

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

3rd May 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

[A plague on both your houses as Brexit anger dominates the local elections](#)

- [A remarkable set of results are unfolding with the Conservatives and Labour](#) both suffering setbacks as local council election results come in. Sky believes Labour did badly in the pro-Brexit north of England but better in the pro-Remain south. The Lib Dems and the Independents, though, gained some spectacular scalps and are on the march. [The Tories look to be on course to lose around 500 seats](#), much as expected. Labour is not doing anything like as well as it should. The Lib Dems have taken control of a number of councils, including arch-Brexitteer Jacob Rees-Mogg's Bath & North East Somerset council

[A cross-party deal on Brexit looks close](#)

- [Theresa May looks set to accept that the UK will remain in lockstep with the EU's customs rules](#) for years after Brexit in a deal with Labour. Under the terms of the tentative agreement Mrs May is close to signing up to, the two parties would agree on a long-term customs union in all but name. The government would commit to 'enter into a customs arrangement with the EU, at the end of the transition period, after leaving the EU. This would include Britain being able to align all tariffs on goods with the EU and having the right to negotiate trade deals on Britain's behalf

[Labour MP Barry Gardiner characterises the Brexit deal as 'Labour trying to bail out the Tories on Brexit'](#)

- ['We are now trying to negotiate with you because your Prime Minister, who has lost control of her party,](#) has lost any chance of getting her deal through parliament so has had to come to us and then had to say 'please can I listen to the ideas you have been putting forward'

[Theresa May has just days to seal her Brexit destiny](#)

- [She could call Corbyn's bluff and show he's been negotiating in bad faith OR so enrage her party](#) by agreeing a compromise deal with Corbyn that they find a way to throw her out OR so alienate her Brexitteer MPs and the DUP they join with Labour to kick her out of office. She has nothing to lose and everything to gain. So expect a move on a Brexit deal with the Labour Party very soon

[Gavin Williamson is said to be plotting to deliver a bombshell speech to trigger Theresa May's downfall](#)

- [As a former chief whip and core to the campaign to get Theresa May elected as leader](#) it is likely he would know where a few of her skeletons are buried. Whether this speech materialises or not, the press now know about the threat so he's entering 'put up or shut up territory'

Conservative donors are abandoning Theresa May to back a new Brexit referendum campaign

- [The Right to Vote campaign for a second referendum](#), set up by Conservative MP's, has already raised hundreds of thousands of pounds from disgruntled Conservative donors since it was set up in January. One donor, City Pub Group chairman, Clive Watson, told Business Insider he had donated £35,000 in a personal capacity, having previously donated £25,000 through his business to the Conservatives

Political News RoundUp

- [Northampton County Council is not voting today as it does not have enough money to run an election](#)
- [Brexit Party candidate Sally Bate, standing in the north west region](#), has quit the party, as she cannot continue to stand alongside Claire Fox, who has failed to condemn the Warrington IRA bombing of 1993 that kills two children which she continues to support
- [Reports says government communication records reveal that Gavin Williamson](#) had an eleven minute call with Telegraph journalist Steven Swinford last Tuesday. Williamson denies he talked about Huawei to the journalist, but this evidence suggests a link which is hard to refute and supports the decision to sack him
- [There was some hilarity over a video of UKIP](#) candidate Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) campaigning in Warrington and ending up covered in a milkshake for a second day running
- [Open Democracy said that a leading Tory MEP](#), and number two on the party's European Election list, Nirj Deva, has been going above and beyond the minimal courtesy an MEP would offer to Huawei - actively and unusually lobbying hard on behalf of the Chinese technology company in Brussels
- [Conservative Party leadership candidate](#) and Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, urged the UK to exercise caution on Huawei and to consider the concerns of intelligence agencies and partner networks about Huawei very seriously before proceeding
- [Former Tory Party minister, Greg Barker](#), is said to have been paid a \$4m bonus by controversial Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, for his efforts in shuttle diplomacy between the UK and the USA - and for getting U.S sanctions placed on Deripaska's company En+ Group lifted

