

May is trashing the country I live in. I have a right t...

Published: January 13, 2026, 8:21 pm

I try not to do anger. I do not always succeed. I admit that. But I try. I find it helps.

Except for yesterday. Then I did not try. Because it would not have helped. May's delay of the so-called 'meaningful vote' was worthy of anger.

This country is, by default, leaving the EU on 29 March. And now we have no decision on whether or how this might happen until 12 March.

Let's just put this in context. It's a small context, but it's indicative of the scale of the issues arising. Any UK driver of a UK registered car on the continent of Europe, including in Ireland, will require a green card and an EU driving licence on 30 March if we leave at 11pm on 29 March. Both take at least 14 days to apply for. Given the uncertainty and rush in the event of No Deal they may take longer. And right now there will be, at most, 16 days to get these documents if it becomes apparent late on 12 March that we are leaving the EU. This creates a near impossible scenario that is bound to be profoundly disruptive.

But, for the sake of appeasing the dogmatically irresponsible fringes of the Conservative Party Theresa May is forcing the people of this country into many of these impossible positions.

There no good reason for this: the EU will not be changing the deal they made with May on the basis of her red lines. Why would they? Why should they? It's her deal. No brinksmanship will change that. And the chance that the Commons will blink and now approve that deal is as remote. They made their position clear: this is not an acceptable deal because the redlines were in the wrong place.

May is not, then, pursuing a policy of brinksmanship. She is instead pursuing an utterly reckless policy of denial. And the denial is of the fact that she is the one who created this mess. And that she is the one perpetuating this mess. And that she is not the one to get us out of this mess.

The option I would like, which is the renunciation of Article 50, is not, I know, on the

table at present. Politically too few are in favour of this a present. I am realistic enough to accept that this may never happen.

But there is also no desire to do No Deal either. Nor was it something that was ever on the agenda during the referendum, as Give confirmed to Marr yesterday: there was always going to be a deal according to those who led the Leave campaign.

But there is no deal that can be approved now. And no time to agree one on the basis of new red lines.

And this impasse is the cause of my anger. I think that wholly justifiably the whole country can be furious with a prime minister whose own stupidity (it is hard to suggest an alternative explanation) has created this position.

Looking back in history to think of a precedent my family concluded over dinner last night that the only one we could think of was Charles I really not believing that he was actually going to lose his head until the morning that it happened. He got no reprieve because he would not change his position on his divine right to rule. May will get no change to the deal she has negotiated precisely because she has not changed her red lines and so no change is possible. And her refusal is as obdurate as that of Charles. Stupid people in pursuit of a goal that is utterly unacceptable to their country should not be put in positions of leadership within it. These two were.

But things are worse now than they were on the morning of Charles' death. There was a plan then. And there was a succession. The role of government in society was also significantly smaller. May's folly is so much worse precisely because it impacts on all in this country in so many ways. Her culpability is all the greater as a result. Not least because there is no succession of any sort.

There is no viable deal possible on 29 March now.

And there cannot be a No Deal, surely? Can that really happen because a stupid prime minister willed it and Parliament would not stop it?

So what can happen? Only an Article 50 extension can work now. Coupled with the toppling of May and a new prime minister, or better still, a government capable of taking negotiation forward.

In 2016 I suggested that this would need to be a government of national unity with three tasks. The first would be agreeing a deal. The second would be agreeing electoral reform so that this should not happen again. The third would be agreeing the foundations for a new UK economic, social and political consensus to tackle climate change. I would now add a fourth. Very clearly a new constitutional arrangement for the UK is required.

I am not sure who could lead this government. But that's what we need.

And I am angry. Because I very much doubt we will get it.

May is trashing the country I live in.

Dammit. I have a right to be angry about that.