



By: *Harvey Morris*

Farage's national emergency plan fails to eclipse problems facing his Reform UK party



Is Britain broken? The right-wing Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said it is. But that was in a week in which the state of his insurgent party looked even shakier than that of the nation at large.

The broadcast of undercover footage showing senior party figures discussing how to disguise illegal foreign donations was such a gotcha moment that even **Farage** acknowledged it “looks bad”.

He had barely time to bounce back before the debut of **Reform’s annual conference** in Birmingham at the end of last week, where an official mandate to party loyalists was that they should dress to impress.

Farage duly obliged, finally appearing on stage in an elegant blue two-piece after a somewhat theatrical delay that party sources said was due to an alert by counter-terror police.

Fix it in 100 days

Then for the message. Britain was broken and only Reform could fix it. It would do that in 100 days after being elected to office by declaring a national emergency. All parliamentary breaks would be cancelled to allow the necessary legislation to be pushed through.

Those who stood in a Reform government’s way, whether civil servants, judges or the House of Lords, would be swept aside.

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All the issues dear to the hearts of the Reform faithful would be solved in the space of little over three months, from stopping migrant boats and ending the “lunacy” of Net Zero, to slashing welfare benefits and cutting taxes on working people and pensioners.

Party leaders, particularly those not in office, may have a tendency towards hyperbole when pitching extravagant solutions to the problems their followers face.

But seriously, Nigel. A national emergency? It sounds positively un-British.

Alarm Clock Britain

The UK is certainly facing a range of economic and societal dilemmas, many of them shared by neighbours in Europe and further afield in an increasingly anxiety-inducing international environment.

That has inevitably created divisions between the haves and the have-nots that the new nationalist right has sought to exploit. But it doesn’t always side with those groups that find themselves most threatened.

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Farage repeated a familiar line that Reform was the party of Alarm Clock Britain, referring to those working people he mentioned who have to get up in the morning, although the pensioners to whom he also promised tax cuts could no doubt choose to stay in bed.

It’s hardly a new phrase. The Liberal Democrats came up with it a decade and a half ago to describe the hardworking British who already then felt they were losing out.

Parties across the spectrum have often courted the so-called “squeezed middle” who perceive that their living standards have shrunk. As Reform seeks to widen its appeal, it is evident that they remain the party’s key target demographic.

The Farage formula

In Reform’s appeal to them, benefit

“scroungers”, immigrants, and foreigners in general tend to take the blame for their problems.

It is no surprise then that Reform’s plans for slashing the UK’s mounting welfare bill – a challenge the current government and any successor would face – start with making most non-UK citizens ineligible for working-age benefits.

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Farage would also end the reliance of the National Health Service on importing doctors and nurses from the rest of the world. “It’s mad,” he told the party conference.

And as for all those young people at university, there were far too many of them and Reform had some “quite radical plans” to cut the numbers down.

These are all areas in which a wide range of voters might agree that change is needed, even if they would not all subscribe to the Farage formula.

Growing public skepticism

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Perhaps Farage had his own party’s emergency in mind after days in which scandal over its sources of finance continued to grow rather than fade.



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He himself was at the now notorious scam meeting in which undercover reporters, posing as potential donors, discussed with Reform officials how to get around electoral laws against foreign donations. He “wasn’t even listening”, he said.

His close aide Dan Jukes and his head of policy James Orr definitely were listening and participating, and **Farage** felt obliged to suspend them permanently.

In his defence, Farage said he had been preoccupied with the **by-election in his Clacton constituency**, where the lunch meeting was being held. He had prompted that poll himself amid an official inquiry into a previous £5 million funding scandal.

Farage held the seat, but the comedy candidate known as Count Binface came second with a respectable 26.9 per cent of the vote, somewhat more than Reform is currently scoring in **national opinion polls**.

Forcing the Clacton vote was always a public relations gamble and may have backfired in terms of the wider electorate’s view of Farage and his party.

The poll lead the party saw during much of Keir Starmer’s Labour premiership has steadily eroded, prompting speculation about whether Farage will continue to front an organisation he almost singlehandedly created.

It’s too early to say that the party’s over. But its

star may be fading in the face growing public skepticism about its finances and the quick-fix solutions offered by the former Mr Brexit.