

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 25th Feb 2019

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### News Highlights

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#### Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

- Later this week the UK government is expected to spell out what tariffs it intends to place on food and other essential imported items in the event of a No Deal Brexit
- It emerged that Ministers have spent £100m on consultancy contracts to assist them with Brexit to date
- Business leaders are sounding the alarm about work permits in Europe on the back of little being agreed and a likely massive six month backlog of applicants seeking them
- HMRC's `Making Tax Digital` rules come into force on April 1st adding to the pressure on up to 1m small businesses who may be struggling to adjust to No Deal Brexit changes
- British Retail Consortium is sounding the alarm over food supply if a No Deal Brexit occurs. It is pointing to no new infrastructure to handle port traffic and no details on how to deal with countries under the new arrangements and only a month to go
- British Ports Association chiefs went on record saying plans to manage a No Deal were lamentable and they wondered if the government was working off Google Map copies of the infrastructure in each port
- The New Economics Foundation reported that the UK economy has already shrunk by £100bn because of recent austerity policies
- Some business writers lament the end of the Japanese love affair with the UK, and argue, that the withdrawal of Japanese business investment is inevitable as their investors lose faith
- Former EU diplomatic chief Ivan Rogers has slammed the whole Brexit negotiation process, calling UK negotiators a `group of fantasists taking offence at a trading club simply asking to enforce its own rules`
- In more steps toward trade talks, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt made a diplomatic faux pas in Slovenia, confusing and insulting politicians in the country by suggesting it was a state that endured Soviet occupation, when in fact it was part of the old Yugoslavia
- Philip Hammond went on record saying Defence minister Gavin Williamson's comments about sending warships to the South China Sea were unhelpful, just at the moment the UK was trying to propel post Brexit trade talks forward
- The EU is considering a 21 month extension/delay in the UK leaving, if it continues to be unable to agree what a final Brexit deal might be
- The EU Commission's Michel Barnier says the chances of an accidental No Deal Brexit are now really high
- Three Tory Cabinet ministers say they are considering stepping down to vote for the Cooper-Letwin amendment in Parliament which takes No Deal off the table
- Theresa May has withdrawn her plans for a meaningful vote on her revised Brexit plan and pushed the date of a vote back to March 12th
- Theresa May remains defiant and ready to fight on, and to push Brexit over the finish line and deliver on her domestic agenda
- There is another amendment being put to Parliament which forces Mrs May to put her withdrawal plan to the British people in a referendum which includes an option to remain in the EU on the ballot paper

## **Economic Impact**

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### **The Japanese aren't daft - that's why they're getting out of Brexit Britain**

A new Japanese consensus has formed. The Conservative party and its leaders cannot be trusted. They ignore warnings, break their word and do not understand business - personified by Old Etonians Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg. Brexit is a first-order disaster, striking at the heart of how Japanese companies organise themselves as "lean manufacturers". As Honda's Patrick Keating, its European government affairs manager, briefed a meeting in Swindon in September, Brexit is likely to interrupt the just-in-time delivery of 2 million parts a day - a fifth of which come from EU suppliers. Those suppliers would have to fill out 60,000 customs declaration forms a year, he warned. One in five of its UK workforce are EU nationals. The world of tariff-free barriers - access to the EU's free-trade agreements with other countries, and ability to move staff between countries promised by Thatcher - has evaporated in front of Honda's eyes.

[https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/24/japan-brexit-honda-nissan-liam-fox?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/24/japan-brexit-honda-nissan-liam-fox?CMP=share_btn_tw)

*Additional sources: (Wired UK)*

### **The City may thrive despite Brexit, but the rest of us won't**

The real gap that Brexit will widen yet further is not just between financial services and trade in food and manufactures. It is between London and the rest of the country. Already the Treasury's staggering £4.2bn "for Brexit preparations" is tipping jobs into the capital. The greatest irony is that London and the south-east of England, which voted overwhelmingly for remain, will emerge from a hard Brexit richer than ever. It is the provinces that voted leave that will suffer. Manufacturing will slide towards recession, while Londoners smile all the way to the bank - a bank for which Brexit will not exist.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/22/city-free-port-brexit-deal-bankers>

