

# My contribution in the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill debate

**Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con):** Opposition parties are struggling a bit with this idea of democracy, are they not? Taking back control was to have control by the people and for the people, and offering the people an early general election so that they could choose an effective Government when a Parliament was logjammed, hopeless and not prepared to govern with clarity and passion was the right thing to do. I just cannot understand why Labour and the SNP are still queuing up to defend the indefensible, and to say that because they may well be faced again with a situation in which they do not dare face the electors, they need some kind of legal rigmarole and manipulation of votes in a balanced or damaged Parliament to thwart the popular will yet again. "Never let the people make the decision," they say: it must be contained within Parliament, even when a Parliament has obviously failed, as it did when it could not implement the wishes of the British people over the great Brexit referendum.

I want assurances from the Minister that this new policy will protect the Crown—the Queen—from the difficult business of politics. I think the Minister's version of it is better than the version from the other place. Of course, it must keep the courts out. There is nothing more political than the decision about when we go to an election and when we give the people their power back and the right to make that fundamental choice. It is a choice that now can mean something, because we do not have to keep on accepting a whole load of European laws that we have no great role in making. Again, we need that absolute guarantee that we will have this freedom so that that can happen.

Those who say that they do not want the Prime Minister to have this much power have surely been in the House long enough to know that, while the Prime Minister has considerable power from his or her office, they are also buffeted and challenged every day by a whole series of pressures in this place and outside. If a leader of a party with a majority wanted an early election that their supporters did not want, I suspect that that would get sorted out without an early election. So we are only talking about what happens when a Government have lost their majority and the Prime Minister is doing his or her best to govern as a minority. We get the extraordinary position we got when the whole Opposition wanted to gang up to thwart the public making a choice, but did not want to govern. That was totally unacceptable, and the Opposition should hear the message from the doorsteps in the 2019 election. The public wanted a Parliament with a Government who could govern, so they decided to choose one. Those who sought to block it made themselves more unpopular, and they showed that they do not understand the fundamental point of democracy that, when Parliament lets the people down, the people must be able to choose a new and more effective Parliament.

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# My intervention to the Minister in the Lords Amendments debate for the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill

**Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con):** Will the Minister confirm that, if we dismiss Lords amendment 1 today, the courts will not have a role in fixing the dates for elections, because, surely, that is matter for us, answerable to the electors?

**Michael Ellis, Paymaster General, Minister of State, Cabinet Office:** My right hon. Friend is quite right that it is not productive, and, in fact, it would not be in the interests of the judiciary themselves, for the courts to have such a role.

We committed to repealing the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, as it had led to paralysis at a time when the country needed decisive action. In a similar vein, the Labour manifesto said that the 2011 Act

“stifled democracy and propped up weak governments.”

A vote in the Commons could create paralysis in a number of contexts, including minority Governments, coalition Governments, or where our parties, Parliament or even the nation, at some point in the future, were divided.

As a majority on the Joint Committee on the Fixed-term Parliaments Act noted, a Commons vote would have a practical effect only where Parliament were gridlocked. The problem is that if the Government of the day had a comfortable majority, a vote would be unlikely to make any difference; it would have no meaningful effect, beyond causing unnecessary delay and expense. However, when Parliament is gridlocked, a vote could mean denying an election to a Government who were unable to function effectively. We witnessed the consequences of such a vote painfully in 2019, so let us not repeat that mistake by devising a system where those events could happen again. Lords amendment 1 is, therefore, with the greatest possible respect, without merit.

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## [My intervention regarding the Government's newly launched 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme](#)

**Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con):** With a three-year visa but only six months of guaranteed accommodation, will people have any tenant rights? What is the back-up provision if the sponsor wants to terminate well before the end of the visa?

**Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Minister for Intergovernmental Relations:** It is our expectation that those who commit to have someone in their home for six months are undertaking quite a significant commitment, but it is already the case that the expressions of interest suggest that there are many people who want to do exactly that. The experience of previous sponsorship schemes has been that those who have undertaken such a commitment have found it a wonderful thing to have done, and the number of those who have dropped out or opted out has been small. However, it is the case—my right hon. Friend is absolutely right—that there may be occasions where relationships break down, and in those circumstances we will be mobilising the support of not only of central Government and local government, but of civil society, to ensure that individuals who are here can move on. The final thing I would want to say is that many of those on the frontline coming here will of course be women and children, but many of those coming here will want to work, to contribute and to be fully part of society. It is the case already that we have had offers from those in the private sector willing to provide training and jobs to people so that they can fully integrate into society for as long as they are here.

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## [Discussing my latest book, Build Back Green: The Electrifying Shock of the Green Revolution](#)

I recently had a discussion with Mark Littlewood from the Institute of Economic Affairs about my latest book, *Build Back Green: The Electrifying Shock of the Green Revolution*. You can watch it here:

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# What does national resilience look like?

The government now says it does wish the UK to be more self reliant. One obvious area to start with is energy, the centre of the current cost of living and international crisis.

The government wishes to move to a net zero future. They need to understand that for the next few years most people will need gas for their home heating boilers, most energy using industry will still need gas for ceramics and steel, bricks and cement. Most cars, trucks and vans will still need petrol or diesel. The electric revolution will be more widespread next decade, not this.

That is why the UK government now needs to call in the oil and gas industry in the UK and encourage it to fill the gap of the next few years with more UK produced gas and oil. The Business Secretary implied he would do so. So when will he make the announcements that policy needs? We do not need more studies or White Papers. The need is urgent. He and his officials need to give licences to explore and to produce more from all the known deposits and fields. The Treasury needs to consider if the tax regime is sending the right signals, as it will be a big winner from more domestic production. Producing UK oil and gas already incurs Corporation tax at double the standard rate.

For its wider goal of decarbonising the government needs to make more rapid progress with small nuclear reactors, to conclude if this is feasible and economic and if so pump prime a development and production programme to make them a next decade reality. It needs to see which combination of technologies could back its extension of windfarms so that they can keep the lights on when the wind does not blow or blows too much. They need to decide on the balance of green hydrogen production, battery storage and pump storage as the main means of storing wind energy when it is available and using it when the wind is on strike. Affordability matters when they make their choices. You cannot rely on more wind farms alone as there are too many hours when there is no wind or when you have to switch off the turbines because the wind is too strong. All the energy they produce on windy nights needs to be stored for use on calm days.