

## Why is it that the UK can no longer find a decent Prime...

Published: May 13, 2026, 6:02 am

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Why does Britain keep ending up with weak Prime Ministers?

In this video, I argue that the problem is no longer simply about personalities or political parties. The deeper issue is that the UK political system now rewards the wrong qualities and filters out many of the people who might actually be capable of governing well.

I look at the five essential qualities any serious Prime Minister should possess:

- \* charisma,
- \* conviction,
- \* competence,
- \* coherence, and
- \* consistency.

I also explain why recent leaders have so often failed these tests, and why modern politics increasingly rewards ambition without vision, media management without substance, and spin without understanding.

The Labour Party may soon face another leadership contest, but I argue that the recruitment process itself is deeply contradictory. MPs and party members often want very different things, and the system may actively prevent genuinely capable candidates from emerging.

I also explore the extraordinary challenges facing the next Prime Minister:

- \* economic crisis,
- \* instability in the Gulf,
- \* climate breakdown,

- \* constitutional tensions within the UK,
- \* the rise of neo-fascism,
- \* failing public services, and
- \* the urgent need for economic literacy at the top of government.

This is not really a video about personalities. It is a diagnosis of a political system that increasingly struggles to produce leaders capable of governing in an age of permanent crisis.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4xlbKEqHlI?si=ZiezTmWSkyl87uob>

This is the audio version:

[https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=ykppt-1ac0a0d-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo\\_link=episode\\_page&btn-skin=c73a3a](https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=ykppt-1ac0a0d-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a)

This is the transcript:

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So let me ask you a question. Would you like to be Prime Minister? There's a vacancy coming up soon.

It's not a very secure job. We've had five in the last ten years, so you won't be there for too long. But while you are, you'll get very well paid, get a nice house in central London, quite a lot of foreign trips, and a mighty lot of hassle.

So, who would want to be Prime Minister is my question? And the answer is, I think, very few people indeed.

It's so long since we had a good one that no one knows what they even look like anymore, but we all think we would recognise one if we saw it. So, the question is not just who is available, and I presume you're not in the running because you're not a Labour MP, it is who is genuinely fit for the role?

The job demands five core qualities, and if this sounds like a job advert, presume that it is. The candidates must be able to demonstrate all of these core characteristics, which

are:

- \* Charisma or the ability to lead and inspire.
- \* Conviction, which is a genuine belief in what they are doing, something seemingly absent in the case of every last Prime Minister that I can recall.
- \* Competence, which is the capability to actually govern.
- \* Coherence, which is a consistent and joined-up worldview, something again, we know nothing about from our last Prime Ministers, and
- \* Consistency, which means that the person will be the same in public and in private, meaning they are unlikely to U-turn because they actually know who they are, again, a quality not seen of late.

What those essential qualities must prove in practice goes well beyond personal character. The person must be able to show

- \* Conviction, which is about their goals and not just their aspirations, and
- \* Competence, which must come out as unflappability when a crisis hits, and
- \* Communication ability, which must be extraordinary and not just media-friendly, which is all we seem to have got of late.

People must understand what a Prime Minister is saying about what is happening, why it is happening, and when they will do anything about it. They must also know who will benefit and how they will even feel that benefit. Again, communication skills that very few of our recent Prime Ministers have shared.

Having a vision is vital in that case, because it is actually that vision which others will follow. Having a vision is a true test of leadership, then. And since Margaret Thatcher, it's not clear that any of our Prime Ministers have really had such a conviction, and as a Prime Minister, others do need to understand that.

The fact is, though, that motive matters more than anything when it comes to being Prime Minister. The goals of a Prime Minister must be secondary to those of the people they serve. This is the paradox of this job. You're supposedly in charge. You are number one, and you have to put yourself at the bottom of the pile if you're going to do this job well. You have to put the interest of the country and those people within it above your own achievement, for others must matter more than personal gain to whoever gets this job. And the job is, by definition, thankless, which means it requires the most extraordinarily altruistic person to take it on and make it worthwhile.

So, where are we now with the Labour Party, which has the task of finding a person with all this extraordinary combination of talents?

The recruitment process that they will be going through is a contradiction before it even begins.

The candidates to be Prime Minister need 80 referees from the parliamentary Labour Party who must nominate them, and those referees are, given what we know about the current members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, people unlikely to be of strong conviction, opinion or talent themselves.

The voting panel, however, the members of the Labour Party, and there are still hundreds of thousands of those, may well be very differently inclined from those who nominate. Those who nominate are likely to be on the right wing of Labour, because that is what Morgan McSweeney and Keir Starmer guaranteed has become the characteristic of the Labour MP, but those who vote on the actual person to be chosen might well be much more left-wing inclined.