### **UK economy £100bn smaller because of austerity - thinktank**

Austerity policies from the Treasury have resulted in slower growth in every year since 2010 and left each household £300 a month worse off as a result, a thinktank has said. The New Economics Foundation said its analysis of the impact of tax and spending changes since the Conservatives came to power, first as part of a coalition with the Liberal Democrats, had left the economy £100bn smaller than it would otherwise have been.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/feb/21/uk-economy-100bn-smaller-because-of-austerity-thinktank>

### **Clear of Brexit's teething troubles, 2020 could be a boom year for the UK**

The adverse effects of Brexit will be front-loaded and the benefits back-loaded. It is difficult to find even the most devoted of Brexiteers arguing that things will start to improve immediately after Brexit. So this issue has something of the characteristic of an investment decision: immediate costs in order to secure long-term benefits.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/02/24/clear-brexit-teething-troubles-2020-could-boom-year-uk2/>

## **Administrative Fall Out**

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### **Government 'May Have Relied On Google Maps' To Draw Up No-Deal Brexit Port Plans**

Emergency plans to tackle no-deal Brexit chaos at UK ports are so "very basic" transport chiefs stand accused of using Google Maps to draw them up. Richard Ballantyne, chief executive of the British Ports Association, made the startling allegation to HuffPost UK as he slammed "simplistic" proposals the government has drawn up for maritime chiefs. Bosses at Dover and Portsmouth are braced for potential ferry gridlock amid fears crashing out of the EU on March 29 could lead to food and medicine shortages.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/councils-kept-in-the-dark-over-no-deal-brexit-ports-planning\\_uk\\_5c6ff377e4b06cf6bb24d111](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/councils-kept-in-the-dark-over-no-deal-brexit-ports-planning_uk_5c6ff377e4b06cf6bb24d111)

### **Ministers spend £100m on Brexit consultant contracts**

The government has agreed contracts worth £104m for outside help on Brexit, according to analysis for the BBC. Since the EU referendum, Whitehall has hired companies to do consultancy work to prepare for the UK's EU exit. Companies with the most valuable Brexit contracts include Boston Consulting Group, PWC and Deloitte, according to analysis firm Tussell.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47338534>

### **Brexit: Ireland warns residents UK driving licences won't be valid in No Deal**

Ireland has warned its residents that UK driving licences will no longer be valid in a no deal Brexit. Drivers who live in the Republic are being urged to exchange their UK licences urgently for an Irish one before March 29. The announcement came this week from Ireland's National Driver Licence Service (NDLS). A statement by the NDLS said UK residents who visit "from time to time on holidays" will still be able to use their UK licence. NDLS rules also make clear visitors can drive on a foreign licence for up to a year providing it is current and valid. But people who live in Ireland have been told: "Your UK driving licence will not be valid to drive here in Ireland".

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-ireland-warns-citizens-uk-14038392>

### **EU expects UK request to help avoid food shortages under hard Brexit**

"I'm sure that the United Kingdom will be giving us a phone call to make sure that in the first few days or few weeks of any particular hard Brexit that there is a joint effort on behalf of the UK and the European Union to mitigate the damage to the citizens of the UK in relation to food," Hogan told Reuters on the sidelines of the Paris farm show. "I don't think they will want a situation where they will have a logistical problem at their ports, that they will have food shortages and food prices going up in the shops," Hogan added. The EU would prefer a "soft" Brexit with a transition period, as set out in last year's withdrawal agreement agreed by May and the other 27 EU countries, but was "ready for the worst-case scenario", Hogan said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-food/eu-expects-uk-request-to-help-avoid-food-shortages-under-hard-brexit-idUKKCN1QCORS>

### **One million self-employed braced for digital tax burden days after Brexit**

More than a million self-employed people and small business owners will be hit by a burdensome new tax-reporting regime to be introduced just days after Britain leaves the EU. From April 1 the Government's Making Tax Digital (MTD) rules will force small business owners with a turnover above the £85,000 VAT threshold to keep all records digitally and submit them to HMRC using approved software. Self-employed people including local shop owners, barristers and landlords will be among those who must comply with the new regime, when businesses are likely to be under severe strain and adapting to new trading conditions post Brexit.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tax/self-employed/one-million-self-employed-braced-digital-tax-burden-days-brexit/>

