

Robert Kilroy-Silk writes...on Michael Howard is a Loser

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Michael Howard is a loser. The Tory Leader is timid. He is a political coward. He does not deserve to lead the Conservative Party. It would be a tragic catastrophe if he were by some electoral mishap to become Prime Minister.

Just as a few weeks ago he made a mess of his policy on political correctness, so this week he failed to grasp the nettle of immigration and asylum.

The report from the Office of National Statistics, revealing that instead of the 13,000 migrants coming here from the ten new countries of eastern Europe that joined the E.U. in May, there have in fact been 191,000 arrivals, gave him the opportunity to say that he will have an immigration policy that will only allow 100,000 people a year to come here. The figure of 100,000 compares with 91,000 British leaving the U.K. each year.

Again, a leaked Home Office memo outlining the disastrous impact asylum seekers were having on towns like Peterborough - and reports in this newspaper and elsewhere of the way in which bogus asylum seekers were now arriving here illegally and disappearing - gave him the golden opportunity to announce that Britain will withdraw from the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees so that we can gain control over asylum.

Instead, it was a speech I made at City Hall, London, on 11 September that announced that the U.K. Independence Party would withdraw from the Convention and limit immigration to 100,000 a year, admitted on the basis of their skills, value to the community and contribution to the economy, as happens in Australia. Unlike Michael Howard and the Tory party, I am not afraid to stand up for Britain and the British way of life. And I am certainly not afraid of telling the truth and of doing the right thing.