

I am ashamed of Johnson, and at least as fearful of wha...

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I wrote quite a number of tweets yesterday whilst watching the various press conferences that closed the G7 summit. The most popular was this:

<https://twitter.com/richardjmurphy/status/1404074519548076032?s=21>

It took seconds, but it summed up a moment in history. The reason it succeeded was that it reflected a dire weekend that a reasonably competent UK prime minister could so easily have turned into a diplomatic success.

Instead there were disasters. Johnson failed to avert the vaccine disaster, which I wrote about when I first heard the plan, saying:

<https://twitter.com/richardjmurphy/status/1403466845408141312?s=21>

Gordon Brown was right to pick up on this. As visions for the world go this one fell very far short. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo this morning there are reports of hospitals being overwhelmed by delta variant Covid cases. This was preventable. It could have been avoided if Johnson had permitted the Oxford University vaccine to have been open source, as those who developed it wanted. But he refused that. It because the AZ vaccine instead, and now millions, if not billions, will not get vaccines on time as a result. The consequence will be an untold number of deaths. Johnson failed to avert tens of millions of deaths this weekend by not throwing all his effort at this.

The summit also failed on climate change. Nothing of consequence happened on coal.

And it failed on human rights. Nothing of consequence happened on China.

But it could reasonably be said that much of this was down to Johnson because what he quite deliberately put on the table was Brexit. Or rather, he put his own refusal to comply with Brexit on the table.

The Brexit row is easily summarised. The former Treasury solicitor, Sir Jonathan Jones, who resigned over Brexit, summarised the issue in one tweet, saying:

That is what is in dispute, in summary. Johnson says he refuses to recognise part 2 of this. But he signed up to such an arrangement in the Brexit Northern Ireland protocol, and the world and the EU (not unreasonably) want him to abide by his word.

Johnson does not abide by his word. That is not what he thinks is required of him. He is wrong. Quite literally, the world only works when people abide by their word. That is why we place a lot of importance on people doing so. The expectation that they will is the basis of which almost all human behaviour is based, with the knowledge that the hurt resulting from people's failure to do so is high.

That hurt will, in this case, be very high. Not only does it make it virtually impossible to deal with the UK in a diplomatic sense, which is, I am quite sure, the sentiment the remaining six within the G7 will have taken away from the summit this weekend, but there are invariably other consequences.

In the current case that failure undermines the Good Friday Agreement, which so vitally removed the border in Ireland, which in turn delivered the longest peace that island has enjoyed for a very long time.

There is no one who can doubt the consequences of this. President Biden knows it all too well. But I suspect Johnson is willing to breach that deal. And to provide cover for doing so I am quite sure he will happily watch Unionist paramilitaries create violent situations, believing, incorrectly, that this will precipitate the EU caving in.

It won't. It's will just show the world the sort of man we have in Downing Street.

I live in fear on this issue.

Fear for Ireland, as a whole.

Fear for the integrity of UK politics, where Johnson is so willing to lie about what was agreed, and where there will be a willingness to hear his view amongst some.

Fear for the UK as it becomes an outcast in international communities, and rightly so, which some will, however, welcome.

Fear too for the social consequences within the UK as the stress from this escalates, or rather is deliberately escalated.

Fear too that the reasons for all this remain incomprehensible, because no one has ever as yet explained what Brexit is all about, unless its only and sole purpose is the generation of pointless division, of which this crisis is but one example.

Fear too as to where this will lead.

I am ashamed of Johnson. But that does not mean that I am not fearful of what he might do. The worst, by far, is yet come.