### **UK food supply under threat from no-deal Brexit**

In Calais and Dover, no new infrastructure has been built to prepare for customs checks should controls be required. London has yet to provide exporters and importers any clarity around its proposed trading regime with countries outside the EU. And companies from supermarket chains to big food processors such as Nestlé say they have no idea what labeling requirements will be in place should no deal be reached. "Obviously as importers of food, it's really important that we know if there will be tariffs applied and if so what that is going to look like," said Andrew Opie, director of food and sustainability at the British Retail Consortium, which represents supermarkets in the U.K. "There are a number of countries such as Iceland, Norway and Mexico — important for imports of food — where we are still uncertain what the trading arrangements will be on day one of a no-deal Brexit."

<https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-food-supply-under-threat-from-no-deal-brexit/>

## **Poles will return east to higher wages and jobs, and UK will lose out**

Britain's old reputation as an attractive place for economic migrants to come and work now lies in tatters. The message is clear: we want your money, but not your people. Eastern Europeans no longer flock to Britain; quite the reverse. Figures last week showed that 76,000 EU workers left last year, while the number of non-EU migrant workers rose by 159,000. Fresh statistics expected on Thursday are likely to show the decline continuing. However, evidence indicates that such immigration has been beneficial for the economy and in the long run we will be the losers

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/feb/24/poles-return-east-higher-wages-job-uk-lose-brexit>

## **The Japanese aren't daft - that's why they're getting out of Brexit Britain**

A new Japanese consensus has formed. The Conservative party and its leaders cannot be trusted. They ignore warnings, break their word and do not understand business - personified by Old Etonians Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg. Brexit is a first-order disaster, striking at the heart of how Japanese companies organise themselves as "lean manufacturers". As Honda's Patrick Keating, its European government affairs manager, briefed a meeting in Swindon in September, Brexit is likely to interrupt the just-in-time delivery of 2 million parts a day - a fifth of which come from EU suppliers. Those suppliers would have to fill out 60,000 customs declaration forms a year, he warned. One in five of its UK workforce are EU nationals. The world of tariff-free barriers - access to the EU's free-trade agreements with other countries, and ability to move staff between countries promised by Thatcher - has evaporated in front of Honda's eyes.

[https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/24/japan-brex-it-honda-nissan-liam-fox?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/24/japan-brex-it-honda-nissan-liam-fox?CMP=share_btn_tw)

## **Bosses' alarm over EU visas | Business**

Many British companies will find it impossible to do business in Europe in the event of a no-deal Brexit, leaders have warned, due to waiting times of up to six months for work permits. If Britain leaves without a withdrawal agreement on March 29, free movement of UK nationals to the remaining 27 EU nations will immediately cease. The time it takes to process an application for a work permit varies from about a month in Holland to six months in Italy. However, immigration experts say the existing application system for short-term visas and work permits could be overwhelmed with demand.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bosses-alarm-over-eu-visas-rgt78cnf7>

## **UK food imports from EU face '£9bn tariff bill' under no-deal Brexit**

The government is expected next week to spell out its plan to mitigate a potential £9bn food-price shock from a no-deal Brexit, as analysts predict the cost of staples such as beef, cheddar cheese and tomatoes could soar. With just over a month until the Brexit deadline, the Department for International Trade is expected on Monday to publish a list of new import taxes, or tariffs, that will apply to 5,200 products, including food and clothing, should the UK crash out of the EU without a deal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/23/uk-food-imports-from-eu-face-9bn-tariff-bill-under-no-deal-brex-it>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **Theresa May risks Cabinet fury as she delays Brexit meaningful vote again**

The Prime Minister told reporters en route to a summit in Egypt that the next major Commons showdown on her deal would take place by 12 March - less than three weeks before Britain is due to leave the EU. She said: "My team will be back in Brussels on Tuesday. As a result of that, we won't bring a meaningful vote to parliament this week, but we will ensure that that happens by 12 March. It tees up a major class with Mrs May's Ministers who have threatened to vote to take No Deal off the table

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/conservative-party/news/102059/theresa-may-risks-cabinet-fury-she-delays>

Additional sources: ([The Guardian](#)) ([Reuters](#))

