

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

Welcome to the Restless Politics Question Time with me, Alistair Campbell.

And with me, Rory Stewart.

Rory, shall we kick off with Morocco? I guess that's been the other major news story. Matt Davis, Morocco Earthquake. Which charity would Rory recommend giving money to so that it arrives quickly and achieves the most? Ideally, I'd like the funds to be distributed to locals in the way he has described previously. Well, I mean, that's a very kind question from Matt Davis.

So I'm very closely involved. I've been the president. I'm now transitioning to be the senior advisor in a charity called Give Directly, which is on the ground in Morocco. We have teams on the ground in Morocco who are very experienced in doing direct cash support, and particularly in an emergency situation. It's very difficult to beat giving direct cash because you can't know from a thousand miles away exactly what somebody who's been hit by an earthquake needs. Do they need shelter? Do they need food? Do they need to get their business off the ground? You need very individualised response. And cash is generally, and this is studied by randomized control trials. And this is one of the reasons I'm so proud of Give Directly, that it uses proper scientific research to demonstrate this, the most effective way of getting support to people and allowing them to get back on their feet.

What about these sort of, you know, often what often happens in these kind of big disasters is that each country has official, generalized, donating bodies that you can give to. Are they effective?

Yes. There's this fantastic thing in Britain, which is a disaster relief committee, which brings together, when there's an emergency, the leading NGOs and charities in Britain.

And that's also DEC, which is this committee, is a very, very good way of the public contributing to the big reputable, as it were, blue chip British charities who bring that together.

So there are amazing people working on the ground. But as you can imagine, I mean, I was in, we talked, in fact, when I was in Turkey in the aftermath of that earthquake, where Give Directly were doing a response. And that was shattering because you realise, in that case, 40,000 people had been killed in about two minutes. And there, and in Morocco now, people are horrified by the afterquakes because all these earthquakes come with aftershocks. And the aftershocks can be as deadly as the original quakes. So not only have you seen your house and business destroyed, you've seen your relatives killed, but you're unable to sleep at night because the ground is continuing to tremble.

And what's this transitioning then? You're transitioning from what to what?

So I was the president of Give Directly, which meant that I was doing the full-time executive staff. I was the CEO of Give Directly. As you remember from a lot of our podcasts, I was travelling to Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, the United States, fundraising. And I'm now moving my family back from Jordan to London. And I'm going to focus on championing Give Directly as a sort of global ambassador. I'm going to be representing them to governments. I'm going to remain deeply involved in some of the ambitious programmes we're doing in places like Rwanda and Malawi. But I'm transitioning out of day-to-day operational leadership.

I trust you're taking a huge pay cut.

I am. I'm not going to be paid in this new role. And that's partly because of this wonderful podcast that I do with you, which allows me to keep deeply involved in Give Directly and championing them. But I'm going to be waving a salary, which I'm pleased to be able to do.

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

And I'm so proud of Give Directly. I'm about to go and represent them at the UN General Assembly next week, after I see you in Bath and Edinburgh.

So who's the new Rory Stewart at Give Directly?

So the new president is Sam Wale. And it's great. I mean, he's a very senior Kenyan civil servant.

Great to have leadership coming in from global south and very excited at how we go forward.

Anyway, question back to you. Suzanne, can you pay some attention to Central Europe and the elections coming up in Slovakia and Poland? How do you see their possible impact on the EU?

And how is the UK's relationship with them developing?

Well, Slovakia is coming very, very soon. I think it's the end of this month,

September 30th, I think. So it's a very, very small country. But the parliamentary election

is happening. And if the polls are right, we're talking about another mini-orban figure,

a guy called Robert Fico, when I say pro-Putin, very much in that side of the argument,

very much modeled on Orban. And of course, Slovakia, I think it's a little bit smaller

than Scotland. I think we're talking about 5 million people. But a lot of the stuff that

we've been talking about, the populism, the post-truthary, the polarization,

it's kind of been on the march there. And this is a guy who's been sort of kicked out of power,

has done a bit of a rebrand. He's come back as a very different sort of personality. And he looks

like he's set to win. So I think that will be significant for the European Union, because it

means they've got another... We're now talking about this, in Eastern Europe, this little kind of

gaggle of leaders who are, frankly, a lot of the time, not living up to the ideals of the European

Union. And that is what weakens the European Union. I had a glimpse of it yesterday. The manager

of

the local cafe around the corner from my house in London had just been in Slovakia. His girlfriend

Slovakian. He himself, I think, is Eastern European. And he immediately said to me,

oh, it's terrible. There are all these Syrian refugees. And he began showing me his phone,

which was a picturesque sort of Slovakian border guards. And it was really interesting,

because there's a sort of dissonance there. On the one hand, I was a bit suspicious of this

image he was showing me. It didn't seem to me as though there were that many refugees actually

in the photograph at all. It looked like the camera was being used to exaggerate the number.

