

# Brexit and “Suicide Vests”: Boris Johnson Takes Another Shot at Theresa May

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*The next blow in Boris Johnson’s chapter of political suicide has been made: a piece in the Mail on Sunday which supplied him ample room to take yet another shot at the ghostly British prime minister, Theresa May. There was nothing new in it; everybody knew what Johnson’s views were, and the position he had taken since hyperventilating over July’s [Chequers statement](#) on Brexit was simply reiterated with the usual reckless prose.*

May’s Brexit deal, scribbled Johnson with an almost boorish predictability, was tantamount to wrapping “a suicide vest around the British constitution” and handing “the detonator to (EU chief negotiator) Michel Barnier”. (He failed to mention that he has been as indispensable as anybody else in adding to that wrapping.)

While the EU had played the role of playground bully, the UK had been unacceptably “feeble” in response, a truly pathetic counterpart. May might have sought a “generous free trade deal” with the EU in the aftermath of the divorce; instead, Britain was effectively saying to those in Brussels, “yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir”. “We look like a seven-stone weakling being comically bent out of shape by a 500lb gorilla.”

Johnson’s very public falling out with his fellow Tories after resigning as Foreign Secretary continues to play out the ailing nature of the May government in very public fashion. Cabinet ministers have had to take very public stances to back the prime minister. Current Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt sounded trench bound in waiting for the barrage, calling on colleagues to keep firm behind May “in the face of intense pressure”.

Former army officer and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee Tom Tugendhat [found himself](#) falling for the old trick that such provocation requires stern correction.

“A suicide bomber murdered many in the courtyard of my office in Helmand. The carnage was disgusting, limbs and flesh hanging from trees and bushes. Brave men who stopped him killing me and others died in horrific pain. Some need to grow up. Comparing the PM to that isn’t funny.”

Brexit, and in a sense, the broader miasmic effect of the Trump presidency on political language, has supplied a release of military metaphors, spells of doom, and imminent calamity. Decorum has come to be seen as the enemy of honesty; opponents are just stopping short of lynching each other. For Alistair Burt of the Foreign Office, [the language](#) used by Johnson was not merely “outrageous, inappropriate and hurtful”.

“If we don’t stop this extraordinary use of language over Brexit, our country might never heal. Again, I say, enough.”

The issue with Johnson has certain similarities to another Westminster country thousands of miles away, and one still insisting on retaining the same British monarch as head of state. Australia resumes parliament with a new prime minister after a needless bloodbath initiated by party functionaries hypnotised by pollsters and number crunchers. The plotters there were also claiming that the governing party had gone vanilla and soft on the hard political decisions. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull had been all too centrist when he could have done with a few lashings of decent, hard right ideology. The result: Australia’s first Pentecostal leader.

Johnson’s overall popularity in Britain is on par with May, a statement of true depression and deflation. But where he has traction is in the ideological, stark-raving mad stakes, a point that May’s aides know all too well, given [their efforts](#) to compile a 4,000 word “war book” on the man’s sexual proclivities in 2016. Unlike other European states, sexual prowess, evenly spread inside and out of marriage, is seen as an impediment to high office.

Johnson certainly has his own cheer squad within the Tories. Tory Brexiteer Andrew Bridgen acclaimed Johnson’s appeal and how he “speaks truth unto power”; Tory MP Nadine Dorries [suggested](#) that his detractors were merely “terrified by his popular appeal”. Were he to become leader of the Tories, and prime minister, “he’ll deliver a clean and prosperous #Brexit.”

Others are playing the middling game. Home Secretary Sajid Javid [merely called](#) for more “measured language” to be used, because that was evidently “what the public want to see.” On the BBC’s Andrew Marr Show, Javid was making sure about booking a seat in any future cabinet that might have a new prime minister.

“I think there are much better ways to articulate your differences.”

Johnson is a spluttering John Bull, foolhardy and all, and his supporters like that. Irresponsible, destructive, a true political malefactor and dressed up public school boy charlatan, he is genetically programmed to disrupt rather than succeed, to undermine rather than govern. His world is not that of figures and sober appraisals, the desk job assessment, the compiler of facts. Those are best left to the hard working empirical types of industry and a hard day’s work.

Even his personal life has not been immune from the all-consuming circus that is the Boris show. His announcement last week that he and his wife of 25 years, Marina Wheeler, would be divorcing, was seen as a political calculation, timed to eliminate any prospect of scandal in the event of a leadership challenge to May.

His opponents, however, have an eternal hope that he will self-destruct, stumbling into a back-end swamp where he will perish as quietly as possible. Johnson’s barbed comments, came foreign office minister Alan Duncan, [marked](#) “one of the most disgusting moments in modern British politics”. Making them spelled “the political end of Boris Johnson”. Unlikely; should Johnson conclude his political career anytime soon, he is bound to be as destructive as the vest he claims May has wrapped Britain in.

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