There is this contradiction, then, and resolving that contradiction is the first test that this person is going to have to deal with, and there will be many more to come.

Once they get into office, those conflicts will become very clear. How to manage the conflict in the Gulf is the first crisis any incoming Prime Minister must be ready to manage. That means they must be able to manage an economic recession or depression, which is going to be on their agenda by this summer. And they're going to have to manage food shortages, fuel shortages, and household energy shortages, all of which are going to hit by Christmas, as I've explained on this channel. And that creates the possibility that they will have to introduce rationing in the UK for the first time since 1954, to ensure that everyone gets all those essentials that they need to survive.

This will mean that this new Prime Minister will have to deal with the crisis of working out who gets what. Income, wealth, and resources might have to be reallocated by the state in a way that has not been known during most people's lifetimes. The goal is to ensure the survival of everyone, and that is a task that the state has not really taken on, except during small moments like the COVID crisis, at any time in the last 70 years.

What is more, nothing else is going to pause while the Gulf crisis unfolds. Everything else is still going to carry on.

Managing the climate crisis is one of the biggest tasks that a new Prime Minister will have to face. It is the biggest challenge in geopolitics now.

More locally, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland all have new First Ministers, and all of them are going to be pressing their independence claims sometime soon, and how is this new Prime Minister going to manage the breakup of the United Kingdom if that is on the cards during their period in office?

Meanwhile, European relationships need rebuilding. Keir Starmer has got that one right,

but we've still got to pretend that the USA matters and the special relationship exists because apparently, this is incredibly important for our geopolitical standing.

And domestically, we face another crisis not dissimilar to that problem with the USA, which is that neo-fascism is alive and well in the UK now, and is a growing threat requiring active management.

At the same time, British enterprise and workplace security need urgent restoration. Our prosperity depends on it, and no politician has given these issues enough attention for decades.

Meeting all these challenges does then mean that I think an economic literacy test is absolutely essential for whoever it is, is going to take on this role.

Every serious candidate for this job must submit a proper economic briefing of what they're going to be trying to achieve within it. This is not just testing their ability to make a presentation. It is a test of their understanding. Spin is not acceptable when it comes to economics. Clarity and substance will be required, and economics is not a specialism for advisors, as it has been for too many recent Prime Ministers. It is a requirement for holding the job.

Getting this wrong means everything else is wrong as well. Keir Starmer is the living evidence of that fact, and what the economic briefing must cover begins with the basics that most politicians avoid.

Candidates must set out their economic priorities in specific terms. Who are they going to run the economy for? Are they going to be running it for the poorest?

Are they going to be running it for the benefit of the City of London?

Are they going to be running it for the benefit of overseas investors?

What is their goal? We need to know, and what is the criterion for success? And please don't tell me "growth" because "growth" is a meaningless term in the current world.

They must also explain what money actually is and how the government creates it, because if they don't understand that, they cannot manage our economy, and they must explain the true function of government debt and the relationship that they would have as a consequence with the City of London and with the Bank of England and with the setting of interest rates.

At the same time, they must be able to describe how the government funding cycle really works. And that means they must understand that spend comes before tax. Vague answers will disqualify them, and the emphasis would be on genuine understanding.

What this is meant to show is that the government will be headed by a person who actually understands the way in which the economy works and has a coherent order of priorities.

So, who would actually apply for a job like this is the question that exposes everything. The job is thankless, contradictory, and relentlessly demanding. The reward is not money, status, or personal legacy, and just look at Theresa May and Boris Johnson to see how quickly you can be forgotten, or, in the case of Liz Truss, how quickly you can be utterly discredited. The only real reward is the sense of having served others well, and that requires the altruism that I've already talked about, which is genuinely rare in public life.

Most of those seeking to do this job do not meet that standard. So the real question behind this job advertisement, which I've outlined in this video, is not about recruitment. It is a question of diagnosis. The absence of good Prime Ministers over the last 15 or more years in the UK, and maybe longer, reflects something that is deeper or more seriously wrong with our politics.

We have a system that selects for the wrong qualities. We get charisma without conviction and ambition without coherence. Until that changes, the job vacancy for Prime Minister will keep recurring.

The question is not then who wants this job? It is whether our politics can produce anyone worthy of it. That is the problem that we face now, and right now, none of the candidates for Prime Minister that we are looking at: Wes Streeting, Andy Burnham, Angela Rayner, Ed Miliband, look like they are in any way up to the job that we might demand they fulfil.

That's what I think. What do you think? There is, as always, a poll down below. Please share your opinions. Please like this video if that's what you do. Please share it because that helps us, and please, if you're so inclined, make a donation to support this channel.

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## **Poll**

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