March 2019

Britain's Ongoing National Humiliation

By George Worsley

Britain's Ongoing National Humiliation is Prime Minister Theresa May. Throughout the Brexit project she has shown herself to be an ineffective salesman, a poor public speaker, deaf to advice, terrible at delegating and lousy at appointing Brexit negotiators.

The situation is a mess. Following on from David Cameron's miserable pleas to the European Union for changes to the rules for Britain, the country lurched into the Referendum in 2016. Since then the EU has conceded nothing substantial to the lazy David Davis, the arrogant Jeremy Hunt, the hateful Dominic Raab and still Theresa is banging away at Brussels and boasting to Westminster that the tiniest concession is a major victory.

Mrs. May's style is alienating friends and adding more and more names to the long list of foes. Her losses in key votes in Parliament have been absolutely humiliating and she doesn't appear to take note of the signs and messages her government is getting. The light at the end of her tunnels is actually only the reflection of the steely glare in her eyes like a rabbit in the headlights.

One of the reasons the Brexiteers do not like Mrs. May's Brexit deal is that she has kept a foot in both the Leave and Remain camps. And the foot in Remain is a massive leg with about 80 toes whilst the Leave foot is minuscule with only a couple of mangled toes. At the time of the Referendum few people had a clear idea of what Brexit really meant but "to leave" the EU yet still be part of the Customs Union and the Single Market does not really look like "leaving." The biggest mangled toe in her Leave camp is Financial Services: one of the country's most important invisible exports. She has also said that while automatic immigration from the EU will stop, the country has benefitted from all of the EU citizens who live and work here and they must, please, please, please, not go home…

Mrs. May has been unable to control her Minister of Trade, Liam Fox, who has gone on record as saying he can get a better deal from Japan for Britain than the EU could. Seeing as Honda and Nissan are pulling out of the UK and Japan regards Britain as not much more than a poxy little island off the coast of mainland Europe, it must surely surprise you that Mrs. May takes that as a compliment!

There have been rumblings and resignations in Mrs. May's ministerial team and more angry walk-outs are expected, especially if Mrs. May loses the crucial vote next Tuesday, the 12th March on her latest submission to Parliament about her deal with Brussels. The Sunday Times newspaper today has suggested she will get thumped by an even greater margin than last time and this would encourage the Labour opposition again to table a

motion of no confidence. I hesitate to use the word ”expert” but leading columnists are forecasting the main support for Mrs. May’s creaking coalition, the Northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party and some of her most powerful ministers will join the vote against her this time and then she will be out.

One of the reasons why the EU has not bowed to the demands of the UK is that should it do so, then other EU members, in turn, would want changes to the make-up of their membership of the club. Whether or not Britain leaves the EU, Brussels should take a good look at itself and adjust to what all 28 members have been saying: “cut down of the expensive bureaucracy, do away with the greedy misuse of MEP’s expense accounts while, at the same time give them – those elected Members of the European Parliament rather than the curiously appointed bureaucrats - more of a say and responsibility for the legislation and rules by which the EU is run.”

Yet another article in the Sunday Times hints at meetings between the former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, where the idea has been mooted: if the UK cannot get the deal it wants, it may just as well stay in the EU.

Then Mrs. May would say, “I voted Remain; I showed the country how Brexit could not be achieved; we will now re-negotiate the renewal of our membership of the EU; aren’t I a clever girl!”

Oh my goodness gracious me!