



# Theresa May should bring back David Cameron

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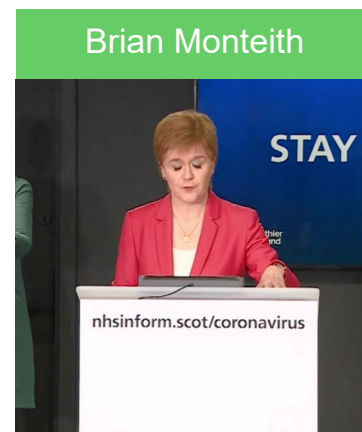
*Splutter your coffee all ye may, ol' Dave is coming back to play.*

SUCH IS the nursery rhyme that will bewilder future generations if there is any truth to it. Shock at the prospect should not discount the very real consideration that David Cameron, the not so recently departed Prime Minister, should rejoin Theresa May's government.

And 'rejoin' is critical. The First Lord of the Treasury is the 'first among equals' in the Cabinet and no better than their peers, save for the Monarch. The Prime Minister has the right to appoint her ministers as she sees fit, and it's as simple as that. Is it unconventional? Not nearly as much as people think.

Firstly, consider the circumstances of David Cameron's

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resignation: principle (or abject pragmatism, the two are often hard to differentiate). Cameron, the grand, swashbuckling referender of the faith won the Scottish independence referendum hands down. He gambled it all to silence the Nasty Nats and did. Kind of. By leading the Union to a 55 percent victory.

And he gambled again!

This time with the most toxic, least understood issue of modern times and a most vicious cancer at the heart of the Conservative Party for sixty years. Is it one metaphor too far to call Europe a Rubicon? Perhaps, but it really was.

And he lost. Quite stunningly so. Mild Dave, an overpriced, lacklustre curry who promised so much but just never had quite the right 'kick', resigned before noon the next day and left office in the same spirit with which he governed: nothingness, but with a particular kind of anachronistic avuncularity.

And then he was followed by M for Murdered her career. The ultimate bluff called out – the new Iron Lady was rusty out the gate. A panicked WI Stalwart at a bake sale who'd left the fairy cakes in the car who was desperately trying to keep it together and fumbling.

Cameron offers precisely that for which he was critically condemned. He stands for nothing; a One Nation conservative of such pragmatism that he decided his party was an electoral liability, so he did away with its twin piers of economic liberalism and social conservatism.



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*Trigger warning: we are not an effing amusement park*

May's error is she's trying, and failing to be that which she is not but her party still is: Conservative. She argued for Remain but bulldozes through Parliament a Brexit agenda. She wants to roll back the frontiers of the state, but can't muster a majority to do it because it doesn't reform welfare or health in any meaningful way to anyone in Labour or the Tories.

Can Cameron return? Of course. He is precisely what is required at a time that nothingness is needed to unify the most substantial split in British political opinion since the Second World War. No pretence, just a good old-fashioned peacetime government modelled on wartime principles of unity, political encompassment and leadership by example. Cameron's ambiguous political realpolitik makes him the ideal man to do it. Queen and Country, best for Britain – do what it takes, no ideological limits.

The British system is not American; you can die a thousand deaths in politics and still be resurrected by the moonlight. The last prime minister to do so was Alec Douglas-Home. After a narrow defeat in the general election of 1964, Douglas-Home served in the cabinet of Edward Heath as Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1970 and 1974. Cameron can come back and could make a real contribution.

If he were to run, it would undoubtedly be on the persuading and understanding it was with the promise of high ministerial office. If so, then what? The answer, even to May, is glaringly apparent as many attribute her Cabinet troubles to the noncommittal shirking of Brexit negotiations by her incumbent Foreign Secretary.

President Bush in his handover letter to President Clinton said: "Your success now is our country's success. I am



*Political narcissism  
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*Scottish Conservatives  
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fight to Sturgeon – not  
make swipes at  
colleagues*

rooting hard for you". The same is true of May. The government wasn't wrong, just lewdly insolent, to say the press should be more patriotic about Brexit. We shouldn't relish in the political hari-kari of the country.

Nevertheless, there's an alienable feeling in the country that the referendum, now a year and a half old, couldn't possibly have predicted the political uncertainty that we're now facing. A new one must be held, and this time offer the public proposals on the terms of withdrawal from the EU with clear guidance as to what that means. Any Cameron return must include a commitment to this principle.

Theresa May's dramatically reduced minority, if not complete destruction at the 2017 General Election, is symptomatic of two problems. The first is that the public has been deeply suspicious of the motivations of the Conservative Party towards Europe for decades. May herself voted Remain but is pushing a negotiated departure with as little parliamentary say as possible. The same is true of the Labour Party. Jeremy Corbyn's Euroscepticism has now transformed into obstructionism for Brexit. What members can be trusted, and who are serving their agenda in a political storm?

And storms there are aplenty. The latest scandal to befall Westminster are allegations against a number of prominent and backbench members of the Conservatives, as well as others across the aisle. Defence Secretary Michael Fallon's resignation is undoubtedly the first of several scalps. What's more worrying is that he resigned for no specific reason other than his behaviour had "fallen short" at times. If the first voluntarily resignation is at the ministerial level, one must wonder what else there is to come, and how it could genuinely destabilise May's government.

The Prime Minister's appointment of Gavin Williamson, her

former Chief Whip, to replace Fallon is indicative of a dwindling circle of supporters. If there is a clear-out of sexist MPs, it's impossible to predict who could find themselves at the centre of the storm. Now is the time for trusted leadership and familiar faces if Brexit has any chance of remaining the legislative focus of Parliament and the country. Williamson, a former Principal Private Secretary to Cameron, might actually be the little birdie in May's ear to push this idea of the former PM's return.

Would Cameron's return assuage these concerns? He could potentially smooth some of the creases of an untamed cabinet with the likes of Boris Johnson waiting in the wings. It could also make matters worse. But May, who reportedly on the cusp of an emotional breakdown and whose Cabinet is divided, has nothing to lose. We want her to succeed, but we want Britain to succeed too.

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