

Is Keir Starmer following in the footsteps of Liz Truss...

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The thought occurred to me overnight that Keir Starmer is fast heading to emulate the glorious achievements of Liz Truss.

Of course, history does not repeat itself exactly, and he might not, as yet, have created the sorts of crises that she did. But there is, undoubtedly, a growing feeling that he is a lame-duck prime minister, elected to office without a clue as to what he wanted to do and clearly without the competence to work what might be now that he is in Downing Street.

There are, though, similarities. Truss let her Chancellor announce tax cuts for the rich that, it was claimed, were unfunded. Starmer has let his Chancellor announce penal measures on some of the poorest in society to supposedly provide her with funding.

No one knew what Truss was really trying to achieve. No one has any better clue about Starmer.

Truss assured everyone that things would work out for the best in the long run. So, too, does Starmer.

The media worked out very quickly that Truss was not up to the job that she had been given. It has now come to that conclusion about Starmer, and that opinion is going to be very difficult for him to shake off.

And, the claim is now being made that the City might not want to fund Starmer (however meaningless that is), and the same was true of Truss.

Truss lasted just seven weeks because she was so clearly not up to the job. She was also without Parliamentary support for what she was doing.

Having won a general election, it is hard to claim that Starmer lacks that support as yet, but the fact that he has already lost at least eight of his MPs (seven by their having had the whip removed and an eighth by resignation) does not suggest that he is enjoying a wave of popularity. The fact that his own party voted against Rachael Reeves' first

announced policy measure does also not help any suggestion to the contrary.

There are, of course, differences. Everyone was baffled that the Tories might think that Liz Truss was competent. In contrast, Starmer succeeded in projecting the idea that he was possessed of that quality. That puts him in a stronger position, but that might only explain why he has already lasted nearly three months and not just seven weeks.

It is, of course, possible that Starmer might recover from the mess that he is in, that is entirely of his own creation. Alternatively, it might all come down to his Chancellor's first budget. That was also true for Truss. Kwarteng's was a disaster, and she was gone soon thereafter. If Reeves fails to deliver a budget that wins popular support, Starmer might not make Christmas. That would represent a political failure of epic proportion.