

# A CRISIS CALLED BREXIT

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Prime Minister Theresa May's resignation as leader of the Conservative Party, thus effectively from the prime ministership of Britain, may resolve nothing yet for the British decision to leave the EU and its inability to agree on the terms of the exit. May's departure was inevitable after she failed three times to win parliamentary support for the deal her government negotiated with the EU. A fourth attempt on May 22 also ended prematurely with the resignation of a minister. May was the architect of her own bitter and tearful political end. A "remainer" to begin with, she promised too much to Brexiteers, but had to sell them the realities of what it really meant to leave, particularly for economic relations with the Irish Republic. Her gambit to bolster her political strength by calling a snap election in 2017 ended in failure as the Tories did not win a majority. She leaves behind a legacy of a country and political parties, including her own, bitterly divided on Brexit. She will remain in office as PM until the Conservatives elect a new leader, for which a race has already begun.

But it must get worse before it gets better. There is also every likelihood that it may not get better. The frontrunner for the Tory leadership is Boris Johnson, the maverick former foreign secretary, a hardliner on Brexit, who once wrote a poem about President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey having sex with a goat. He has said already that Britain will leave the EU by the extended deadline of October 31, "deal or no deal". In the EU parliamentary elections, the Tories are a distant fourth, and the extreme-right Brexit Party has won the most number of seats in Britain.

Its leader Nigel Farage, who also heads the United Kingdom Independent Party, has been criticised as a racist and is a known immigrant baiter. Labour, which is as divided as the Tories over Brexit and its leadership, has stood third in the elections. Such are the challenges before Britain. A possible general election may throw up even more difficult choices.

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