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Brexit – is the end in sight?

By George Worsley, international insurance guru

Brexit is due to take place on the 31st October, according to the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, with- or without a deal. He is not the only one who is saying that; all of his newly appointed Ministers echo his sentiments. However, with only small handful of exceptions his head-nodding followers in the Cabinet are a bunch of ninnies. People like Dominic Raab (Foreign Office), Priti Patel (Home Office) and Stephen Barclay (Brexit Office) have all been likened to empty food cans clattering noisily around key issues.

There is a groundswell of opposition to Boris Johnson's tally ho approach to leaving the EU without a deal. Staunch Conservatives including ex-ministers are talking with the two other main parties (Labour and Liberal Democrats) to bring about a vote of no confidence in the present government. Boris has glibly said that even if he loses such a vote, he will not resign. In the unwritten constitution, he might be right but all the House of Commons would need to do, is pass a law booting him out.

This past week (September 9) your scribe interviewed Dutch and French observers who admire Boris' energy, communication skills and empathy with the media. But he gets compared with the clown across the Atlantic in dividing the nation instead of unifying it as well as annoying the EU partners at the same time. He seems deaf and blind to the effect a no-deal Brexit would have on the 27 EU members let alone the UK itself. A recent study of seven EU countries posts a dismal view of the impact on them when a chaotic no-deal Brexit takes place: the loss of jobs in the automobile industry alone will cost Germany and Spain billions and the sale of oil and gas in and outside UK waters to and from other EU countries has not been revealed – for fear of publicizing the amount involved. Whilst the Netherlands is viewed as the best prepared of all EU countries for no-deal, the impact, according to the government, will cost its economy €10 billion. What about the other EU members?

The business world is also sending conflicting messages on the best way to push Brexit through and Scotland still thinks that North Sea gas and oil will finance the independence it is now demanding if it joins the opposition in supporting a vote of no confidence. The issue of a hard border in Eire/Northern Ireland has woken up a few Senators in the US who are now saying that if Boris scraps the Good Friday Agreement, he can whistle in vain for a trade deal with the United States.

EU leaders and negotiators do not seem minded to renege on the offers Mrs. May agreed to months ago. France and Germany especially, have had enough of the whinging noises coming out of Britain and want to concentrate on other issues.

As the Brexit date approaches it is not possible to say if the no-deal Brexit team will win or lose. Most of the polls are saying a majority of people now do not want Brexit; but who is listening to the people? All very uncertain. One thing is true however, pretty well since the referendum in 2016, Brexiteers have given the Remainers ample opportunity to come up with a cohesive argument to defeat Brexit but petty squabbles, posturing, procrastination and lack of leadership means that the paucity of opposition will probably allow a miserable Brexit to cross the line ahead of what the country really wants.