

## What if the Liz Truss Premiership was a Wargame?

Liz Truss was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for one of the shortest premierships since the founding of the position. Having swept to power on a wave of populism from the Conservative Party membership, this was anticipated to be the start of a long political journey, not one that failed a mere six weeks later. This newsletter is an attempt to look at the trajectory from a wargaming perspective.

### Timeline

7 July 2022: Johnson announces resignation, followed by an 8-week leadership campaign.

Truss' campaign: Economic populism and traditional social values. Her competitor, Sunak, had the majority of MP support.

Contest for Membership support: Projected to be, at minimum, low 60's in % support for Truss.

6 September 2022: Truss becomes Prime Minister, with 57.4% of the vote (significantly under the projection).

8 September 2022: Death of the Queen. Followed by 10 days of halted government business, stalling Truss' momentum.

We've all been in a wargame where an action does not meet the success that it should have, and our masterful strategy seems to take a slight stumble. With the end of the mourning period, the nascent Prime Minister was eager to make her first roll of the dice.

### Trussonomics

- Economic policies not well-received by the economist community.
- Strategy caused a crash in currency value, requiring interference by the Bank of England.
- The Chancellor was removed for enacting her exact strategies, and replaced by Hunt who immediately declared Trussonomic policies ended, stabilizing the market.

Truss stumbled from the smoking wreck of her economics and like any confident wargamer, prepared to take on the next turn.

### Mis-Step

In wargaming, it's sometimes the smallest of actions that precipitate disaster for your strategy.

19 October 2022: Miliband introduced a Bill opposing the expansion of Fracking (against popular opinion); this would allow the Opposition to challenge one of the few policies remaining in the Trussonomics arsenal.

The Truss government ordered its MP's to vote against the Bill.

It was then announced the vote would be considered a vote of confidence in the government - MPs did not want to vote for such a Bill due to its lack of popularity.

Although the government had won the vote, Truss was mortally wounded.

### Conclusion

The last turn of any wargame leads to the temptation of one last throw of the dice, a final try at reaching the goals that seemed so close.

Truss had a plan that cannot be disputed, but the mark of a good or experienced wargamer is having an alternative plan for when things go wrong.

By delaying a solution forcing the Bank of England to step in, Truss had undermined the economic reputation advertised by the Conservatives. The fatal moment was the attempt to stamp authority using a deeply unpopular policy.

Political wargaming has a nuance of personality: it's not enough to analyze the policies but to look at the personality too, an approach not taken by Truss.