership is Leave inclined, which leaves Give the most likely. Except for the fact that who could trust him?

Fourth, the November EU Summit will not happen.

Fifth, the EU, looking into an abyss that it would rather not face will offer to extend the Article 50 notice period. May will accept, even at the cost of including the UK in the EU elections next summer. The reasoning on all parts will be that a new UK Tory government (they cannot be forced from office at present) must be given the chance to negotiate for itself, and without Article 50 extension that would not be possible.

Thereafter? Then it gets harder. A Leave Tory will try to renegotiate. The EU will not wear it. A new impasse would be reached. Article 50 would be extended again and a new referendum will be offered. The question will be whether to accept the deal on the table (no one could ignore it) or stay. I cannot see a leave option getting through the Commons.

The likelihood is that the vote would be stay.

But suppose, instead, that somehow a vote was offered that compared no deal and the deal now on the table? That vote would be the deal on the table. I have no doubt of that. 25% to 30% would vote no deal: the rest would be pragmatic compromisers.

Is there an option where we get to leave with no deal, as one rather excited Leaver said to me was the only possible outcome now? I cannot see it. Not with no more than 15% of the Commons, very few of the Lords and a majority of the country not wanting it: there is no chance of that. And that is most especially because the EU will seek to avoid it, hence Article 50 extensions.

What then? I'm told on the grapevine that Leavers will not accept this outcome: civil disturbance is likely. I think that is possible. Hence the route to a coalition; a national government after an almost inevitable general election as the Commons fails to agree again - or is pulled down by such a coalition acting to do so. Then there will be the fundamental reforms to make sure that UK politics will never again present people with three options in England and Wales that almost no one finds especially palatable. The Scots are in a different place, of course.

And I should add, in all this the move towards another Scottish referendum is almost inevitable, and likely to pass - just to escape the mayhem.

Who will lead that Coalition? Caroline Lucas, most likely. Precisely because she would not be from any major player in it.

And if that all sounds like wild fantasy, maybe it is. But we've not been here before.

And there's one but I do suggest is taken very seriously. Right now, the need to prepare for disorder should be high on the government's priorities: the risk is real.