

Grenfell, Windrush and Skripal: Theresa May's Tainted Tenure Finally Ends in Tears

By [Johanna Ross](#)

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The next UK Prime Minister has their work cut out to unite a divided nation, but also to improve Britain's standing on the world stage, after one of the worst periods in UK-Russian relations

UK **Prime Minister Theresa May's** political career officially ended in tears on Friday, as the woman who declared that she would provide 'strong and stable' leadership when she came to power back three years ago, proved in the end to be not quite so strong or stable as she broke down in front of press outside 10 Downing Street.

She had in fact, arguably one of the most disastrous records of a UK PM to date. A total of 50 cabinet resignations since [she took office](#), far more than any of her recent predecessors; together with scandals such as the Grenfell Tower disaster, Windrush scandal, hostile environment policy and record levels of homelessness and poverty which have all tainted her legacy. And that's not to mention her inability to deliver Brexit, which effectively led to her demise.

Indeed however tempting it may be to feel sorry for Mrs May – she has been surrounded by political vultures all vying for her position for months now – one is minded of the words of British political commentator [Owen Jones](#), who when asked recently if he felt sorry for the Prime Minister, noted that May's tears were simply those of self-pity and were absent at times when they would have been appropriate, such as in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, which claimed 72 lives.

One may be inclined to think that if she was so unsuccessful on the domestic front, then perhaps in the area of foreign policy Mrs May could have had a better record. But alas, no such luck. We only have to look at the considerable deterioration in relations with Russia to understand that under her leadership, Britain's standing in the world has diminished. Prominent British journalist Patrick Cockburn has even gone as far to say that Britain is now 'entering a period of permanent crisis not [seen since the 17th century](#)'.

But arguably back in the 17th century the UK was more competent in the art of diplomacy than it is now. May's Defence Minister, **Gavin Williamson**, with his comment that Russia should 'go away and shut up' epitomised the extraordinary lack of finesse and savoir-faire the May government had when dealing with Russia.

His bellicose tone unfortunately went hand-in-hand with a completely misplaced notion of

Russia presenting to the UK some kind of genuine threat, as he argued earlier this year that the UK had to 'enhance its lethality' against such well-resourced states, as opposed to concentrating its energies on Islamic terror groups. He was then accused by fellow politicians of 'sabre-rattling' in what were widely seen as misguided and provocative statements.

However, the Defence Minister was not alone in his anti-Russian stance. It was under the May leadership that the controversial government-funded Integrity Initiative programme really began to flourish; designed to 'counteract Russian propaganda' but instead deceptively engaged itself in spreading disinformation about Russia and even about the UK Labour party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, by hiring journalists, academics and commentators who would all sing from the same hymn sheet when it came to discourse about Russia in the press.

What was most chilling about the revelations in the Integrity [Initiative hacked documents](#) was the extent to which policy makers within the inner workings of the establishment are apparently obsessed about an imminent 'Russian threat' and are prepared to go to considerable lengths to persuade the British population of this.

Even more unnerving was the discussion that there was need for some event to be staged in order to heighten the UK population's awareness of a Russian threat. The timing was uncanny: this was not long before the poisoning took place of ex-double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, which has, along with multiple discrepancies in the British narrative, led some analysts to ask whether the whole incident was indeed orchestrated by [British secret services](#).

Staged or not, the handling of the Skripal incident by Prime Minister May left much to be desired. Even her experience of handling the Litvinenko affair as Home Secretary hadn't taught her a great deal. Before any concrete evidence was produced to implicate the Russian government in the poisoning, Mrs May was already issuing ultimatums to the Russian President. Her infamous phrase that the government concluded it was 'highly likely' Russia was responsible for the poisoning even entered itself into the Russian vocabulary and became something of a household joke in Russia as the UK Prime Minister herself became nothing more than a laughing stock.

The decision to publicly accuse another state of attempting murder on UK soil with evidence which only amounted to 'a nerve agent of a type produced by Russia', was utterly reckless, not only deeply harming relations with Russia, but undermining the credibility of the UK as a whole. And despite it being an attempt to bolster the PM's position at a time when desperately needed to generate support for her upcoming Brexit white paper - this itself, given a delayed Brexit and divided country, proved fruitless.

So what can we expect from the next Prime Minister of the not-so-Great Britain? Whoever it is has their work cut out not only to unite the Conservative party, but the country. In terms of improving relations with Russia, as long as the Tories remain in power, and the 'deep-state' or civil service continues to push its aggressive anti-Russian agenda, we are unlikely to see any significant change in policy.

One could hope that a certain **Boris Johnson**, himself named after a Russian émigré, and the leading candidate to replace May, could seek to build bridges in this regard, but his record on the Skripal case leaves room for doubt. The PM is after all a figurehead, and the

UK civil service remains a driving force of policy-making.

As former Labour PM **Tony Blair** once said:

“You cannot underestimate how much they [the civil service] believe it’s their job to actually run the country and to resist the changes put forward by people they dismiss as ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ politicians. They genuinely see themselves as the true guardians of the national interest, and think that their job is simply to wear you down and wait you out.”

[Says it all really.](#)

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