But of course, he also said, on the one hand, he's sort of sympathetic towards

what this Slovakian populist is saying. On the other hand, he then said, oh,

it's a bit like Brexit. And of course, I talked to him about Brexit four or five years ago,

where he was horrified by the way in which the populist right in Britain were trying to whip

up anti-immigrant sentiment. So you can see that kind of divided consciousness there.

There's a history to this guy as well. So he's been prime minister before. I think he's been

prime minister twice. He was there in the 2006, he was there again, 2012. And something happened

there that kind of, I don't know, you'd have thought would have been the end of him, but it

appears not to have been, is that there was a journalist who was exposing all sorts of corruption

going inside the government, links to the mafia, and so forth. And the guy who was doing this,

the journalist guy called Jan Kuczyak, he and his girlfriend were murdered by contract killers.

And it led to huge demonstrations. Fico and the cabinet had to quit. George Soros was blamed

as they often are by the hard right, as he often is by the hard right. And you'd think that would

be it. He'd be finished, but no, you had the change and now it looks like we're changing back.

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

And he absolutely parrots the Putin line about Ukraine, says these people are fascists.

So, you know, this is pretty worrying. And I think sometimes in the UK, we look at Europe and we think, oh, well, France is important, Germany is important. But we don't think of the fact that, you know, you're talking about an institution here that does involve all 27 and Slovakia coming in, albeit a small country, I think it could lead to more change than people are perhaps ready for.

Very good. So legacy bill, Oran Loughry, a loaded question I'll admit, but I would love to hear it answered. Rory's quick to condemn the actions of the IRA and Republican groups at any given opportunity when Northern Ireland is mentioned. What's his take on the legacy bill passed by his party this week, given that British armed forces murdered 188 civilians during the course of the troubles? However, unlikely it was before the families of those victims never stand a chance of getting justice now. And this is something that's been really championed by your friend, Johnny Mercer, isn't it? This has been one of his main campaigns.

Yeah, but the question I think was directed to you.

It was directed to me. So, well, I think it's possible in this, as I guess in many things, to believe two things on both sides of this. I absolutely feel that the IRA did horrifying things. And we should be very clear about, you know, what was involved in the Brighton bombing and the people that were killed and mutilated there and elsewhere, while at the same time accepting that there was also terrorist acts by the Unionist community, there were civilians killed by the British military, most notably, of course, in Bloody Sunday. And I have been very doubtful about this legacy bill. It's not something that I supported. I think that I get why the government did it. The government did it because many soldiers feel that they are still in danger of being prosecuted as old people for things that happened back in the 1970s. And they want to finally be able to draw a line about under it. But anything like that that happens has to be done equally for all communities. It's very, very important, I think, for not just for security, but for justice and a quality of treatment that if you're going to do this for British soldiers, you should be doing it for everybody else that was involved in the killing in the 1970s and 80s. I should just say, Fiona and I are watching, finally getting around to watching once upon a time in Northern Ireland, which is absolutely brilliant. It's so good. It's essentially the story of the Troubles. They're interviewing people who are living there, some of them active, some of them, one guy who was in and out of prison, part of the Bobby Sands hunger strike was in prison with Sands at the time. But a lot of them are just kind of what we would call ordinary people. And it's really worth watching, just to remind ourselves, because I think there is a danger we forget of just how horrific things were. And we had a lot of difficult decisions to make when we're doing the Good Friday Agreement. We've talked before about the probably the most

difficult being prisoner release. That was a very, very, very hard thing to do. And it was a very, very hard thing for a lot of people to swallow. And so is this.

