

Final sovereignty on Brexit must rest with the people

Jeremy Corbyn

In these critical weeks for democracy, we must resist the actions of a phoney populist cabal in Downing Street

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We will do everything possible to stop a disastrous no deal for which this Conservative government has no mandate. This is a smash-and-grab raid on our democracy, to force through no deal, which is opposed by a majority of the public.

Most people in Britain reject a Tory no-deal Brexit. Boris Johnson's government wants to use no deal to create an offshore tax haven for the super-rich and sign a sweetheart deal with Donald Trump.

No deal would destroy jobs, push up (food) prices and hand our public services and protections over to US corporations. And most of the public want nothing to do with this Trump-deal car-crash Brexit they are being driven towards.

Johnson and fellow Conservatives who campaigned for Leave in 2016 promised people that they would get a deal. In 2017, Boris Johnson, then foreign secretary, proclaimed: "There is no plan for no deal because we are going to get a deal."

But clearly they haven't got a deal. And now, running scared of being held to account for his reckless plans for a Trump-deal Brexit, Johnson has decided to shut down parliament to stop them doing so.

But you don't have to go back to 2017 to find our new prime minister flip-flopping and U-turning to suit whatever position he has adopted at the time.

In late July he promised EU citizens he would legislate to protect their rights. Now we learn the home secretary will end freedom of movement on 1 November without any new immigration rules or protections in its place. Clearly, this is not a prime minister people can trust.

Last week the Advertising Standards Agency banned a Home Office ad about EU citizens registering to stay because it was misleading. And the government registration app won't be ready until the end of the year (months after the home secretary plans to scrap their rights).

As the Spectator – the magazine Johnson once edited – warns: "There are worrying signs of sloppiness, even negligence, in the way the Home Office is handling all this."

We already know the kind of consequences such decisions can have. The hurt caused to the Windrush generation by the government's hostile environment policy is now in danger of being repeated on an even bigger scale, with around 3 million EU citizens living in the UK.

Every week I meet EU citizens who are stressed about their future in this country. Sadly, many are leaving – taking with them their skills and support from our NHS, social care and schools.

The defence secretary, Ben Wallace, let the cat out of the bag when he told his French counterpart that parliament is being suspended because "we've suddenly found ourselves with no majority".

There is an obvious and practical solution when a government finds itself without a majority. It is not to undermine democracy. The solution is to let the people decide, and call a general election.

This week could be the last chance to stop Johnson's Tory government taking us over a no-deal cliff edge that will threaten jobs and our NHS, mean a restoration of the border in Ireland – threatening peace – and cause shortages of food and medical supplies from day one.

Industry after industry is warning of the deeply damaging impact of a no-deal Brexit. During the summer I listened to the fears of farmers, car workers, NHS staff and many others across the country.

And as Trump's close ally, the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro, lets the Amazon rainforest burn, it could not be clearer that we need to build stronger relations with other international allies in the global fight against the climate emergency.

A different future is possible, and real change can be delivered for every community, nation and region of our country. The threat of a no-deal crash is creating an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. But I am determined to ensure Labour brings people together by giving hope and confidence that a different future is possible, and real change can be delivered for every community, nation and region of our country.

There is a rapidly growing movement of people determined to stop no deal. Last week spontaneous protests sprung up around the country.

People are angry that those who claimed we would "take back control" are now keeping control for themselves – with the aim of handing it over to Donald Trump and US corporate giants in a race-to-the-bottom free market trade deal.

This weekend, Labour MPs have been joining more protests across the country. People are determined that they will not allow a phoney populist cabal in Downing Street, in hock to the vested interests of the richest, to deny them their democratic voice.

It is the people, not an unelected prime minister, who should determine our country's future.

A general election is the democratic way forward. And in that election Labour will give the people the chance to take back control and have the final say in a public vote, with credible options for both sides, including the option to Remain.

In the maelstrom of the coming days and weeks, we need to remember that sovereignty doesn't rest in Downing Street, or even in parliament, but with the people.