

# Former Tory leader outlines plan to SAVE Brexit that is sure to INFURIATE Brussels

BRITAIN could leave the EU on time if Theresa May reopened negotiations on the Irish backstop, according to a former Conservative leader.

Lord Howard claimed the House of Commons would support Prime Minister's deal on the condition she renegotiates the Northern Ireland backstop. He wrote the Daily Telegraph: "Achieving this would not just win the support of Parliament but also create a coherent position around which a Conservative Party that appears dangerously disunited could begin to coalesce. The problems with the backstop arise solely out of the EU's refusal to countenance any change to the wording of the Withdrawal Agreement.

"But in recent days there have been a number of developments which completely change the dynamics of these discussions."

Mr Howard, who was leader from 2003 to 2005, added that Brexiteers have argued against the backstop believing alternative arrangements could be made.

He said: "This argument has now received complete endorsement from the leaders of the EU.

"Leo Varadkar, the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic, told the Dail that under no circumstances would there be a border between the Republic and Northern Ireland.

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Lord Howard claimed the House of Commons would support Prime Minister's deal (Image: GETTY)

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The Brexiteer added Mrs May's Withdrawal Agreement has secured a majority in Commons before (Image: GETTY)

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"An identical assurance was given to the European Parliament by Jean-Claude

Juncker, the President of the European Commission.”

The Brexiteer added Mrs May’s Withdrawal Agreement has secured a majority in Commons without the backstop.

Under Mrs May’s Brexit deal the UK will automatically drop into a customs union with the EU unless a new trading relationship is established during the implementation period.

Membership of a European customs union would mean the UK still has to follow a significant proportion of EU rules with very little say, whilst being unable to negotiate comprehensive free trade agreements with third countries.



Mr Howard, who was leader from 2003 to 2005, added that Brexiteers have argued against the backstop (Image: GETTY)

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Lord Howard said: “I fully understand that this is not the only reason why some have refused to support the Withdrawal Agreement.

“But the Brady amendment shows that it is the backstop which is the crucial factor in the Government’s inability, so far, to obtain a majority for it.

“So there are now powerful reasons for those who have opposed the agreement on these grounds to think again.

“After all, if the Government proceeds with its declared intention of putting a further series of indicative votes to the House, we are quite likely to find that the amendment proposed by Kenneth Clarke, which would keep us in a full-blown customs union, will pass.

“This is the amendment which has come closest to passing in previous votes, but would make it impossible for us to enter into trading agreements with other countries.”

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