

Is Sueella Braverman set to resign? Home Sec chooses GBNews interview to drop hints

Also, EXCLUSIVE : the PM's NI deal is in tatters as it fails half the DUP's tests

CIBUK looks at what was said yesterday – and why it could matter a lot

Yesterday evening there must have been steam exuding from the ears of those sitting in an office deep within No.10 Downing Street, as the PM and his advisers watched his Home Secretary take to the airwaves in an exclusive and highly-watchable televised interview with Liam Halligan for GBNews. (Watch it below.)

In CIBUK's analysis today, we summarise what readers need to know – and very importantly what the significance of it all might be. We also reveal – EXCLUSIVELY – the off-the-record, 'deep background' whispers from our sources close to the discussions between No.10 and the MPs from the DUP.

Summary

The CIBUK and Facts4EU exclusive on the NIP, and the GBNews scoop

▪ Exclusive : Brexit Facts4EU.Org is told 'on deep

- background' that Rishi Sunak's deal won't fly
- DUP believes it fails most of their seven tests
 - The significance of Suella Braverman giving any interview at all right now
 - The fact she bypassed the BBC and Sky News and chose GBNews' Liam Halligan
 - The Home Secretary's clear statements on what's needed to fix the NI Protocol
 - Her stress on DUP support being vital to any solution
 - The need for the UK to be much tougher with the EU in negotiations
 - Her lukewarm support for Rishi Sunak
 - Her convictions and her love for her country
 - The implied threat of her resignation as Home Secretary
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1. EXCLUSIVE – Sunak's deal is sunk below the waterline

Rishi Sunak's NI Protocol deal with the EU looks to be dead, according to whispers from close (and usually reliable) sources of CIBUK.Org and Brexit Facts4EU.Org.

According to those who have seen it, the text doesn't come close to meeting the DUP's seven 'red lines'. These were put in place around 18 months ago, not as a rigorous and forensic set of tests, but as an indication of what is needed to resolve the current impasse. We understand that half of these have not been met.



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Inexplicably the government's text of the proposed deal with the EU was written without the involvement of the DUP or any other unionist parties in Northern Ireland. Instead, it seems that Mr Sunak's officials quietly applied the loosely-worded tests from the DUP written 18 months ago as they understood them, without once asking the DUP (nor the ERG) for a fully-descriptive set against which any EU offers could be judged.

We further understand that the Leader of the DUP, Sir Jeffery Donaldson MP, has said privately that the PM **"needs to show some mettle"** with the EU.

For the moment, it seems that all of CIBUK's predictions in recent months are correct.

It is against this background that the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Suella Braverman MP, gave her TV interview yesterday evening to GBNews.

2. The GBNews TV interview with Suella Braverman last night

Yesterday in a scoop for the UK's newest broadcaster, the Home Secretary gave her first major televised interview. In the midst of a tumultuous week, for the Home Secretary to give any kind of interview sent a clear message to No.10.

Below are the excerpts transcribed from the video by CIBUK and Brexit Facts4EU.Org in relation to sovereignty, Northern Ireland, and the Home Secretary's own position. We have added our commentary.

Excerpts from the GBNews Braverman interview, 22 Feb 2023

Q : *"You've called the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill 'one of the biggest tools we have in dealing with the EU over the issue of the Northern Ireland border'. What did you mean by that? What have we used that tool for?"*

SB : *"Well there are problems with the operation of the Protocol right now and that is clear for everyone to see. There are problems with trade across the Irish Sea within the UK internal Market. There are problems with a democratic deficit, that being that Northern Ireland is still on the receiving end of hundreds of laws being passed at the EU level and applying in Northern Ireland. And there are problems with the delivery of public services in Northern Ireland because of an executive which is not functioning. Now all of those problems need fixing. I believe that the proposed legislation that the government introduces – "*

" – That allows ministers to avoid parts of the Northern Ireland Protocol as it stands. – "

"Yes, it's an important tool in fixing some of the issues that I've just talked about."

