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## THE BREXIT DIARIES: 4 - THE POLITICAL SURVIVAL OF THERESA MAY

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12.07.2017

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Deutsche Welle (11 July 2017)

To die or not to die, that is the question

It's said that nothing improves one's life expectancy more than a premature obituary. But will that be the case for Theresa May? Immediately after the suicide mission that was the June parliamentary election, her former finance minister George Osborne branded her a "dead woman walking."

Another party colleague, former chief whip Andrew Mitchell, saw it similarly: At a dinner among colleagues in June, he allegedly said May was "dead in the water." And it is allegedly Brexit Secretary David Davis who is behind it all, since he's banking on having May's job.

Others meanwhile are calling for caution: Because the Labour Party is eight percentage points ahead of the Conservatives in the latest poll, some say it would be another instance of political suicide to replace the prime minister prematurely, leading to a complete loss of power for the Conservatives.

Beautiful chaos

The prime minister herself wants to do everything to prevent herself from becoming a floating corpse. Despite appeals from all of Britain's business associations, May remains recalcitrant when it comes to a "soft" Brexit that would allow the country to take advantage of all the "goodies offered by the EU, such as access to its customs union and single market. She wants out from everything - especially from the European Court of Justice.

Former government adviser James Chapman complained on the radio that these red lines made it difficult for David Davis in Brussels. Where would there be room for compromise in the negotiations?

Walking away, but staying friends?

On Tuesday May will formally ask the opposition for support: The other side will be expected to offer its considerations for how Brexit should be carried out in the country. It's a possible boon for Labour, as Jeremy Corbyn could suggest that a change in government would be the best way forward. Still, his party is no less disputed than the Tories when it comes to the question of Brexit.

Vince Cable, on his way to becoming the party leader of the Liberal Democrats, has questioned whether Brexit could even happen in this political environment. "I think the problems are so

enormous, the divisions within the two major parties are so enormous \*[] can see a scenario in which this [Brexit] doesn't happen," he said. If so, it would have failed because of the incompetence of its supporters.

LOL.

Admonitions from Brussels

EU Chief negotiator Michel Barnier's role now seems to be the person constantly wagging his finger at the UK. Most recently he complained during a meeting with the Economic and Social Committee, a European lobbying body, that British politicians still didn't understand the full repercussions of Brexit.

[Grundschule (picture-alliance/dpa/P. Pleul)]

Some youngsters have such a difficult time learning

Thus, there could be no easy freedom of movement between the UK and Europe if the country leaves the customs union. "I have heard some people in the UK argue that one can leave the single market and build a customs union to achieve 'frictionless trade' - that is not possible," he said.

Barnier often comes across like a distraught teacher, frustrated by the intellectual limitations of his students. The more he explains the hard realities of Brexit to them, the more willing they are to learn. Maybe they need an educational adviser; send applications to the European Commission, Rue de la Loi 170, 1000 Brussels.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament is threatening the UK with a big stick: The British proposal concerning the future of citizens rights - for EU citizens in the UK and vice versa - is insufficient and needs to be improved, according to the parliament's representative Guy Verhofstadt. Otherwise, it's NO to Brexit.

Exactly!

The Brexit-bus served as effective propaganda

Sorry, honestly

Dominic Cummings, a former director of the pro-Brexit campaign, unleashed a Twitter storm last week where he admitted that 1. the referendum was a "dumb idea" and 2. "in some possible branches of the future leaving will be an error." Cummings was the one who came up with the popular bus slogan claiming the UK paid 350 million pounds per week to the EU. Many Britons believed it. Now, the man doesn't want to have anything to do with his own propaganda. That's what you call late remorse.

Name-calling

It's well known that a fellow party member is often just one step up away from being your enemy - but for the Conservatives, the situation now resembles a men's high school locker room. The Brexiteers are known by their opponents as the "fu [ ]" while the pro-EU politicians are called wankers.

This seemed illogical to one professor of German at the University of Cambridge, who in a letter to the Financial Times newspaper suggested the Conservatives' rhetoric "inverts the truth."

"It is the Europhobes who shut themselves away in self-gratifying fantasies, while the Remainers know that real life is possible only through interaction with others," he said.

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