

I Am Ready to Return to the Battle to Save Brexit
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By Nigel Farage

(Telegraph) -- My new year resolution was to hope for the best but to prepare for the worst. It is the only one that I have kept in my entire adult life and I am sticking to it rigidly. This is why.

Throughout the torturous EU negotiation process, I have warned repeatedly that Theresa May is engaged in the betrayal of Brexit . Many Brexiteers have tried to tell me I am wrong. But ever since September 2017, when Theresa May delivered her EU speech in Florence , I have been convinced of my position: Brexit has undergone a slow strangulation.

In that speech, Mrs May indicated that, after decades of Britain opting out of the EU's structures, our withdrawal from the EU would see Britain opting into them. In effect, she said she desired a close relationship with the EU, rather than a clean break.

It was this attitude which led ultimately to the appalling Withdrawal Agreement that was kicked out of the Commons on Tuesday. Looking more like a surrender document signed by a nation defeated in war than a confident vision for our future, it is not surprising that the PM went down to a historic defeat . The EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, commented afterwards that there would be no concessions from his side. This means the agreement is politically dead.

The EU's stance should present no problem for the UK. Not only did the British people decide to leave the EU by a majority of 1.3 million votes in the referendum, but 80 per cent of voters cemented that decision at the 2017 general election by backing Labour or the Conservatives. Both parties' manifestos promised to deliver Brexit. Moreover, in 2017, some 498 MPs voted to trigger Article 50.

Article 50's terms are clear. The UK will leave the EU with a "withdrawal agreement or, failing that, two years after the notification".

So, UK law now states that we are leaving on March 29, deal or no deal . Although I have hoped and prayed that this law would be obeyed, I can see this is now highly unlikely. There is no will

among the Government, most MPs or Speaker Bercow for this to happen.

Having voted for legislation that lets Britain leave the EU on World Trade Organisation (WTO) terms, this group has decided to do its damndest to change it. Our politicians believe that a bad deal is better than no deal, and to hell with what the people think.

Now, in Mrs May's desperation to deliver "Brexit in name only", she has appealed to her political opponents. Jeremy Corbyn has so far snubbed the offer of talks. But the Lib Dems, SNP and Plaid Cymru have already visited her in Downing Street. They all supported Remain. Logically, any consensus reached with their help will surely be a watered-down Brexit.

Mrs May's long-standing friend, Damian Green MP, has given a strong clue as to what lies ahead. He has cited Norway, saying it is not in the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy or under the European Court of Justice. But remember, Norway voted twice not to join the EU and its politicians signed it up the European Economic Area anyway. This supposedly independent country must accept free movement of people, obey EU single market laws and pay EU financial contributions. Norway's political class overrode the will of its people. Much the same is happening here.

By far the likeliest outcome now is the activation of the Article 50 clause allowing for an extension, there being no Commons majority for anything else. Indeed, I have already been told by the Secretariat of the European Parliament that Brexit is dead. My arch-opponent in Strasbourg, Guy Verhofstadt, has even joked that the worst part of the UK staying in the EU is that Farage will come back.

Brexiters must accept that the Brexit betrayal is happening. In line with my new year resolution, I am preparing to fight the European elections on May 23 and working with Leave Means Leave to assemble a cross-party campaign to fight a second referendum, should one occur.

Not to do so would be negligent. It would also betray the 17.4 million people who voted for the UK's independence.

After dedicating 25 years to getting Britain out of the EU, I shall return to the battle lines if I must. And I will do so with more determination than I have ever shown before.

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