What's your view on it? Do you agree with your friend, Johnny Mercer, that soldiers should be getting amnesty in this way? I think, put it this way, I think if we released prisoners, people who we knew had done very, very, very bad things, I think that we'd had the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, incredibly expensive, incredibly detailed, went on for years and years and years and years. I actually thought one of David Cameron's better moments in Parliament. And it was an attempt in a way to bring some sort of closure. I don't like the way the government has handled this,

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

but I think into, because I think they've tried to sort of make it a big deal of it, make a political point of it. Well, because it's very popular with veterans organisations, isn't it? Yeah, which is, which is, you know, I understand the politics of it, but I just think we're in, we're in such a delicate place at the moment. I think, but the principle of it I get, and I can see why they want to do this. The process has got to keep moving forward. And we do have to try to bring people to some sort of reconciliation about the past. I feel very strongly also that we have to be very, very clear about bringing soldiers to justice if they do bad things. And you know, there's a real knee-jerk tendency, very understandable for people who've been in the military to be very, very protective of any allegations made against soldiers. But some of the revelations that have come particularly out of special forces units, the US Navy SEALs appear to have been closely implicated in extrajudicial executions, basically killing unarmed people in Iraq. Australian SAS, terrifying stories coming out of some of their operations in Afghanistan. And it's really important that being a soldier, having a gun, having that lethal power has to be a very, very precious responsibility. And you have to act with real courageous restraint. And what we can't do is just say, soldier's right or wrong. And we have to be serious about allowing them to be legally challenged. I do agree with that. So let's just bring it up to something more to do with today. Stanny 1905, with the stagnation in Northern Ireland causing many issues in funding public services, is it time to legislate to prevent devolved government failing due to the action of a single party and allow other parties to carry on without them. And this is of course because the DUP are refusing to sit down and get back into devolved

administration. And it's testing the arrangement that we came to where essentially you had to have both in power together. That was part of the settlement. So the question, Stanny's asking whether that needs to change. Now, I'm not sure whether it can be changed in the current atmosphere and the current circumstances. It'd be very dangerous to change it, wouldn't it? Don't think you'd be suggesting we should be trying to change that. Difficult.

Here's one for you. Thomas Gray. What are your views on the grammar school system? I find it often gets overlooked in education policy. I think there's a good argument to be made for the social mobility they provide for bright kids from poor areas as shown by Mustafa Suleyman. Should more grammar schools be created? No. And this is despite the fact that you and Gary Lenaker

went to the same grammar school and benefited greatly from it. As discovered. Well, that was because there were lots of grammar schools around. As we argued at the time, I went through my entire

school years thinking it was a comprehensive because that's what it became. Anyway, I'm just utterly opposed to selection in schools. I think that I don't like the existing grammar schools. I wish that we'd done more about them. I just think we, until we have an education system in which all of us feel a shared sense of ownership, I keep talking about Finland and Canada, where there is next to no private education, there is next to no selection. And kids in the main get a very, very good education. And that's what I want. And we can all point to examples. Yes, Mustafa Suleyman said in fair play, you know, he went to a grammar school, turned out to be a very good grammar school. Fine. He did very well. I think he'd have done very well in the comprehensive school, provided we had proper, proper comprehensive system in which

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

all the schools are good. So to put in a plug for my father, who's no longer with us, one of the things that he felt, so when he was in the civil service, senior civil servant in the 1970s, he went around and looked at the permanent secretary, so the senior person in every government department.

And in those days, early 70s, almost all of them had been to grammar school. And one of the things that he noticed as you went into the 80s and 90s is you began to see an increasing number of people from private schools taking over as the grammar schools were closed and the comprehensive system began to sweep across the country. So he felt that unfortunately, one of the consequences of that was that you were not getting people from state education at the senior levels. And that was partly because the grammar schools had been removed. But you don't agree with that?

Well, I can't disagree if that's his historical analysis of what actually happened. But I just think that our obsession with, you know, a very small percentage of people who think that their children can't possibly mix with other children in a system used by all. And this idea of putting kids into brackets of succeeding and failing aged 10 or 11, I just think is an absurdity and I just wish we didn't do it anywhere. Very good. So, Anastasia, thank you for that. Many more questions to come. Let's just take a quick break. Paul G, what is the point of the List Trust book?

