

What a way to ruin a country

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Friday's are teaching days for me this term. I like teaching. I like students. They seem to like me. Although that said, I am not sure that Friday's, teaching and students always mix as well as they might. Students seem to have an MP's attitude to Friday afternoons: they'd rather be somewhere else. And today most MPs will be in their constituencies, because Brexit cannot keep them legislating. What I do hope is that time away from Westminster gives them some time to reflect on what we may have learned this week.

First, No Deal is a non-starter.

I have to say I think a People's Vote is as well, at least right now. Maybe not forever, but certainly right now.

Then, Parliament can't even decide to decide what it wants.

But it does know it wants to delay doing that, with the EU's permission.

And in the meantime it fully expects to reject May's deal again next week.

After which she will just have to plead for an extension on the basis of saying something.

But she will not be following Vince Cable's precedent by announcing her departure, which is a shame because her Commons performances were even worse than his this week, and his were not good.

Despite which, I think he pretty much held his party together, and that is the last thing the Tories did. To describe them as dishevelled and split asunder is to be overly kind. There is literally no discipline left. And no apparent philosophy left in common. Even the cabinet is openly riven.

Despite which the public still apparently prefer the idea (rather, perhaps, than the reality) of the Tories much more than they do Labour.

And when all is said and done, May is still running this process. Quite extraordinarily, despite having lost votes in her deal twice and having literally no control of her government, her ability to set the parliamentary agenda means that she will still table her deal again next week.

So the truth is that for all the shenanigans of this past week we have hardly progressed one iota from last week. Her plan remains the only one in town. Except she is now asking for Brexit day to be 30 June, not 29 March. And uncertainty has increased a bit because we have no idea what the EU will say in response, but I suspect very strongly that they will consent.

What else do we know that we did not? Nothing really. Apart from the fact that we are as a country out of control, without an effective government, facing crises on all fronts, led by a prime minister whose ability to listen, negotiate and deal, let alone comprehend, is almost non-existent.

And Bercow might still have to guide us through this.

It's a mess.

And what is astonishing is that after a week of debate it is effectively the same mess. We went nowhere.

What a way to run down a country.

If the government was a company it would be in administration.

If it was a local authority it would have been relieved of its responsibility.

And if a public agency its management would long ago have been sacked.

But a government can just blunder on. And without an effective opposition also able to hold its party together that's what it will keep doing.

And so the rundown will continue.