

Sir Kim Darroch has effectively been forced to resign as UK ambassador to the USA for telling the truth in what he thought would be internally read memos to the Foreign Office about the state of the Trump administration.

We do not know who leaked those memos. Nor do we know why. What we can see is the fallout. That is ugly.

Trump's reaction confirmed all that Darroch said: this is an administration headed by an unstable man, apt to ignore convention and unpredictable as to his actions, who appears unable to predict the consequences of his behaviour because his attention span lasts little longer than the time it takes to send a tweet.

Darroch told the truth. The bullies swung into action.

I say bullies deliberately. I included Boris Johnson, who very obviously knows Darroch: he was US ambassador throughout the time Johnson was at the Foreign Office. Johnson willingly sacrificed him to Trump.

There was not a shred of principle in Johnson's actions.

There was not a moment when Johnson displayed an iota of understanding of the consequences of his own actions.

I very much doubt Johnson thought of anything bar appeasing Trump.

And the result? Those are numerous, but let me list three.

First, British diplomacy will no longer speak truth to power. Darroch joins Ivan Rogers, the former UK ambassador to the EU, amongst those who have paid the price for doing their job appropriately in telling politicians what they may not want to hear, but which had to be said. The result will be ministers being told what they want to hear. The result will be even worse decision making by ministers than we have now.

Second, the influence of the expert is diminished yet again. It's as if all we had ever learned - that quite literally learning about something so that there was expertise on

an issue (any issue) has been forgotten. Instead sentiment rules. As a society this takes us into territory that we simply do not know.

Third, we are seeing the rise of political thuggery. Let me be clear that I have known that the world of politics is not a pretty place throughout my adult life. It is one reason why I chose not to seek political office. But the fighting, outright nastiness and blatant ruthlessness of Westminster is not the same as the politics of thuggery which now appears to have developed in the USA, and which is now appearing in the UK and which Johnson is very clearly seeking to both deliver and exploit. Disrespecting a person is one thing: being callously indifferent to them is another.

Of course it can be argued that the bedroom tax, austerity and its like has long exposed the Tories as indifferent to others. And I would agree. It could, perhaps, be argued that the fact that Kim Darroch can be identified as a victims of thuggery should not, perhaps, make him a special case. Millions have suffered before him. But I would respond by saying he is not the issue and it would be a mistake to say he is: in a real sense I am indifferent to Sir Kim Darroch, who I would have struggled to name until a few days ago.

The issue is that every convention of good governance that has underpinned the way in which the sound government of our country has been managed (and by and large, it has been, because of the efforts of public servants and despite the best efforts of ministers on occasion) is being threatened. What is happening is that the boundaries that have underpinned our wellbeing are being knocked down, one by one.

The result is unpredictable. As unpredictable as Trump. As unpredictable as Johnson. But what we do know is that their worldview is brutal and callously indifferent as to consequences. That is not a world I want to live in.