

1974

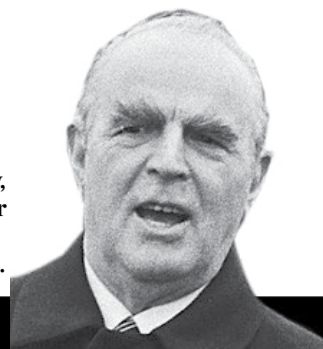
Northern Ireland's power-sharing Sunningdale Agreement collapses following a general strike by loyalists.

1975

Fifteen West African countries sign the Treaty of Lagos, creating the Economic Community of West African States.

1977

In Southgate, Kentucky, the Beverly Hills Supper Club is engulfed in fire, killing 165 people inside.



1979

Konstantinos Karamanlis signs the full treaty of the accession of Greece with the European Economic Community.

# May's successor faces an even more divided country than the one she inherited

Like May, any successor will need to be mindful that voters were promised there would be no costs to leaving – even more so if the person chosen is one of those who made that promise.

For defining what Brexit actually means, this continues to be a matter of dispute. From the outset, the main options were a soft Brexit, meaning, primarily, membership of the single market, or a hard Brexit, which would mean leaving the single market and seeking a free trade agreement with the EU. These are entirely different economic and political models, but both require as a precondition a withdrawal agreement between the UK and the EU.

After some initial ambiguity, May opted for a hard Brexit, with the UK leaving not just the single market but also the customs union and the system which exempts the UK and the rest of the bloc from tariffs on goods. It is inconceivable that the Conservative Party will now elect as leader anyone who advocates a softer Brexit than this.

A hard Brexit has a consequence that would destroy May's attempts to reach the withdrawal agreement she struck with the EU. By definition, being outside the territory area of the single market and the area of the customs union means the UK is creating a hard border with the EU. And that would compromise the Good Friday Agreement that ended the armed conflict in Northern Ireland.

In order to ensure that, whatever happens, there is an open border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, the withdrawal agreement specifies a backstop arrangement to be used unless another solution is found. The backstop would mean the UK as a whole remaining in the EU customs union and Northern Ireland also remaining in many parts of the single market. That way, there would be no need for border checks.

In opposition to the backstop from the most vocal Brexit MPs in her own party and Unionists from Northern Ireland, whose votes were needed for a majority, was the main reason why May failed to achieve support for a deal on multiple occasions and was



Recent pictures of the eight contenders declared as of May 26 to replace Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May when she resigns on June 7: (top L-R) Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, former foreign secretary Boris Johnson, Britain's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary Michael Gove, former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab, (bottom L-R) Britain's International Development Secretary Rory Stewart, former works and pensions secretary Esther McVey, former leader of the House of Commons Andrea Leadsom, and Britain's Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock, all pictured in Downing Street, central London

forced to resign.

The key political conundrum is that these pro-Brexit MPs opposed May not because she failed to give them the hard Brexit they wanted but because in agreeing the backstop, she was asking them to recognise the practical realities inherent in a hard Brexit and the compromises needed to implement it. This they will not do.

Instead, they want the backstop to be removed from the withdrawal agreement altogether, in favour of as yet unspecified or untested "alternative arrangements", or to have a time limit on it (which by definition would mean it was no longer a backstop). If the EU will not agree then they propose to

leave with no deal at all.

It is almost certain that May's successor will come to office promising to pursue this approach. It is also likely that the EU will not accept the backstop being abandoned or diluted. Indeed it is not clear that they could do so without violating World Trade Organisation rules, even if the Good Friday Agreement was not an issue. So if the new leader sticks to the Brexiteers' plan, there will be a no-deal Brexit (although some think the British parliament would find a way of preventing this). If they do not stick to the plan, the Brexiteers will revolt again.

But if the UK leaves with no deal, the Irish border issue doesn't disappear. So in the

event of a no-deal Brexit, there will immediately need to be new negotiations – about the border, trade and many other things – for which the EU's precondition will be what was agreed in the withdrawal agreement, including the backstop.

This will bring things back to accepting something like May's deal but with the addition of a major economic crisis. The only other possibilities would be to abandon Brexit altogether or shift to a soft Brexit – each of which would cause a major political crisis. For that matter, a no-deal Brexit would itself cause a political crisis since it is not remotely what Leave voters were promised in 2016.

That all roads lead to crisis reflects the fact that public debate is now so toxic, any outcome will be regarded by some part of the electorate as a betrayal. May's main failure was that she did not try to build a consensus, difficult as that would have been, on a realistic way of doing Brexit until it was too late. Her attempt to hold cross-party talks ended in failure earlier this month and precipitated her departure.

Political discourse is now dominated by the language of sabotage, betrayal and treachery. May did little to challenge that and sometimes encouraged it. Positions on all sides have polarised. So even if a new leader were minded to seek consensus, the possibility of achieving it is very small. But in any case, it also means that the new leader is inevitably going to hold a position that will polarise things further.

