

Is Starmer over?

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I am not recounting what happened in the Commons yesterday here. The mainstream media exists to do that, and they might on this occasion do what we expect of them, so bad was Starmer's performance.

What do we know now that we did not is that:

- * Starmer knew how flawed Mandelson was, and appointed him anyway.
- * Starmer can no longer command the Commons.
- * Starmer looked terrified of or by the situation that he is in
- * Starmer's judgment, even in managing yesterday's parliamentary debate, which should have been straightforward but descended into chaos, appears completely flawed.
- * His only defence for what he did is that Morgan McSweeney persuaded him to appoint Mandelson, but no one is persuaded by that: he appointed McSweeney, and so questions about his judgement remain.
- * McSweeney's departure will not save Starmer: that was clear from commentary in the Commons last night.
- * Starmer is now on borrowed time: he cannot survive this. Whatever credibility he had is gone and cannot be recovered

And now let's look at the consequences:

- * Labour needs a new leader. There is none in waiting who will do any better than Startmer. The chance is that they may well do worse.
- * The chance is Reform will seek to exploit this, but not a single Reform MP was in the Commons yesterday. Questions need to be asked as to why. What are they hiding?
- * Andy Burnham must be furious.

- * The chance of having competent government for the next 3.5 years, which Labour has left to it, appears very low.
- * Rarely, if ever, has a massive majority looked to be so meaningless.
- * It is not just Starmer who is at risk here. Wes Streeting looks to be vulnerable. So does Peter Kyle. There may be others. They are too associated with Mandelson for comfort.
- * Things can only get worse: large amounts of material both here and in the US have yet to reach the public domain. We can be sure that none of it will make anything better for Starmer or Labour.

What do I think will happen?

- * McSweeney will go within days, at most.
- * Just as Kwarteng's scalp did not save Truss in 2022, McSweeney's scalp now will not save Starmer.
- * Starmer will be gone in little more than a week. The story is not going away. He cannot survive it.
- * I have no clue who will be next Labour leader. I am not sure it makes much difference. Labour is sinking and will disappear without a trace by 2029, and nothing they can do will save it. A party corrupted to its core by neoliberalism is over, having lost all contact with its roots and the ethics that built it
- * The left will go Green.

The political realignment in the UK Parliament is happening even faster than I expected.

What follows from that? To me, the biggest question is whether the UK can survive this. That question is the one that will now be asked. Traditionally, Labour held Wales and Scotland. Now that faith that this party could hold the Union together is gone. Will the Union go with it?