I wish we'd be promoting it. I certainly, I'm not currently intending to read it. What's it called? Ten Years to Save the World. It's a bit comical, isn't it? Because it gives a lot of opportunities for 40 days to destroy the pound. But when we talked about Cathy Ashton, radical humility, I don't think List Trust does humility, does she? No, it's absolutely amazing. It's not just 10 days to save, it's ten years to save the West. I want to share the lessons from my experience where I was often the only conservative in the room and we need to avoid a managed decline of the Western architecture. So, it's all part of this narrative that Boris Johnson liked, which is the fake optimism of the populist riots. So, they pretend they're all against decline, they're all for global Britain, they're all optimistic. And actually, I think they're secret pessimists because they're not really focusing on the details of how to make the country better. This is all spin. I think they're actually deeply cynical. I'd ever felt with Boris Johnson that when he was like, Rory, it's something I write about in politics on the edge, when he says, Rory, I want you to go out there and fix Libya. Libya is a bite-sized British problem. That may sound optimistic. But when I come back to him and say, well, we don't have a resident ambassador in

Libya, but with £40 million, we could do this with the UN, we could do this with the Italians, you know, he immediately loses interest and ends up actually doing nothing. The so-called optimism is actually an excuse for inaction. A couple of related questions on that. What is the process asks Nigel McFeed for misconduct in public office? You raised Johnson, not me. Two questions, if I may. One, what is the process for charging a politician with misconduct in public office? Two, why has Boris Johnson not yet been charged with misconduct in public office? A related Johnson question, which is about both of us, G.J. Sykes, is political discourse too pally and cliquey? I cite his examples. Alistair recently chatting away on Sky News with Rachel Johnson and Rory interviewing Theresa May at Cheltenham to plug her new book. Sorry, Rory. So you're interviewing Theresa May for a book festival, but not getting her on the podcast?

I think we are getting her on the podcast, aren't we? Yes, but not through you.

Well, wait a second. I've also been asking her. Yeah, but you've not been. So you've managed,

anyway, honestly, Rory, you've just got to decide where your loyalties are. I have profound loyalties both to you and Theresa May. I will somehow find a way to resolve that. On the pally cliquey thing, if you were watching the interview, this is the program you were on at the weekend, Trevor Phillips. I did at least use the opportunity to make the point that I felt Boris Johnson ought to be in jail directly to his sister. I thought that was fair enough. That's not pally and cliquey. Weirdly, I think that we need more courtesy, not less in politics. I think that we need to find... That's why I like the British idea of the loyal opposition, which is why I like the idea of still calling people honorable members, which is why I also want to push back a bit against that question about using the law to charge people for misconduct in public office. I think it's often actually quite dangerous when countries go down that route. I think a certain degree of courtesy, a certain degree of tolerance in the way that we treat people from other parties is really important for democracy, even if we profoundly disagree with what they're doing. But doesn't that give them a blank... Doesn't that give politicians a blank check for corruption? Well, this is why you and I are having a bit of a standoff on Jeremy Corbyn, for example. Obviously, I completely disagree with Jeremy Corbyn. I think he's a terrible prime minister, but I'm absolutely not in favor of expelling him from the Labour Party, and therefore, effectively getting him out of parliament. But we didn't do that. But also, Jeremy Corbyn didn't... Whatever his faults and weaknesses as the leader of the Labour Party, he didn't debase public life in the way that Johnson has. I think luckily with Johnson, I feel we're probably in a better place with Boris Johnson than the Americans are getting themselves in with Donald Trump, which is... You and I have done a certain amount to help discredit and expose Boris Johnson. He did an enormous amount himself to totally humiliate himself and expose himself as an incompetent clown. I think once you start taking legal proceedings against people, as you've found with Donald Trump, pretty quickly, their stock begins to go up because people say, wait a second, what this guy did isn't quite as serious. This is a hysterical witch hunt. They're trying to put him in jail. Well, we have to believe in the rule of law, surely. 100% believe in the rule of law. But I think we need to be very cautious. And this is a point that I'm making also about the prison population, about what offenses you actually try to prosecute and who you try to put in jail. And I think putting politicians in jail, absolutely right, if it's conservative Labour politicians who are fiddling their expense of doing all this. And there are proper legal procedures for doing that. There are parliamentary commissioners, there is the police, there are investigations. But goodness sake, let's rely on that and not find ourselves getting ourselves into a world in which Boris Johnson somehow becomes legal martyr, which would be a catastrophe for all of us. I do find G.J. Sykes, I do find the political discourse in the Westminster village far too pally, far too cliquey, far too many journalists who spend weekends away with politicians go on holiday. And I used to do it myself when I was a journalist. But I think it's very, very, very cliquey. But also, I think it's difficult with that. So Rachel Johnson, it's not her fault that she's the sister of Boris Johnson. But I think if she goes out and defends Boris Johnson in the way that she sometimes does, then, you know, I'm going to take that on. The cliqueiness is a big problem. A lot of people, obviously, this sounds like I'm plugging my book again. For God's sake, Rory, you're getting bad as I am.

