

The chance of avoiding No Deal is very, very low

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I was having one of my regular discussions on politics with a friend yesterday. This particular person spends even more time considering the current state of play than I do.

We scenario played Brexit.

We made no assumption on who would win the Tory election.

We did assume the winner would pursue a unicorn policy of trying to renegotiate Brexit, with the absolute certainty that they would fail.

We presumed Hunt might win a vote of no confidence in July, but not necessarily in September.

We presumed Johnson might lose in July.

In either case we could not see an election before September.

Try as we might we could not see an outright Labour victory, although we could see it as the major party.

We could not see a Labour coalition. They dislike the LibDems and SNP too much. So there would be a minority government.

We did not think there would be a major Brexit Party presence.

We could not see Labour under Corbyn asking for an extension to EU membership. That may be contentious. I believe he will say that does not respect the referendum.

We thought it very unlikely any Tory would ask for an extension.

We saw no chance of a referendum being called.

All these options got mulled over more times than was good for us.

And what did we conclude? We ended up with No Deal being by far the most likely option whatever happens.

Why? Because no one has the will to stop it. And it is the backstop in law. That's why. And imagining that will change with any current leadership before 31 October is very hard.

Unless - and this was our only let out - a newly elected parliament overturned Corbyn too if he would not prevent No Deal. Only an election and the emergence of cross party working to deliver a deal - which would be May's Deal - by 31 October could change this. And that would require a government to actually ask Europe and get this done.

Is that possible in the available time? We doubted it. But you have to clutch straws. And this situation is beginning to look desperate.