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The SNP will be attacked over its "bully pulpit" approach to Brexit in a keynote speech tonight.

Addressing the David Hume Institute in Edinburgh, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson will say the nationalists' behaviour "doesn't speak of a party confident of its case".

She will point to polls showing plunging support for a second independence referendum, and reports suggesting the SNP may be poised to ditch its long-term stance of keeping a separate Scotland in the EU.

Ahead of the Holyrood budget debate later this week, she will also stress that the Scottish Conservatives will not support any budget that makes Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK.

## **Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson will say:**

"In recent weeks, the SNP appears to have decided to double-down on its attempt to push for a second referendum.

"Now it's not just about Brexit. Now, Mike Russell takes to the airwaves to declare that we need a referendum to escape what he describes as an 'insular' and 'inward-looking' Britain.

"Indeed, if reports this week are to be believed, for the SNP hierarchy it is no longer about staying within the EU at all.

"Instead, SNP sources are now proposing that an independent Scotland should exist in a no-man's land, half-way between the UK and the EU, but part of neither.

"It's a position concocted purely to try and win back the many thousands of SNP supporters who voted to leave the EU.

"And now, with support for a referendum falling off a cliff, the SNP is no longer saying the people should have the right to decide.

"Nicola Sturgeon says a referendum is something we all 'must confront'.

“In other words, having failed to persuade people of the necessity of another referendum, the SNP is now hoping to soften us up by telling us we’ll just have to accept it.

“It is the language of the bully pulpit. The attacks on the UK are grave distortions.

“It doesn’t speak of a party confident of its case. It smacks of desperation – and I urge the SNP to take a different path.

“Or to put it another way – when you’re in a hole, stop digging.”

**And on the Scottish Government’s budget, Ruth will add:**

“We will have no choice but to oppose this week’s budget, unless the SNP agrees to examine its tax proposals once again.

“We will do so because we believe that taxes here should not be higher than in the rest of the UK – and, where affordable, should be lower.

“That would boost growth and add to the Scottish Government’s coffers.”

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You can read the full text of Ruth’s speech [here](#).