Economic News RoundUp

- [Bombardier said it now plans to sell its operations](#) in Northern Ireland, where the Canadian aerospace group is one of the biggest employers, with a workforce of 3,600 people. Bombardier has previously warned of the consequences of a hard Brexit for its operations in Belfast - a threat which could now complicate the sale process
- [Bristol's economic prosperity is at risk over](#) a no-deal Brexit, according to the urban policy research unit, Centre for Cities. A total of 55% of Bristol's exports are sold to the EU and are worth around £3.6bn to the city's economy, or £8,508 per worker
- [The Bristol Royal Infirmary told a cancer patient](#) that a cutting edge radiotherapy treatment for cancer in his liver, his best chance of survival and recovery alongside chemotherapy, has been delayed indefinitely due to Brexit chaos

Jobs at Risk

Bombardier puts Belfast aerospace business up for sale

Bombardier plans to sell its operations in Northern Ireland, where the Canadian aerospace group is one of the biggest employers with a workforce of 3,600. The decision to dispose of the Belfast-based aerostructures business comes at a sensitive time for the UK, which is grappling with the impact that

Brexit could have on Northern Ireland. Bombardier has previously warned of the consequences of a hard Brexit for its operations in Belfast — a threat that could now complicate the sale process.

<https://www.ft.com/content/7db6d104-6cc6-11e9-a9a5-351eeaef6d84>

Economic Impact

Bristol's economic prosperity 'at risk' over no-deal Brexit

Failure to secure a good Brexit deal with the EU risks putting Bristol's economic prosperity at risk, a think tank is warning. A total of 55 per cent of Bristol's exports are sold to the bloc and are worth around £3.6 billion to the city's economy, or £8,508 per worker. But local exporters are facing tariff barriers if the government fails to secure a good Brexit deal, says urban policy research unit Centre for Cities.

<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/business/bristols-economic-prosperity-at-risk-2822367>

Administrative Fall Out

Cancer patient told 'Brexit chaos' has indefinitely delayed life-saving treatment

A cancer patient has been told his best chance of a cure has been delayed indefinitely "because of Brexit". Richard Kelly was due to start the cutting-edge treatment known as selective internal radiation therapy (Sirt) for cancer in his liver last month, alongside chemotherapy. But now the 53-year-old has claimed that his oncologist at Bristol Royal Infirmary told him: "The treatment had been delayed due to Brexit". Mr Kelly told The Independent his consultant said: "NHS England were unable to set a budget for this kind of treatment because of the chaotic nature of the Brexit negotiations and the actual leaving of the European Union. Therefore this essential treatment was delayed, with no suggestion of a date when it would be available." Consultants proposed he undergo the "groundbreaking" treatment method after they found signs the bowel cancer he was initially being treated for had spread to his liver and was "incurable" with surgery - though it could be contained with chemotherapy.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/brexit-cancer-treatment-delay-radiation-sirt-bristol-life-saving-a8896181.html>

British teenagers able to apply for free EU rail passes despite Brexit

British 18-year-olds can apply for a free rail pass awarded by the European Union despite the looming Brexit deadline. The European commission announced on Thursday that 18-year-olds in the EU could apply for 20,000 "DiscoverEU" passes that allow travel to one or more countries, a repeat of the oversubscribed ticket giveaway launched last year. Successful applicants will have to take their trip, of up to 30 days, between 1 August 2019 and 31 January 2020. British 18-year-olds can apply for tickets, although the UK is scheduled to quit the EU on 31 October.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/02/british-teenagers-to-be-able-to-apply-for-free-eu-rail-pass-despite-brexit>

Political Shenanigans

Theresa May has just days to seal her Brexit destiny

Well there are three failure scenarios, all of which could almost simultaneously happen. 1) She could call Corbyn's bluff and in the end find out that he has been negotiating in bad faith; it may turn out that he simply could not bring himself to do a deal with any Tory prime minister. But that would probably reflect worse on him than her. 2) She could so enrage her party that they find a way to throw her out double quick. But she knows that's going to happen in pretty short order any way. So in that sense she has literally nothing to lose from doing what she thinks is the right thing by the country. 3) She could so alienate her Brexiter MPs and Northern Ireland's DUP, whose support is vital to the Tories remaining in office, that they would join forces with Labour to force a general election. But May knows that the parliamentary arithmetic may make it impossible to secure any kind of

