



Speeches that have marked history

Jeremy Corbyn – Let this bill pass and we will back an election

September 4, 2019 – House of Commons - London, UK

And I call the leader of the opposition Mr Jeremy Corbyn...

Thank you Mr Speaker, this is the second time I have replied to a Conservative Prime Minister seeking to dissolve Parliament to call an election because they didn't have a deliverable Brexit policy. Although I'm not condemning the Right Honorable member for Maidenhead by comparing her to her successor. She at least made detailed speeches setting out her Brexit policy, even if we fundamentally disagreed with them.

This Prime Minister claims he has a strategy, but he can't tell us what it is. The bigger problem for him is that he hasn't told the EU what it is either. And at Prime Minister's Question Time today, as with the statement yesterday, he was unable to say whether he's even made any proposals whatsoever to the EU...

And it's basically a policy that's cloaked in mystery, like the Emperor's New Clothes there really is absolutely nothing there. And the naked truth is that the reality is deeply unpalatable, a disastrous No Deal Brexit to take us into the arms of a trade deal with Donald Trump that will put America First and Britain a distant second...

The Prime Minister knows there is no mandate for No Deal, no majority support for it in the country, and no majority for it in this House. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster – the co-convenor of the Vote Leave campaign – said in March this year: "We didn't vote to leave without a deal". Even the leaders, even the leaders, even the leaders of the Leave campaign are absolutely clear that the referendum conferred no mandate for No Deal.

No Deal ... no deal ... no deal... no deal is opposed by every business group, every industry body, every trade union and by this House, as today's votes and others have shown. Mr Speaker we want an election, so we look forward to turving this Government out. And.....

Does the leader of the opposition want a general election, a yes or no will suffice....

Well he obviously didn't hear what I just said... I was about to point out before I was erm gently interrupted by the honorable member that the offer of the election today is a bit like the offer of an apple to Snow White and the wicked Queen. Because what he is offering is not an apple, or even an election, but the poison of a No Deal.

So Mr Speaker I repeat, I repeat what I said last ni... last night: Let this Bill pass, and gain Royal Assent, then we will back an election so we do not crash out with a No Deal exit from

the European Union. And so it's the anti-democratic instincts of this Government that cause us concern. Despite the expressed will of the House to support the Bill debated today, the Conservative peers, their colleagues, in the Lords have tabled 92 amendments for debate.

I really doubt this is motivated by desire to improve the legislation – not a bit of it – but to filibuster it. An undemocratic cabal in Downing Street aligned with an undemocratic and unelected House to override the democratic will of this House expressed in the Bill that we have just given a third reading to. If they can't win the argument they try to shut down debate...

We had the Prime Minister deciding to prorogue Parliament in August and today he wants to dissolve Parliament to shut down scrutiny. He cannot handle dissent, he cannot handle dissent and debate in his own Party and has extraordinarily expelled 21 of his own MPs who voted against him last night. The hypocrisy of this process is phenomenal from a Prime Minister who twice voted against the Prime Minister's, the last Prime Minister's Brexit plans.

A general election isn't a plaything for a Prime Minister to avoid his obligations, to dodge scrutiny, or renege on commitments. He has committed to renegotiate Brexit – but where is it? Where is the plan? Where are the proposals? If he has a Brexit plan – be it No Deal or the new mystery proposal deal that we are yet to see any information of – then he should put it before the people in a public vote, a referendum, a referendum, a referendum or a general election and seek a mandate for them.

Let the Prime Minister go to Brussels tomorrow and ask for an extension so that he can seek a mandate for his unknown Brexit plan and put it before the people. The truth, Mr Speaker, is that this motion from the Prime Minister is about playing a disingenuous game that are unworthy of his office.

I look forward to the day his government and his party and all the austerity and misery they've heaped on this country are turfed out of office and we prevent leaving this, we prevent this country crashing out on the 31st October with all the damage he knows, because he's already seen the documents, it will do to people's lives and job prospects in this country. It's a cynical movement from a cynical Prime Minister.