### **The Independent Group will back Theresa May in any vote of confidence, says Heidi Allen**

The new Independent Group of MPs has agreed to back Theresa May in any vote of no confidence, one of its most prominent members has said. In an exclusive interview with The Independent, former Conservative MP Heidi Allen said the group – which also consists of eight Labour MPs – had decided not to do anything that would facilitate a general election. Her words go further than previous comments that the group might support Ms May in a confidence and supply arrangement if she agrees to soften her Brexit stance.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/independent-group-may-vote-no-confidence-support-heidi-allen-a8792841.html>

Additional sources: ([Yahoo!](#)) ([Reuters](#))

### **Brexit: Greg Clark, Amber Rudd and David Gauke issue delay warning**

Brexit should be delayed if Parliament does not approve a deal in the coming days, three cabinet ministers have warned publicly for the first time. Ahead of crucial votes in the Commons, Greg Clark, Amber Rudd and David Gauke told the Daily Mail they would be prepared to defy Theresa May and vote for a delay. Downing Street said the trio's views on no deal were "scarcely a secret".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47336501>

Additional sources: ([RTE.ie](#))

### **May signals she is ready to fight on**

Theresa May signalled on Sunday she wanted to press on as prime minister, saying there was still more to do to live up to her promise when she took office to make Britain work “for every one of us”. May told her governing Conservatives in December last year she would not lead the party into the next election, part of a message to ease concerns among her MPs before they mounted, and then lost, a no confidence vote against her. But she has so far refused to give a date for her departure, and despite reports some of her ministers want her to step down after local elections in May, she said she wanted to pursue not only Brexit, but what she called her “domestic agenda”

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-may-fighton/may-signals-she-is-ready-to-fight-on-idUSKCN1QD0WB>

### **Liam Fox slaps down Cabinet colleagues over plan to halt no-deal Brexit**

Liam Fox has warned that a Commons plan to kill off a no-deal Brexit would “fundamentally weaken our position” - just a day after three of his Cabinet colleagues broke ranks to back the proposal. In a direct rebuke to his Cabinet colleagues, Dr Fox took aim at the plot to push for an Article 50 extension. He told the Sunday Telegraph: “Taking no-deal off the table would be to remove the single strongest card that we have in our negotiation with the EU itself and would therefore fundamentally weaken our position ... While [I] do not want to see a no-deal scenario, the risk of failing to deliver on Brexit itself is too great to be contemplated.”

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/102054/liam-fox-slaps-down-cabinet-colleagues-over-plan-halt-no>

### **Brexit: Motion for second referendum to be tabled in parliament next week**

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Vince Cable has said his party will next week make a fresh drive to give MPs the chance to back a second Brexit referendum. Sir Vince asked members of the new Independent Group for support as he sought backing for a motion aiming to lock a new public vote into law. As it stands it is unclear whether any other group will try to bring forward or support a bid for a fresh referendum this Wednesday, when MPs will have another opportunity to table alternative proposals for the next steps in the Brexit process.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-deal-latest-liberal-democrats-vince-cable-referendum-final-say-independent-group-a8793261.html>

### **Theresa May's Brexit vote delay: what does it all mean?**

Deep divisions in the cabinet over how to manage Brexit burst into the open this week, with three ministers – Amber Rudd, David Gauke and Greg Clark – warning in a statement published in the Daily Mail on Saturday that if a breakthrough could not be achieved, “in the next few days”, then the article 50 notice period for leaving the EU must be extended. May is now promising to bring her deal back to parliament for a second meaningful vote on 12 March – just 17 days before Britain is due to leave the EU. But Rudd, Gauke and Clark’s comments suggested they were ready to join the string of ministers who have signalled that they are prepared to defy party whips in order to back the Cooper-Letwin amendment.