Brexit ahead of an election in any case. So again she would have lost nothing if an election was precipitated. Or to put it another way, even though the prospect of Theresa May securing a pact with Labour for a managed departure from the EU is a remote one, trying and failing is not such a terrible thing for her - because she knows that whatever happens, her time in 10 Downing Street is almost up. Her destiny is sealed. Her time as prime minister is drawing to a close. So why wouldn't she boldly go where she has never gone before, and seek a genuine Brexit alliance with her implacable opponent, Jeremy Corbyn?

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-05-02/theresa-may-has-just-days-to-seal-her-brexit-destiny/>

Gavin Williamson 'planning' bombshell speech likely to trigger Theresa May's downfall

Some MPs have called for Mr Williamson to be prosecuted while others believe he should be allowed a chance to defend himself in an official investigation. However, he is reportedly thinking of delivering a speech like Geoffrey Howe's resignation speech which sparked Margaret Thatcher's downfall. Political editor Nicholas Watt said on BBC Newsnight: "Make no mistake, Gavin Williamson is on the war path. "I spoke to a friend tonight who said he is thinking of delivering a speech on the level of Geoffrey Howe's resignation speech which famously precipitated the downfall of Margaret Thatcher."

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1122230/BBC-newsnight-gavin-williamson-theresa-may-huawei-leak-sacked-5G-defence-secretary>

Labour and Tories hit by Brexit backlash in local elections

Labour and the Conservatives have been hit by a Brexit backlash, while the Liberal Democrats, Greens and independents are enjoying a Brexit bounce. On a night of town hall turmoil in the local elections, broadly speaking Labour have done badly in the pro-Brexit north of England and better in the pro-Remain south. For the Tories it's the opposite: struggling in the south and yet embarrassing Labour in its northern heartlands. The Lib Dems have gained some spectacular scalps and independents are on the march. The two big parties wanted these elections to be about bins, not Brexit. Fat chance. Brexit has dominated and polarised UK politics for three years and threatens to continue to do so for years to come.

<https://news.sky.com/story/labour-and-tories-hit-by-brexit-backlash-in-local-elections-11709851>

Labour 'trying to bail out' Tories on Brexit

Labour MP Barry Gardiner has said his party is trying to "bail out" the Conservatives over Brexit - trying to find a compromise which will break the current deadlock. Mr Gardiner, who is shadow international trade secretary, clashed with Conservative Brexit minister James Cleverly during the BBC News Channel's local election coverage on Thursday. He said: "We are now trying to negotiate with you because your prime minister, who's lost control of her party, who's lost any chance of getting her deal through Parliament, has had to come to us and say 'please, I now need to listen to the ideas that you've been putting forward'".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-48143435/labour-trying-to-bail-out-tories-on-brexit>

Chris Philp MP: The local elections are about the everyday services in your area, not the politics in Westminster

For everyone voting tomorrow, it will be a simple choice of who you want running everyday services in your area, and how much you want to be charged for them, says Conservative Chris Philp MP.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/conservative-party/opinion/house-commons/103589/chris-philp-mp-local>

Conservative donors abandon Theresa May's party to back new Brexit referendum campaign

Pro-European Conservative donors are diverting their cash from Theresa May's party in order to fund efforts to stop Brexit, as funding for the national party dries up, Business Insider can reveal. The

Right to Vote campaign for a second Brexit referendum, set up by Conservative MPs, has already raised hundreds of thousands of pounds from disgruntled Conservative donors since it was set up in January. One donor to the campaign, City Pub Group chairman Clive Watson, which operates 44 sites across England and Wales, told Business Insider that he has donated £35,000 in a personal capacity, having previously donated £25,000 to the Conservative party through his business.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/disgruntled-tory-donors-divert-100000s-to-second-brexit-referendum-campaign-2019-4>

