

Boris Johnson Government, Accused of “Misleading” the Queen, Goes on Trial

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The UK government’s decision to prorogue parliament till 14th October is to be scrutinised by the highest court in the land on Tuesday, after it was ruled by a Scottish court last week that it ‘misled the Queen’ by suspending parliament. Two cases are to be examined by the Supreme Court in London; the first being the one brought by activist Gina Miller, that Boris Johnson had no right to shut down parliament, and another will be the government’s appeal against the Scottish ruling that the suspension was unlawful.

Various scenarios are possible – the government could be vindicated by the court upholding the government’s appeal against the Scottish verdict and dismissing Gina Miller’s case (it could argue that the matter is a political one and not one for the courts). Or it could rule in favour of the Scottish court whilst ruling against Gina Miller. In this instance, because it upheld the Scottish verdict, the court would have to rule that it was unlawful overall. (It’s a complicated business in the UK as Scotland and England have their own separate legal systems; however the Supreme Court deals with both.) In any case, if either ruling does go against the government it will be extremely damaging for the government and in particular for Boris Johnson and his Brexit strategy.

Gina Miller’s lawyer today is to argue that if the courts do indeed ‘wash their hands’ of this case then it is setting a dangerous precedent for future governments to dismiss parliament as they please for any length of time required, without fear of the repercussions. Last week the Scottish court ruled:

“It was to be inferred that the principal reasons for the prorogation were to prevent or impede Parliament holding the executive to account and legislating with regard to Brexit, and to allow the executive to pursue a policy of a no-deal Brexit without further Parliamentary interference.”

The judges highlighted in particular the length of the suspension which they said was indicative that this was a deliberate tactic to avoid parliamentary scrutiny of Johnson’s Brexit plans.

Such an avoidance tactic is typical however of Prime Minister Johnson. When faced with an awkward situation, his instinct is to run a mile. One only has to recall how he avoided protestors during his visit to Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in July, when he left via the back door. Or more recently on Monday during his visit to Luxembourg, when he refrained from taking part in an outdoor press conference with the Prime Minister of Luxembourg for fear of being heckled by the angry anti-Brexit mob nearby. So the prorogation of parliament can equally be seen as Johnson’s bid to find an escape route: an

easy way out, by which he doesn't have to face any questions and can hide away from opposition.

The flippant way in which the lives of UK citizens are being played with during this Brexit saga was revealed in an interview with former Prime Minister David Cameron for ITV aired on Monday night. Cameron said that on the eve of his declaration that he would campaign to Leave the EU, Boris Johnson sent Cameron a text stating that he thought the Vote Leave campaign would be 'crushed like a toad under the harrow'. Cameron elaborated by saying he thought Johnson simply wanted to be on the 'romantic, patriotic, nationalistic, side of Brexit' but never really expected his side would win.

Such a revelation only further indicates that Boris Johnson is currently a Prime Minister playing a game; and it wasn't one he ever expected to be allowed to play. The fact that millions of citizens put their faith in this campaign - one built around mistruths and exaggerations - and voted to Leave does not likely perturb the PM however. Johnson is willing to push his party, country and own reputation to the brink for the sake of the Brexit experiment.

27 days ago when Boris Johnson met Angela Merkel to discuss a future deal, she gave him 30 days to do so. That time is almost up and European leaders have seen no fresh proposals from the UK government that would suggest it is serious about getting a deal. This, together, with the fiasco created by suspending parliament have only caused more concern in Europe about the UK's intentions, expressed by the Prime Minister of Luxembourg on Tuesday when he said that EU leaders do not want to be blamed for the current 'nightmare' as he put it.

The Luxembourg meeting was supposed to be a key event in the Brexit calendar, but as one could have expected, with no new propositions from the UK government, it proved to be just another part of Boris Johnson's charade. Still intent on pursuing a No Deal Brexit, he is simply going through the motions when it comes to persuading the world that he wants a withdrawal agreement.

Within several days we should have the verdict of the Supreme Court regarding both cases, a ruling which will have consequences of historical significance. With Britain's future hanging in the balance, the stakes could not be higher...

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