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We now know that the government is relying on the supposed doctrine of necessity to breach the Northern Ireland Protocol. It cannot do so because under international law it cannot have contributed to the necessity creating the breach, which in this case it very clearly has, not least by not using the Article 16 option within the Protocol to try to resolve the issue in the first instance.

But that, of course, is not what this is all about. That is much more easily stated, as I did in a tweet this morning:



Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 22m

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The Northern Ireland Protocol recognises that Brexit requires a border with Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement says it can't be in Ireland. So it has to be in the Irish Sea. The Brexit Agreement confirmed that. Johnson denied it. The only necessity is that he own his dishonesty.

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It is not necessary to save Johnson.

It is not necessary to cover up his lies.

It is definitely not necessary to breach the Good Friday Agreement.

It is not necessary to aggravate so many people to ensure Liz Truss has a chance of winning the far-right Tory vote in a Tory leadership election.

It is not necessary to do any of this.

But the Tories define necessity as what suits them. And when 30% or so of the UK electorate share that worldview then we have a problem.

And this is the problem to be solved.

Well, that and getting rid of Brexit altogether.

But Labour won't say that, and as a result they compound the problem.