Chris Grayling's no-deal Brexit ferry services scrapped at cost of £83m

Chris Grayling faced fresh calls to resign today after the government wasted £83 million on no-deal Brexit ferries that have been running half-empty for more than a month. The transport secretary was criticised over his handling of contracts signed to create extra freight capacity across the Channel in the event of Britain leaving the EU without a deal. It was announced that contracts with two ferry companies were being scrapped five weeks into a six-month deal, costing the taxpayer about £50 million. This is on top of a £33 million settlement to the Channel Tunnel operator Eurotunnel after it was unfairly excluded from bidding for contracts. The additional space was bought from Brittany Ferries and the Danish operator DFDS to keep essential medicines and food flowing if there were lengthy delays at French ports.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chris-graylings-no-deal-brexit-ferry-services-scrapped-at-cost-of-50m-zx9hhdgmw>

Conservatives and Labour fear 'plague on both your houses' as Brexit anger dominates local elections

Both the Conservative party and Labour fear a disappointing set of results as voters go to the polls in the first major set of elections since Theresa May's decision to delay Brexit. The country will on Thursday elect candidates to 8,200 seats covering 259 councils in England and Northern Ireland. Six directly-elected mayor positions are up for grabs in regions across England, too. For Prime Minister Theresa May and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, the results will provide a clear insight into how the country feels about their handling of an extremely turbulent period in British politics

<https://www.businessinsider.com/local-elections-conservative-and-labours-brexit-anger-results-2019-5>

Rory Stewart: I'd bring country together as PM

New International Development Secretary Rory Stewart has said he intends to stand for the Conservative leadership after Theresa May steps down. He told the BBC's Political Thinking With Nick Robinson podcast he could "help bring the country together". Mr Stewart also said he wanted to move "beyond my brief", laying out his opinions on "other issues". Mrs May has told Conservative MPs she will stand down if her Brexit deal is passed by Parliament. Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Sajid Javid, Jeremy Hunt, Dominic Raab and Andrea Leadsom are among those who have been touted as possible replacements.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48140849>

Toby Harris: We need to detoxify political debate in Britain

I am introducing a debate in the Lords next Thursday on the toxicity of debate in public life and the divisions being fostered within our society. Such toxicity led to the murder of Jo Cox in the run up to the European referendum, since when politics has – if anything – become even more fractured. Threats to MPs have rocketed with 142 offences recorded in 2017, rising to 270 last year. Death threats are now commonplace. MPs' homes and offices are attacked and their constituency staff intimidated.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2019/05/toby-harris-we-need-detoxify-political-debate-britain>

Woman who's voted for 66 years turned away from local elections for having no ID

An 87-year-old woman has been turned away from today's local elections for not having ID - despite voting in every election in her adult life. The pensioner attacked the "stupid" system after taking a

taxi to her local polling station in Pendle, Lancashire, only to be told she couldn't vote.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/local-elections-woman-87-whos-14984757>

This County Isn't Voting Today Because They Don't Have Enough Money To Run Elections

Crisis-hit Northampton County council is desperately trying to make savings after years of overspending, so district and borough council elections are off.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/this-local-council-isnt-voting-today-because-they-dont-have-enough-money-to-run-elections_uk_5ccac7b7e4b0913d078d3631

Brexit: Guy Verhofstadt to knock on doors for Lib Dems in European parliament elections

The European parliament's outspoken Brexit chief is coming to Britain next week to knock on doors in the European elections on behalf of the Liberal Democrats. Guy Verhofstadt, who is himself seeking re-election as a Belgian liberal MEP, will hop on the Eurostar from Brussels to join Lib Dem canvassers on the doorstep on Friday. While Mr Verhofstadt is best known in Britain for being the parliament's voice in Brexit talks, the former Belgian prime minister is also leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group in the European parliament, in which the Lib Dems sit.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-european-elections-lib-dems-guy-verhofstadt-change-uk-a8896661.html>

Andrew Adonis - Remain supporters need to back Labour to make a People's Vote happen