In the end, the only way forward might be another referendum or perhaps a general election. But all the signs are that these would yield very close results and fail to provide any real resolution, for May bequeaths to her successor an even more divided country than the one she inherited.

Yet for all her faults and mistakes, the core challenge of delivering Brexit is not one of leadership but of Brexit itself, as her replacement will shortly discover.

*(Chris Grey is a professor of organisation studies at Royal Holloway, University of London and the author of The Brexit Blog)*



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



We are immensely proud of India's culture. Similarly, we are also optimistic about India's future. We are working to create an India that is powerful and prosperous, empowered and inclusive.

@HSHskMohd

02



On Memorial Day, we honor the brave men and women who gave their lives for our country and the families who lost loved ones. Today, we reaffirm a grateful nation's commitment to everyone who has served and to their families.

@BernieSanders

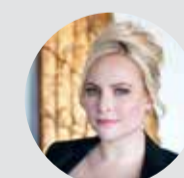
03



South Africa sends heartfelt congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi and the BJP party on a decisive victory. We wish you everything of the best as you return for a second term and we look forward to further strengthening the good relations between our two countries.

@CyrilRamaphosa

04



We are free, in the greatest country in the world, because of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We honor the brave men and women who gave for us today & all days. We thank God for those who serve and sacrifice & pray for them and their families. Freedom isn't free.

@MeghanMcCain

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

ly effective. But to innovate in this many intermediaries? Here's the equation. You can send money in the world in seconds. As your funds move, it's not possible to censor or steal, as it is done through a network, not by a centralized institution.

to receive Bitcoin, you can use a smartphone with Bitcoin. According to a survey, 45% of citizens in many countries already own a smartphone. While that means a large number of people in the world's poorest countries don't have the internet, the fact that smartphones continue to rise in popularity and that more people receive Bitcoin, support or an ID or even if they don't have a government ID, they can still receive the funds. It



US soldiers load a C-17 cargo plane with food, water and medicine for a humanitarian mission to Venezuela, at Homestead Air Force Base in Homestead, Florida

is a true peer-to-peer transaction, done over a global, neutral payment rail. Of course, what isn't guaranteed is that the recipient can turn Bitcoin into local currency so they can buy the food, medicine or help that they need. That's a major challenge, but it's changing in a big way.

According to a global analysis of Bitcoin exchange data, individuals in West Africa, Latin America and East Asia are seeing a significant increase in their ability to sell Bitcoin for local currency. In an interview with researchers at the Open Money Initiative, I learned that the "liquidity

time" of Bitcoin in Venezuela today is 15 minutes. Meaning, if you're in Caracas, I can send you Bitcoin from Miami and you can be holding bolivares in your hand within 15 minutes of my Bitcoin arriving on your phone. To give you an idea of the scale of Bitcoin activity in Venezuela today, consider that on April 26, 639 million bolivares were traded on the Caracas Stock Exchange. During that same week, the average daily volume of Bitcoin traded on one online platform alone – LocalBitcoins – was 5.2 billion bolivares.

LocalBitcoins is one of several online marketplaces – like Paxful, Hodl

With Bitcoin, you can send money directly to anyone in the world in a matter of minutes. As your funds move to the recipient, it's not possible for third parties to censor or steal, as payment processing is done through a global competition, not by a centralized institution

Hodl and Bisq – that work a bit like eBay. For example, if you're in New York and I'm in Lagos and you send me 1 bitcoin (roughly \$7,800 at today's price), I'd create an account on the LocalBitcoins website and make a post, saying I'm selling 1 bitcoin for the going rate of around 2.8 million Nigerian naira. When I get a good offer, I click accept. I send my Bitcoin to LocalBitcoins, you send your naira to me, and my Bitcoin is only released to you when I confirm that I've received your naira. Or, we can choose to meet and make the trade in person, where you give me cash and I send you Bitcoin, smartphone-to-smartphone. And – voila – I just received Bitcoin from across the world and turned it into local, spendable currency.

When the highway blockade occurred on the Colombian border, preventing much-needed aid from getting into Venezuela, millions of dollars of Bitcoin were freely moving in and out. A big perk of using Bitcoin is that

even when brick-and-mortar banks close, the Bitcoin network never shuts down. As global Bitcoin infrastructure improves and local exchange becomes more widely available, its value proposition for humanitarian aid – especially in disaster zones and tough political climates – will only increase. If you are one of the billions of people stuck in a country restricted by capital controls, suffering from hyperinflation, trapped behind sanctions or simply lacking identification or a bank account, donors can now use Bitcoin to reach you directly.

If you are a gift-giving foundation, foreign ministry or development advisor, could sending your aid via Bitcoin be a better way? Bitcoin's peer-to-peer digital payments network could be the future of humanitarian aid.

*(Alex Gladstein is Chief Strategy Officer at the Human Rights Foundation. He has also served as Vice President of Strategy for the Oslo Freedom Forum since its inception in 2009)*