[https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/24/theresa-may-brexit-vote-delay-what-does-it-all-mean?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/24/theresa-may-brexit-vote-delay-what-does-it-all-mean?CMP=share_btn_tw)

### **Amber Rudd accused of cynical plot to force Tory Brexiteers into backing May's Brexit deal**

Amber Rudd was last night at the centre of claims that she was part of a cynical ‘plot’ to force the capitulation of Tory Brexiteers over Theresa May’s deal with Brussels. The Work and Pensions Secretary faced fury after she joined fellow Remainer Cabinet Ministers, Business Secretary Greg Clark and Justice Secretary David Gauke, in signalling publicly that they would force a delay to Brexit to stop a ‘disastrous’ No Deal. While some leading figures in the pro-Brexit European Research Group (ERG) said the three Ministers should resign as they were in breach of Cabinet collective responsibility, others said they suspected it was a ruse to scare MPs into backing Theresa May’s deal.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6738173/Amber-Rudd-accused-cynical-plot-force-Tory-Brexiteers-backing-Mays-Brexit-deal.html>

### **Brexit news latest: Senior Labour MPs say party could back second referendum this week**

Labour is moving closer to supporting a second Brexit referendum and may officially back one as soon as this week, senior members of the party have said. Asked whether this would be the week Labour comes out in support of a second referendum, the party's deputy leader Tom Watson told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show: "It might be... we are getting closer to that point."

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-news-latest-senior-labour-mps-say-party-could-back-second-referendum-this-week-a4075001.html>

### **Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell exclusively reveals how Luciana Berger was let down by Labour**

McDonnell argues there is progress. They are backing the Cooper-Letwin amendment, which would delay Brexit if a deal isn’t approved by March. Although Corbyn is perceived to be anti-People’s Vote, McDonnell is not. He volunteers that “we’re moving towards [a referendum]” and is warm about the initiative by Labour MP’s Peter Kyle and Phil Wilson, which would offer the Prime Minister support for her deal, so long as it was put to the people for a vote.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/shadow-chancellor-john-mcdonnell-exclusively-reveals-how-luciana-berger-was-let-down-by-labour-a4073906.html>

### **Theresa May insists Brexit must not be blocked**

Theresa May has vowed to Tory grassroots activists that she will not allow the referendum vote for Britain to leave the EU to be frustrated. Northern Minister John Penrose warned taking no-deal off the table could undermine Mrs May’s efforts to secure concessions on the backstop. “It could torpedo Brexit completely, leaving us in a ‘Hotel California’ Brexit, where we’d checked out but could never leave,” he said in an article for The Sunday Telegraph.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-02-23/theresa-may-insists-brexit-must-not-be-blocked/>

### **Brexit: Carwyn Jones calls for second EU referendum**

Former First Minister Carwyn Jones has called for a fresh referendum on Britain's EU membership. Before standing down in December, Mr Jones, the AM for Bridgend, argued that Labour should seek a general election first. But speaking S4C debate show Pawb a'i Farn on Thursday evening, Mr Jones said: "It makes sense to me settle the question now."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-47329344>

## **Political Setbacks**

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### **Eilis O'Hanlon: 'Ireland shouldn't hold its breath for a sea-change in UK's broken politics'**

'Ireland shouldn't hold its breath for a sea-change in UK's broken politics' according to the Irish Independent. The emergence of a breakaway group of pro-EU MPs at Westminster may be too little, too late for Ireland as UK's broken political system jogs on towards a No Deal Brexit which hurts us all

<https://www.independent.ie/opinion/comment/eilis-ohanlon-ireland-shouldnt-hold-its-breath-for-a-seachange-in-uks-broken-politics-37847172.html>

### **Michel Barnier says there is high chance of 'accidental' no-deal Brexit**

Michel Barnier has said he is more concerned than ever after a week of talks with Theresa May and the British negotiators that has left Brussels fearing an accidental no-deal Brexit in five weeks. But he told a French radio channel: "Today I am more worried than before" over the talks, adding that the UK needed to make decisions fast. The EU official also told ambassadors privately, after the negotiations with the UK's Brexit secretary, Stephen Barclay, and a visit by May to Brussels, that the chances of an "accidental" no-deal Brexit were high.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/22/michel-barnier-says-there-is-high-chance-of-accidental-no-deal-brexit>

### **Momentum chief warns Independent Group pose a threat that could damage Labour**

Momentum founder Jon Lansman has admitted that parliament's new Independent Group of MPs is a threat to Labour, as his organisation's Corbyn-backing activists mobilise in a bid to force by-elections in defectors' seats. In an exclusive interview with The Independent, Mr Lansman said that while he believes the new group is guaranteed to fail under its own shortcomings, Momentum will seek to minimise the political cost to Mr Corbyn by accelerating its downfall.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/independent-group-labour-split-momentum-campaign-jon-lansman-corbyn-a8792076.html>