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

Okay, but I had a sort of ferocious week of interviews doing, you know, five, six hours a day. I've noticed. And a lot of the accusations leveled against me are that I'm painting too negative a picture of parliament. That's not what I'm hearing from the MPs. The MPs from all parties are reaching out and saying that they recognize exactly what I'm describing. The reason why it looks as though it's too negative is that this cliquey relationship between particularly what's called the lobby, which are the journalists who are inside parliament and the MPs, means that the lobby are always softballing it. They're always not really going hard after the accountability, not really asking what is Liz Truss's record in office. You know, my first three bosses were Liz Truss, Priti Patel, Boris Johnson. I've tried to describe in the book what it's actually like to work for those people, the lack of seriousness there. But none of the lobby journalists were really pointing this out at the time because they were more interested in the question of who's up, who's down. And that facilitated people like David Cameron promoting these people, putting them in senior positions. He did it with Liz Truss and Priti Patel, Boris Johnson was obviously later with Theresa May. But in every case, these are people who've been built up by a media that hasn't held them accountable. When my book recently came out, you were asking me whether I... And just to remind everybody, it's called *But What Can I Do?*

For you, you sort of asked me whether I cared much about what people said about it and the reviews and so forth. Your reviews have been pretty good, but something's just... Literally, while you were speaking, somebody sent me a headline or a piece that's been written by Ian Martin. Can I read you the headline? Oh yeah, go on then. The headline is

The Crackpot Worshipers of Romantic Rory Stewart. Yeah, exactly. It's absolutely lovely, that stuff. Absolutely lovely. I mean, it's a weird experience because I know Ian Martin and I think, you know, we sort of work together on the Scottish referendum campaign. The telegraph's obviously having a bit of go at me as you'd expect, but I'd said, you know, I felt very ashamed of myself often in politics and I felt that I was a bit creepy and I was trying to butter up David Cameron to get a job. So of course, the telegraph has taken my own comments and led as an exclusive

headline, Rory Stewart is an insinuating hypocritical creep as though they sort of broken the story themselves rather than quoting what I said about myself. Okay, here's a question for you, which I think is an interesting one and I'd like to get you on. Martin Darlington, can you offer your suggestions for a form of PR, Proportional Representation that could work for the UK? How to bring it in as a parliamentary level, yet respecting local wishes for a particular MP party? Thank you. This is only my fourth or fifth request for this topic, so I don't expect it'll get an inch. I have a first stab just to give you a minute to get your heads together. So I am a huge fan of the New Zealand system and one of the reasons I'm encouraged by the New Zealand system is,

of course, everybody says, oh, you can't get the change in Britain because Turkey's not going to vote for Christmas. New Zealand had a first past the post system and it's shifted to a system which is, I think, a really good balance. It respects the constituency model, so it's got a bit of a first past the post element, which allows MPs to keep their links to their constituency, but it balances us up with the Proportional Representation system, which means that the parties in Parliament reflect the vote across the general country. And we'll have a chance to do this when we