The three elements are Labour's 'alternative Brexit plan', a general election, and a second referendum with an option to remain. Behind them is the reality that, despite all the political developments of recent months, including the launch of Change UK, Labour continues to be both the dominant opposition party and the only alternative government to the Conservatives, although a range of Tory leaders and Brexit policies are possible in the months ahead. Crucially, Labour alone can now stop Nigel Farage from topping the poll in the European elections on May 23. If Farage comes first, he will be rampant and the dynamic of Brexit will be his.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/andrew-adonis-writes-on-the-european-elections-brexit-and-peoples-vote-1-6027708>

Cabinet leaks are undermining Brexit, says Jeremy Hunt after the sacking of Gavin Williamson as defence secretary over secret Huawei meeting breach

Jeremy Hunt last night criticised Cabinet colleagues for damaging leaks which he warned had undermined Brexit. Backing Theresa May's decision to sack Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson over the Huawei leak, the Foreign Secretary said no Premier could have a minister at the table she did not have confidence in. He also defended Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill against Mr Williamson's criticism of the investigation, calling him a 'man of utmost integrity'. Mr Hunt insisted it was right the Huawei leak was treated differently because it had been from the 'inner sanctum' of the National Security Council which discusses highly-classified information.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6986653/Cabinet-leaks-undermining-Brexit-says-Jeremy-Hunt-sacking-Gavin-Williamson.html>

@BBCLauraK Papers snapped by the inimitable @PoliticalPics show document carried by David Lidington say Williamson stays in the privy council

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<https://twitter.com/bbclaurak/status/1123940032354631680>

May prepares to keep EU customs rules

Theresa May is preparing to accept that Britain will remain in lockstep with the European Union's customs rules for years after Brexit in a deal with Labour. Under the terms of a tentative agreement Mrs May is close to signing up to a long-term customs union with the EU in all but name in return for

Labour supporting her withdrawal agreement. Details of internal discussions began to leak as Mrs May gave her strongest hint yet that she was prepared to give ground. She told MPs that both sides now agreed on "some of the benefits of a customs union". It is understood that under the proposal, which has yet to be agreed, the government would agree to enter a "customs arrangement" with the EU at the end of the transition period. This would include Britain aligning all tariffs on goods with the EU and allowing it to negotiate trade deals on Britain's behalf.

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/may-prepares-to-keep-eu-customs-rules-dg9c3qd2q?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=b04373834d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_05_02_06_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-b04373834d-190289417

@SkyNewsPolitics Brexit minister James Cleverly says the Conservatives will "disproportionately" face a Brexit backlash from voters

Brexit minister James Cleverly says the Conservatives will "disproportionately" face a Brexit backlash from voters. Polls have closed in local elections,

<https://twitter.com/SkyNewsPolitics/status/1124064594190905344>

@Plaid_Cymru The Welsh Senedd has voted in favour of the Plaid Cymru motion declaring a #ClimateEmergency. Wales has just made history becoming the first parliament in the world to do so.

VICTORY. The Welsh Senedd has voted in favour of the Plaid Cymru motion declaring a #ClimateEmergency. Wales has just made history becoming the first parliament in the world to do so.

https://twitter.com/Plaid_Cymru/status/1123634832444219393

Political Setbacks

Brexit Party candidate quits over colleague Claire Fox's 'ambiguous position' on IRA bombing

Sally Bate, who was standing in the North West region, said she "cannot continue to stand beside" Claire Fox, who has failed to condemn the Warrington attack which killed 12-year-old Tim Parry and three-year-old Johnathan Ball in 1993. Ms Fox is a former member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, which defended "the right of the Irish people to take whatever measures necessary in their struggle for freedom," in a party newsletter published shortly after the killings. In a statement issued on Tuesday, Ms Fox, who is the Brexit Party's top candidate in the North West, said she had the "greatest sympathy" for the Parry family. She added: "The loss of their son was tragic and must have been terribly painful, as for all victims of violence during the Troubles. "My personal politics and views are well known and I have never sought to disguise them, though on this issue they have remained unaired for many years.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/news/103617/brexit-party-candidate-quits-over-colleague-claire-foxs>

This Government Wants To Throw EU Students Under The Bus - Student Reps Like Me Won't Let Them