### **Jeremy Hunt enrages Slovenia by wrongly saying it was 'a vassal state of the Soviet Union'**

Foreign secretary visits Slovenia hoping to win friends and influence people over Brexit, before being labelled 'arrogantly insulting' after telling his hosts they were once subservient to Russia when they were actually part of a fiercely independent Yugoslavia

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jeremy-hunt-slovenia-gaffe-soviet-vassal-state-brexit-negotiations-foreign-secretary-diplomatic-a8793471.html>

### **Brexit must not be frustrated, Theresa May vows**

The Brexit vote must not be frustrated and the government needs to maintain an "absolute" focus on delivering it, Theresa May has said. In a speech to Tory activists the PM said, as her negotiations with the EU reach their final stages, the "worst thing we could do is lose our focus".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47346630>

### **What UK's political crack-up means for Brexit**

Without signs of progress, some ministers and officials believe the unravelling of the party system — started by the 12 MPs who resigned from Labour and the Tories last week — could accelerate. A sizeable chunk of government ministers are threatening to resign to vote for backbench proposals

designed to stop a no-deal Brexit. The result would be a further destabilizing of British politics just weeks before the U.K.'s scheduled departure from the EU on March 29, opening up the prospect of a general election, second referendum or even a redrawn coalition government replacing May's ailing administration.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/the-independent-group-labour-tories-mp-brexit-what-uks-political-crack-up-means-for-b-rexit/>

### **Contempt Committee: Theresa May's Government has 'Not a leg to Stand On' Withholding Information from Parliament**

Opening its session this week, the committee's chair, Charles Walker MP, asked key Opposition MPs: "Do you think the Government has a leg to stand on?" when it came to keeping requested information out of the hands of elected representatives. SNP MP Joanna Cherry QC (SNP) said she did not believe that the Government has a "leg to stand on" if MPs' requests for factual information, particularly on Brexit, are stonewalled. "They have to accept that they are a minority government," she said, before adding that Parliament is operating in "exceptional circumstances" that are at least equivalent to those before the Iraq War. This issue strikes at the heart of what the public should have a right to know.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/02/24/contempt-committee-theresa-mays-government-has-not-a-leg-to-stand-on-withholding-information-from-parliament/>

### **We need the final say on Brexit**

Two and a half years later, what is unfolding is an epic shambles that could very soon spell disaster for our nation. Every day that goes by businesses and public services are spending a fortune trying to prepare for a no deal scenario which would be an unprecedented self-inflicted disaster for our country. Businesses are hurting - delaying investment, paying sky-high prices for stockpiling and not committing to providing the decent, permanent jobs we need for the future.

<https://www.gmb.org.uk/long-read/final-say-on-brexit>

### **EU Considers 21-Month Delay If May Can't Get Brexit Done**

The European Union is considering telling Theresa May that if she can't get her Brexit deal through Parliament and wants to delay the departure date, the country will have to stay in the bloc until 2021. Three European officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said senior EU figures and several governments back an extension of as much as 21 months beyond the scheduled March 29 exit day. The idea will enrage pro-Brexit lawmakers in May's party, who will probably see it as a tactic to get them to back May's deal. A fourth European official also said it looked like a scare tactic.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-24/eu-is-said-to-mull-idea-of-proposing-brexit-extension-to-2021>

*Additional sources: (The Guardian)*

### **Institute of Direct@JonSnowC4News Institute of Directors issue statement saying they have 'lost faith in the political process' after May postpone yet another vote.**

Institute of Directors issue statement saying they have 'lost faith in the political process' after May postpone yet another vote on a Brexit deal

<https://twitter.com/jonsnowC4/status/1099712734336352256>

### **Theresa May Told How To Hold A Cue As She Plays Pool With The Italian Prime Minister**

In the footage, the British Prime Minister admits she'll be "hopeless" as she's handed the cue. "You'll have to show me how," she adds, unsure of the mechanics of the game. Conte lets May onto the table after failing to pocket. Clearly hoping to help his boss while she's caught in a tricky situation, Gavin Barwell, her chief of staff, shows her how to use her hand as a bridge and how to hold the cue. "Put your thumb and finger like that," he suggests. Sadly, the video cuts out just after she hits the cue ball, so we'll probably never know if she's a natural.