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

interview the New Zealand Prime Minister. I'm very interested to hear his views on this, but I think when we interviewed a former New Zealand Prime Minister, she was very, I think, thoughtful and good on the ways in which it allows the main parties to moderate. They don't get taken over by their extreme fringes, so it's been a guarantee against a certain form of populism. It allows new fresh blood in, it allows dissent. So I'm selling New Zealand. Anyway, where are you on this? Yeah, I think probably, and the other point that Helen Clark made is that she was passionately against it until the change, and then she was now passionately defending it. I kind of agree with that. I think New Zealand is a good example. I think that my worries about PR, I was talking about this at this debate last night. So for example, the Netherlands at the moment, it's a real struggle to see how a functioning government is going to be formed because so many of the smaller parties are able to get traction. I worry about what's happening in Germany at the moment with the AfD rising to 20% in the polls, 30% in some areas. I find it very scary the idea of the AfD getting into a position where the political chips will fall so that they have to be in national government. So I think the question is right in terms of the balance that we have to find if we do have some kind of electoral reform. It is about preserving that sense that people know who to go to when they want to go to their MP, but also feel that when they go to vote, their vote is not just sort of one of millions that is being cast in a safe seat, be that Tory Labour, SNP or all of them. Last question for me, so I think we'll come to the end, Barry Lyons. My whole family are staunch Labour supporters, and they've always, without exception, voted for the Labour Party. I saw them recently and we spoke politics and not one member of my family said they will vote Labour at the coming election. I cannot state enough just how much they all hate the Tories. Any thoughts on that? What do you think is going on there in that story? Well, you do hear a lot of people who say, I absolutely hate this government. They've got to go, but I'm not really that keen on Labour at the moment. And that's the bit that Labour have to answer in the next few months. And it's not up to the election. They have to answer it in the next few months because it's now that people, the undecideds, are making up their minds. Now, I hope that Barry Lyons family will actually, given that they've, you know, they clearly voted, assuming that they're, you know, not 18, they voted for Tony Blair, they voted for Gordon Brown, they voted for Ed Miliband, they voted for Jeremy Corbyn. So what is it that they say that is about the current Labour party that they can't vote for? So I hope they would vote Labour, but I think there is a genuine thing at the moment of people wanting to know in detail what the difference is. I mean, this debate I was doing with Gary Neville last night, I did the thing that we often do it when we're doing live, restless politics shows where I said, who's going to win the next election? It was 80%, 90% Labour, Kerstama, who can come up and tell me five things that they think will change directly as a result of that. And this was a well-informed, this is an audience that was going out on a hot, sweaty Monday night to listen to us talk about politics. And I'm afraid it raised a laugh that that's got to be addressed, it's got to change. A couple of things that we could see with new Labour when you guys were getting going in the sort of 95, we could already see very, very clearly what that Labour government was going to do. You could sort of feel it. And I'm afraid if you look at the polls, Kerstama's net popularity rating is nowhere close to where Tony Blair's was at this stage. And you could make the argument actually that this government is feeling worse than John Major's government. I mean, John Major's government, the economy was beginning to take off. There was quite a lot of room in

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 171. Question Time: The return of Liz Truss, Slovakia's answer to Viktor Orbán, and Starmer's popularity waning?

the public finances. And actually, you know, yeah, there was sleaze. But I think there was a much clearer narrative that the Conservatives had coming out of Margaret Thatcher into John Major than they have had after Boris Johnson, there's trust in Rishi Sunak. So there's something wrong here. And it's got to be faced. I must say yesterday, I spoke at the National Housing Federation in Birmingham yesterday. And before the bit that I was involved in, there was Lewis Goodall, who presents a minor, something we never mentioned. Yeah, a minor podcast that none of our listeners have heard of. But he interviewed the housing minister, Rachel McLean. And he has to one point, he went through some figures of the current state of housing. And he said, look, let's say that the year to go to the election, how is it going to be different in five or six years' time after another term of a Tory government? Which you'd have thought was like the freest full toss ball you've ever had in your life. So what's the correct response that? What would you train an MP? She looked like she'd had a middle stump taken out because it clearly, she hadn't computed the idea that somebody would seriously say to her, you might win again. And it was honestly the place sort of fell about. What she should have said is, well, you've set out the scale of the problem. I think we have made some progress over the last decade or so. But there's clearly a lot to do. And here's what we would try to do. It's not a difficult question to deal with. But it was actually, it was a great sort of psychological moment because you basically felt she'd given this speech about the long-term housing plan, which didn't seem to me to be to exist. But she was kind of going through the motions. And then when she was confronted the idea of explain what you might do if you get other term of power, she was kind of, she was totally stubbed. It was a very, I don't think it's soon that's given up. And I don't think hunts govern that. But I wonder whether some of these ministers just think, you know what, we're just treading water now. Well, thank you, Alistair, very much. I think we're sort of coming towards an end. Very good. See you soon. Thank you.