The Tory government plans to raise fees for EU students, remove vital financial support and make it far harder for EU students to apply to study in the UK. This move would shut off access to your world class education sector from the world.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/international-students-brexit_uk_5cc9c1ace4b0913d078b879a

The Londoner: Labour members shred their cards

Labour members are cutting up and shredding their membership cards in protest at the party's failure to offer another referendum in its European Election manifesto. Yesterday saw a long drawn-out Labour National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting decide that the manifesto would offer a

second referendum “fully in line” with Labour’s policy, which is to offer a referendum only after trying to secure the party’s own “alternative plan for Brexit” or a general election. There had been an attempt by Tom Watson, the deputy leader, to strengthen that policy and make a confirmatory vote a priority. But with Jeremy Corbyn, pictured, said to be implacably opposed, Watson’s move failed, prompting a furious backlash among members. Pictures of membership cards cut into pieces, or being fed into shredding machines, flooded social media last night and this morning. “I’m not voting Labour until there is a people’s vote,” wrote one member.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-londoner-labour-members-shred-their-cards-a4131441.html>

Tories are hopeful local elections will ONLY lose them ‘500 to 600’ seats over Brexit shambles

Tory chiefs’ hopes are growing that they can duck a council elections wipe out today as voters go to the biggest local polls since 2015. Control of a total of 259 local authorities are up for grabs across England and Northern Ireland, with 8,804 councillors to be elected. Conservative MPs have feared a vicious drubbing as angry Leave as well as Remain voters take revenge on the Government for the Brexit shambles. Some Cabinet ministers have even predicted more than 1,000 council seat will be lost. But CCHQ insiders now say they can limit the losses to “around 500 to 600 on a good night”. A Tory figure told The Sun: “The private estimate is our vote will be more resilient than is generally thought. “Much of the voting is in rural areas, where Labour haven’t made many in-roads in the last few years. “The doorstep experience is also better than the national narrative.” In contrast, then-PM John Major’s Tories lost more than 2,000 councillors in 1995 in a massive midterm wipe out. A variety of hidden electoral factors are also expected to help hold up the Tory vote despite the Brexit anger, including a low turnout.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8983903/local-elections-conservative-wipeout-brexit/>

The 11-Minute Phone Call That Sparked Gavin Williamson's Cabinet Sacking

An eleven minute phone call is what appears to have sparked Gavin Williamson’s spectacular and dramatic downfall from government. When the defence secretary talked to Telegraph journalist Steven Swinford last Tuesday, he set in train a sequence of events that ended with the first leak-related sacking of a Cabinet minister in 70 years. Communications records, showing that the pair spoke after two crucial meetings of the National Security Council (NSC) and Cabinet that day, are understood to have revealed the exact length and time of the call. In a two-hour session with the official leak inquiry investigators last Friday, Williamson strenuously denied that he had discussed any confidential material from the NSC meeting, never mind the Huawei case. He’d chatted instead about the Tory leadership, Brexit and other matters, he said. But it’s clear that his explanation simply didn’t wash with the inquiry - or with Theresa May.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/analysis-gavin-williamson-cabinet-sacking_uk_5cca0d8ee4b0e4d7572d2f99

Gavin Williamson: Now he's told to 'go away and shut up'

In a leak investigation, that has broken the precedent of most leak investigations that end up with precisely no result at all, a rapid hunt of just a few days has resulted in the sacking of one of the most senior ministers in government, and one of the few ministers frankly, that the prime minister could more or less rely on. Mr Williamson was for a while chief whip too, the keeper of the government's secrets. And, crucially, one of the few ministers who had good relations with the DUP. Indeed, brokering a deal on Theresa May's behalf in the wreckage of the 2017 general election. But there was also a lot of resentment and frustration in government circles at how he sometimes behaved, suspicion often that he was too quick to seek his own political advantage, too interested in his own future, too entertained by the dark arts of Westminster. That meant that as soon as the Huawei story broke, fingers were being privately pointed to him as the source of the leak. "Operation get Gav", as one of his allies described it.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48128188>

Additional sources: ([Sky News](#)) ([The Independent](#)) ([BBC News](#))

Theresa May has questions to answer over the Huawei scandal

The main question that needs to be answered by the prime minister and her security team is why the UK can mitigate this risk, when its partners in the FiveEyes cyber security alliance believe it is impossible. And - perhaps most importantly - whether the UK would have reached a different decision if it had not already allowed Huawei in, over a decade ago?