[https://m.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/theresa-may-pool\\_uk\\_5c731640e4b06cf6bb2729e4?utm\\_hp\\_ref=uk-news](https://m.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/theresa-may-pool_uk_5c731640e4b06cf6bb2729e4?utm_hp_ref=uk-news)

### **Gordon Brown calls for MPs to vote to delay Brexit - for up to 12 months**

The former Labour PM wants to postpone Britain's jump from the EU and "avoid hurtling over a cliff edge" by gathering evidence from people across the country to tell if they want a second referendum on the move

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/gordon-brown-calls-mps-vote-14042810>

### **Buoyed by freedom, the rebels are now able to follow their consciences**

If Corbyn breaks his promise on a second referendum or, more characteristically, pretends to support a people's vote while quietly sabotaging it, more MPs will go. There's talk of Tom Watson, the nearest the modern Labour movement has to a Bevin, forming a real Labour party. Whether it's more than talk, I can't say. One thing is certain, the question "do you think Jeremy Corbyn is fit to be prime minister" has the same answer it always had. I don't know how much longer the bulk of the parliamentary Labour party can avoid delivering it.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/23/buoyed-by-freedom-rebels-now-follow-their-consciences>

### **Corbyn told: change course before it's too late for Labour**

Some of Labour's most influential figures are urgently warning Jeremy Corbyn to change his approach to antisemitism, Brexit and factional infighting, as more senior politicians reveal they have already decided to quit the party. Figures across the party say that a major exodus of MPs, peers and councillors will be triggered over the next few weeks unless the demands for change are met, with some already poised to go. One senior parliamentarian told the Observer: "I have decided that I am going to have to leave. For me, it's just a question of when."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/23/corbyn-told-change-course-before-its-too-late-for-labour-michael-savage>

### **Ivan Rogers slams UK government, again**

Writing in The Times, Rogers labeled Britain's "political class" a group of fantasists for taking offense at the EU wanting to enforce the rules of its trading club in Brexit negotiations. Rogers also faulted the EU for not "thinking strategically about the long-term relationship it wants with what will be its most important non-EU economic and security partner." Rogers reserved his greatest astonishment for that the fact that British businesses to have no idea about their terms of trade in five weeks time: "I can think of no parallel for this in the postwar annals of developed countries," he wrote.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/ivan-rogers-slams-u-k-ministers-again/>

*Additional sources: ([Herald Scotland](#))*

### **'A wrench to see them go': 20 more MPs are on brink of quitting**

The Observer has spoken to Labour MPs, peers and supporters who are all on the verge of quitting. "I know personally there are up to 20 MPs sitting on the cliff edge," said one MP. "The interesting thing is of the 20, it's whether they jump or are kicked off." Another said: "100%, more will go." Several peers are also considering their position. "In many cases they've had 50 or 60 years of membership," said one. "It is a wrench. However, there are people in the 'not if, but when' mode."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/23/20-more-mps-on-brink-of-quitting-parties-labour-tories-independen-t-group>

### **The British public is disconnected from the reality of Brexit**

There are politicians for whom a well-informed public on Brexit is now the enemy. These distortions of the political situation in the UK are having a cumulative impact. They are creating a looming disconnect between the UK public and the consequences of leaving the EU. Those in favour of Brexit are doing their best to ensure that remains so. May has suppressed reports from her own civil service that concluded that immigration makes a positive contribution to the UK economy. When a

UN envoy wrote a damning report about the level of poverty that exists in the UK- surely an argument for having as soft a Brexit as possible - instead of using the information gathered, the Conservative Party rejected it as outright lies. From Isis brides to off-hand comments from EU politicians, anything that can be thrown into the mix to obscure the truth is being used.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/the-british-public-is-disconnected-from-the-reality-of-brexit-1.3803145>

### **PM accused of DUMBING down Brexit demands to get quick deal before Commons showdown**

It is believed negotiations include a joint review mechanism that could end the backstop within 12 months of it being triggered. One pro-Remain minister told The Sun: "The PM knows she has to come up with something fast before next week to keep us onside". But the development sparked an angry backlash from Brexiteer Tory MPs' European Research Group, who warned of another major rebellion. A senior ERG source said: "It is highly likely that both sides in Brussels are about to commit another catastrophic misjudgement".

