

The future of Mrs May

People write in to tell me the Conservatives need to get rid of Mrs May as PM. Others write in to tell me to leave the Conservative party altogether because of the way she has handled Brexit.

I intend to remain a Conservative MP. I was elected as one, and wish to influence the future course of the present government as I was elected to do. I am trying to get the government to stick to the sensible approach to Brexit we jointly set out in the Manifesto in 2017. Any Conservative MP who resigns the party whip loses a vote over Mrs May's future and loses a vote to choose the next Prime Minister. The fact that the Brexit party has been formed to agree with the line I have been pursuing throughout, seeking an exit without signing the Treaty, does not mean I have to join them. My vote is secure in the Commons for the outcome I have always said may be our best option and they now want anyway.

I voted No confidence in Mrs May when the issue was tested late last year. I had argued against holding such an early Confidence vote as I thought it difficult to win it, but other colleagues wanted to go ahead and did so.

Today there are two movements underway to get the PM to go. The voluntary party has expressed its displeasure and has demanded a special meeting on the subject of her leadership, which is likely to take place soon after the Euro election. An unknown number of MPs have written to the Chairman of the 1922 Committee making clear their lack of confidence in the PM and urging him to tell her to go. If and when he gets to more than half the Parliamentary party it is difficult to see why the PM would continue to hold out against naming the departure day. He is likely to get there quite soon if Mrs May persists with her wish to do a deal with Mr Corbyn to force through the Withdrawal Treaty with even worse terms attached for the future negotiation over our possible exit from the EU in due course. The 1922 Committee would doubtless change its rules and turn a majority of MPs into wanting her to leave into a requirement she leaves. The only way I think she could save her Premiership is to get us out of the EU without signing the Treaty.

Iain Duncan Smith has been leading the movement to get her out, asking in public for a date for her to leave in all circumstances. She has hinted she would leave after getting the Withdrawal Treaty through the Commons, without precisely naming a date. I do not believe she would leave as soon as she passed the Treaty, were that to happen with Labour votes. It would be seen by her and the pro May parts of the press as a great triumph to have got it through against all the odds and against the overwhelming opposition of the voters. Why wouldn't she then say she was needed to handle talks with the EU based on the Treaty?

That is why my best option is she takes us out this month, cancelling the European election. If she fails to do so the pressures should become overwhelming for her to go.

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