Our analysis : *"... in fixing **some** of the issues..."* This suggests that Ms Braverman believes the full solution requires more than the current Bill which is held up in the Lords.

Q : *"Doesn't it up the ante? Doesn't it make a deal with the EU tougher?"*

SB : *"No, I actually think if you look historically at how our deals and agreements have been reached for the EU it's important that we take a robust approach. We need to. You know, my clear preference is for us to reach a workable and pragmatic agreement with the EU. I know that the Prime Minister shares that objective and I know that he's working flat out to reach such an agreement whilst not compromising on our sovereignty or on the place of Northern Ireland inside the United Kingdom."*

Our analysis : *"important that we take a robust approach"* – A clear message that the UK Government has not been tough enough in its negotiations with the EU. Regular readers know that Brexit Facts4EU.Org has consistently argued for a 'robust approach' to the EU since we started seven years ago.

Q : *"But that Protocol bill – as you say, a vital negotiating tool – is languishing in the Lords. The word on the street is that No.10's abandoned it."*

SB : *"That's not my perception. I know that the Prime Minister is absolutely committed to resolving this issue, regardless of the implications. It's absolutely essential that we get Stormont back up and functioning, that we restore free-flowing trade across the Irish Sea so that businesses in Northern Ireland and Great Britain can carry out their commercial activities. But also that Northern Ireland's place within the UK is safeguarded."*

Our analysis : *"That's not my perception."* This is hardly a ringing endorsement of what No.10 is doing. Has she been involved in the discussions?

Q : *"Simon Clark, former cabinet minister, has said there will be a very real problem for the government if there is a*

Northern Ireland deal that doesn't carry the support of the DUP. Is he right??"

SB : *"Listen the DUP are an important voice in this debate and in this discussion – "*

" – Can we have a deal that they don't agree to?"

"We have always worked very closely with the DUP. They are unionists, they speak for a significant portion of the communities in Northern Ireland, and they need to be around the table. Ultimately Stormont will only function if the DUP supports any proposal."

Our analysis : "Stormont will only function if the DUP supports any proposal." In other words, No.10 must get the DUP onside – something they have clearly failed to do.

Q : "You resigned of course as a Brexit Minister in 2018 over Theresa May's deal. Would you resign over this?"

SB : *"Listen I don't think we need to be talking about resignation. I've taken a very forthright position in the past because I've found the terms of previous agreements intolerable. I don't support selling out on Northern Ireland and allowing the EU a foothold in the United Kingdom. It's absolutely vital that we safeguard what we've gained from the Brexit vote – that we go forward as a United Kingdom where the integrity of our Union is safeguarded and we properly 'Take Back Control'. And I know the Prime Minister shares that objective."*

Our analysis : *"I don't think we need to be talking about resignation."* This must be one of the weakest denials available to someone with Ms Braverman's skills. She is a barrister as well as politician and everything she said in this interview must be viewed through this prism. Her answer

will do nothing to quell the rumour mill, which places her in the small list of ministers who may decide to resign if the PM does not rapidly make progress on the NIP and on other key policies.

Observations

Some readers will no doubt feel we have over-analysed the Home Secretary's words. We suggest that they must be read or watched against the backdrop of her being a barrister – someone who chooses their words carefully – and of the current debacle going on as the PM's proposed deal with the EU, done behind closed doors, runs into major opposition from a large number of Conservative MPs.

Do we foresee the possibility of more than one junior minister resigning if the PM doesn't radically change tack? Yes. Do we foresee more than one PPS resigning? Yes. The \$64,000 question revolves around Suella Braverman.

Ms Braverman is a conviction politician, whatever readers may think of her politics. She already has a track record, having resigned as a Brexit Minister in Mrs May's government over her disastrous Brexit policies. We believe that if Rishi Sunak tries to deliver a Northern Ireland sell-out deal again, which fails to deliver on the principle of one United Kingdom, and without the support of the DUP, then yes, we think Ms Braverman will walk.

The original article can be found [here](#).

This report has been co-published with our affiliated organisation, [Brexit Facts4EU.Org](#).

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