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8483140/brexit-deal-theresa-may-dumbing-down-demands/>

### **Legal papers lodged against Boris Johnson for 'lies' told during EU referendum**

The Brexiteer MP and Vote Leave leader has been accused of "abusing public trust" through the inaccurate claims made about the money sent each week to the EU. Claims about £350m sent to Brussels featured prominently on a big red bus during the Brexit campaign and on literature sent to voters - despite the chair of the UK Statistics Authority writing to tell Johnson his claims were untrue. A study carried out last year found that almost half of voters still believe the claim. Now private prosecutor Marcus J Ball has filed papers at court, claiming three offences of misconduct in public office against Johnson.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/marcus-ball-lodges-papers-against-boris-johnson-1-5903840>

### **Poll shows Welsh voters prefer May's Brexit deal to leaving EU without a deal**

The latest YouGov poll for ITV Wales suggests that Welsh voters are now more likely to vote remain if there was another EU referendum. But if the only choice is Theresa May's deal or No deal they'd vote for the May Deal

<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2019-02-22/polls-shows-welsh-voters-prefer-mays-brexit-deal-to-leaving-eu-without-a-deal/>

### **Polls show Brexit regret is so strong that 'Remain' would win a second referendum by 9 points**

The more familiar British people become with the details of Brexit, the less they like it, according to one of the UK's leading pollsters. There is now a nine-point majority that believes leaving the European Union was "wrong," YouGov found. It's the biggest majority against Brexit since the poll was instigated. A majority would vote "Remain" if a second referendum was held. Morgan Stanley now predicts Brexit will be delayed, possibly opening a window to a second vote.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/yougov-poll-brexit-regret-remain-second-referendum-2019-2>

### **I'll stop Brexit extremists infiltrating our party, Theresa May assures Tories**

Theresa May has vowed to block right-wing entryists from joining the Conservative Party in an attempt to stem further defections. Anna Soubry, Sarah Wollaston and Heidi Allen said local Tory associations were being infiltrated by a Eurosceptic "purple Momentum" when they joined the new Independent Group of MPs on Wednesday. In a letter to the trio, Mrs May said she did "not accept" the comparison between the Conservative grassroots and the influx of left-wing activists into the Labour Party since Jeremy Corbyn became leader.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ill-stop-brexit-extremists-infiltrating-our-party-theresa-may-assures-tories-q3lwbsmwv>

## **Trade Deals/Negotiations**

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### **Downing Street delays No Deal Brexit tariffs report to avoid outrage before crunch vote**

Downing Street is delaying a bombshell announcement on No Deal tariffs to avoid uproar before a crunch Brexit vote next week. Cabinet sources last night said that long-awaited details of import duties on areas such as food and ceramics will only come “next Thursday or Friday”

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8483841/downing-street-no-deal-brexit-report/>

### **Philip Hammond reopens row with Gavin Williamson by saying UK-China relations ‘not made simpler’ by defence secretary’s threats**

Philip Hammond risked reopening a cabinet rift with Gavin Williamson by suggesting the defence secretary damaged UK relations with China by suggesting that the UK would deploy an aircraft carrier in the South China Sea, just prior to a drive to open trade deal talks

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/philip-hammond-gavin-williamson-china-south-sea-defence-military-cabinet-a8790656.html>

### **No-deal Brexit “like jumping off cliff without parachute” says former WTO leader**

Britain would go to the bottom of the international pecking order in the case of a no-deal Brexit, a former Director General of the World Trade Organisation has said. Pascal Lamy likened a hard exit to “jumping off a cliff without a parachute”. “What happens in the next days is you move down from first league to fourth league, and you have to apply tariffs, borders, controls and I’m not talking about specific arrangements of airlines, capital markets, nuclear safety. It’s not ready, nobody is ready, for a no deal, which is by the way the reason I think it will not happen. People are wise enough not to jump off the cliff without a parachute,” Lamy said.

<https://www.euronews.com/2019/02/22/no-deal-brexit-like-jumping-off-cliff-without-parachute-says-former-wto-leader>