

When England cannot provide there is no case for a Union...

Published: January 13, 2026, 8:46 pm

Misha Glenny has an [interesting article in the Observer](#) this morning. He considers afresh his view of the Union, and to cut his narrative short, realises that England prevailed over its immediate neighbours because it was the economic powerhouse amongst them. Although he does not quite say it, he appreciates it never played a dominant social role, and the politics is always open to dispute. But on the economy it was not just size that made England the master: it out innovated in ways that delivered results that secured acquiescence to presence in a United Kingdom (and I am aware this ignores many individual cases).

From this premise he leaps, with little difficulty, to an obvious, if again understated, conclusion. If post-Brexit England will be not be just bruised but actually broken, and that is my view of what it will be which it appears that Glenny shares, then what remains of the reason for the Union? The obvious argument is that there is none.

Whether Northern Ireland or Scotland realise this first is open to debate: it may be one or other by no more than a length in my opinion. Wales may be a few more lengths behind, but it will come in, albeit third. Whatever the ordering the reason for leaving the Union will be the same. The economic justification, which has always overcome the political and social reasons for separation, will have gone. And on that basis division if the Union becomes inevitable.

March 29 is about much more than leaving the EU. It is the very obvious beginning of the end for the UK. The only question is how long it takes. But that England will shrink to having a sphere of influence it last knew in the 13th century, and maybe (if French possessions of that time are taken into account) the eleventh century, is inevitable.

This could be described as sobering.

In the light of the current political and chosen economic malaise of the UK it could also be described as appropriate.

And even this does not guarantee a future for the Conservative Party.

That is May's legacy.