<https://news.sky.com/story/theresa-may-has-questions-to-answer-over-the-huawei-scandal-11709335>

How Sir Mark Sedwill became Theresa May's supreme 'securocrat' - and pivotal in the Gavin Williamson affair

In his one and only interview as Cabinet Secretary, Sir Mark Sedwill spoke of the importance of keeping 'a sense of perspective' and 'shouldering responsibility' when it came to taking decisions on 'the big issues'. Speaking to Civil Service Quarterly, a government publication, the 54-year-old 'securocrat' described how he drew on his former career in security and international relations to become the country's most senior civil servant - and some say, the most powerful man in the country.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/02/sir-mark-sedwill-has-much-power-fault-theresa-may/>

Tommy Robinson swings punches at man after milkshake thrown over his head

The far-right extremist, real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, was in Warrington this afternoon when he was covered in McDonald's milkshake for the second time in two days

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tommy-robinson-swings-punches-man-14985549>

Additional sources: ([The Independent](#))

Matteo Salvini: vote for nationalists to stop European caliphate

Matteo Salvini, Italy's most powerful politician, has said Europe will become an "Islamic caliphate" unless nationalist parties make gains in the European elections later this month. Salvini, Italy's deputy prime minister and leader of the League party, is trying to form a coalition of nationalist and far-right forces ahead of the elections and was speaking in Budapest during a visit to his ideological soulmate Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian prime minister. "For our children, to leave behind an Islamic caliphate with sharia law in our cities is not something I want to do and I'm going to do everything in my power to avert this sad ending for Europe," he said at a joint press conference with Orbán, who has used similarly incendiary rhetoric to rail against migration to Europe from Africa and the Middle East. Salvini made similar comments earlier this week in Italy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/02/matteo-salvini-vote-for-nationalist-parties-stop-islamic-caliphate>

Ukip and swastika graffiti daubed 'on Lib Dem activist's car' as voters go to polls in local elections

A swastika and the word Ukip have been daubed onto a Liberal Democrat activist's car in Kent as voters go to the polls in local elections. Images show the graffiti crudely drawn onto a car which was parked outside a primary school. The vehicle's tyres were also slashed. A father walking his daughter to a primary school, on Edith Road, in Faversham, Kent, told the Standard he saw the vandalism this morning.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/ukip-backer-daubs-swastika-on-lib-dem-activists-car-as-polls-open-a4132261.html>

PM's tetchy exchange with Yvette Cooper over Brexit compromises

Theresa May insists compromises are possible on finding a way forward over Brexit and shows annoyance at the suggestion she is 'stubborn' when asked by Yvette Cooper

<https://news.sky.com/video/pms-tetchy-exchange-with-yvette-cooper-over-brexit-compromises-11708736>

If Theresa May thinks the Gavin Williamson row will blow over, she's kidding herself

Having sacked Gavin Williamson in the most abrupt and even brutal manner possible, Theresa May apparently "considers the matter closed". Today in the Commons, MPs were in uproar. Some demanded a criminal investigation. Others – including several Tories – protested that the former Defence Secretary was the victim of a "kangaroo court". Labour's Tom Watson, intriguingly, began by denouncing the leak as "a fundamental breach of duty" – but then criticised the decision to let Huawei help build the UK's 5G network. "Our [international] partners are so concerned," he scowled, "that they're considering whether they can safely continue to share intelligence with us." Yet Mr Watson wouldn't have known about the Huawei decision if it hadn't been for the leak. In his eyes, it seems, the leaker was simultaneously endangering national security and defending it. Mr Williamson himself was absent, as indeed was Mrs May. Speaking on the Prime Minister's behalf was David Lidington, the Minister for the Cabinet Office. Mr Lidington is often deployed when the House is fractious, probably because his manner is so cool and soothing. He's calamine lotion in human form.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/02/theresa-may-thinks-gavin-williamson-row-will-blow-kidding/>

