

Johnson's survival will mark the start of a new assau...

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After a few days of disruption I admit to being on a late start this morning.

What I did manage to do was follow much of the shenanigans in and around parliament yesterday as the Sue Gray report was published. The detail is too well known to require comment. The failure of Johnson to respond in any meaningful way - with his contrition for failings visible from space lasting 30 seconds or so - was predictable.

The idea that he will have to be dragged kicking and screaming from No.10 now seems appropriate. I even wonder if the seemingly inevitable (barring Tory corruption) finding of the Privileges Committee that he lied to parliament will see him resign. I think he would rather risk a vote of no confidence and hope to brazen it out. With some Tory MPs now saying they are happy for an obviously out of control, law breaking and contemptuous prime minister to be in charge of the country, he might just win that.

I am going to presume he will. The game of 'surely this time he must go' has lost its appeal. My suspicion is that Johnson will now lead the Tories into the next election. That will be, because of the collapsing economy, be in autumn 2024, I suspect (October being likely, to reduce the student vote as they will all have just moved). And, the aim between now and then will be severalfold.

First, there will be relentless attacks on the right to vote to persuade as many as possible on lower incomes not to do so.

Second, the freedom to speak will be under enormous attack. It already is with the Public Order Bill.

Third, I suspect there will be moves to prevent opposition parties cooperating with each other. I anticipate a Bill to cut permitted funding for parties that agree platforms for change in elections.

Fourth, I anticipate a tougher election law relating to social media to restrict those who might use it to seek to influence election outcomes from a non-party position.

And fifth, I suspect there will be rafts of very right-wing policies to appeal to the core Tory vote. Even the death penalty will be back on the agenda.

And there will be tax cuts.

Nothing of benefit to the country intended to meet real need will happen. Instead everything will be focussed solely on the perpetuation of Tory power, reducing politics to a game of corrupt vanity power, and not public service.

The risk that our democracy, public sector, public life, human rights and freedoms will be sacrificed to Boris Johnson increased significantly yesterday.

Starmer was good yesterday. So were others. Tories were noticeably quiet. But Johnson is still there. And there is as yet no obvious alliance to be rid of him. And that greatly worries me.