Senior Tory revealed as Huawei cheerleader in Brussels

As the ongoing controversy over Huawei engulfs Theresa May's cabinet, a senior Conservative politician with a controversial lobbying history has emerged as one of the Chinese telecommunications company's leading advocates in Brussels. On Wednesday the prime minister sacked her defence secretary, Gavin Williamson, after he was accused of leaking secret discussions about Huawei that suggested May "overruled" senior ministers and security warnings to let the Chinese tech giant help build Britain's new 5G mobile internet network. Those concerns do not appear to have resonated with Nirj Deva, a Tory MEP and number two on the party's list for the upcoming European Parliament elections, who recently urged colleagues to back Huawei in an upcoming vote in Brussels. "I would ask you to make decisions based on facts, rather than unfounded allegations and to consider the very real implications of banning Chinese technology from our market," Deva wrote to colleagues on 12 March in a leaked email seen by openDemocracy and SourceMaterial. "There has not been a single instance of foul play detected on any Huawei product."

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/senior-tory-revealed-huawei-cheerleader-brussels/>

Brexit Party Spiked - Nigel Farage's Disastrous RCP Candidates

Claire Fox clearly did not understand that and nor has she sought to. Her arrogance, lack of remorse and unwillingness to take the sincere concerns of locals seriously was already testing patience, but her call to Colin Parry was the final straw. On Wednesday night one of her fellow Brexit Party candidates, Sally Bate, quit the party in disgust and resigned as the prospective MEP. Sally is the founder and leader of Warrington for Brexit and a well-known local activist. Friends and political allies tell me that she felt she could no longer represent the party when Claire Fox was standing on the same platform.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/05/02/brexit-party-spiked-nigel-farages-disastrous-revolutionary-communist-candidates/>

British Lord Barker Got \$4 Million Bonus on Deripaska Sanctions Deal

Former Tory Part minister, Greg Barker, a member of Britain's House of Lords and the chairman of En+ Group Plc, was awarded a bonus of about 3 million to 4 million pounds (\$3.9 million to \$5.2 million) for negotiating the removal of U.S. sanctions on the Russian company, according to people familiar with the matter. Barker spent months shuttling between Washington, London and Moscow to put together an agreement between the Treasury Department and Russian billionaire Oleg Deripaska, who was sanctioned last April. The talks culminated in a deal in which Deripaska agreed to step away from En+, which holds a controlling stake in aluminum giant United Co. Rusal.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-05-01/en-chair-barker-said-to-get-4-million-bonus-on-sanctions-deal>

SNP MP labels PM 'evasive' over government's Cambridge Analytica meetings

An SNP MP has branded Theresa May "one of the most evasive Prime Ministers in history" after the Tory leader again refused to answer questions over meetings between the UK Government, Cambridge Analytica and Canadian political consultancy and technology firm AggregateIQ. At Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons yesterday, Deidre Brock challenged May to "spill the beans" on who from her government met with Cambridge Analytica and AggregateIQ and when meetings took place, following confirmation from the Foreign Office that they happened.

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17611734.snp-mp-labels-pm-evasive-over-governments-cambridge-analytica-meetings/>

UK should exercise 'caution' over Chinese firms like Huawei, Jeremy Hunt warns

The UK should exercise "a degree of caution" about the role of large Chinese firms such as Huawei, Jeremy Hunt has said. The foreign secretary raised concerns about Chinese laws requiring firms to co-operate with Beijing's intelligence agencies, saying: "We have to weigh those considerations very carefully." A Whitehall leak inquiry is under way after details emerged of a National Security Council (NSC) meeting at which Theresa May was said to have given the green light for the Chinese tech giant to help build "non-core" parts of the UK's 5G communications network.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/huawei-jeremy-hunt-leak-enquiry-cabinet-phone-records-5g-national-security-council-a8890561.html>