

Funding the Future

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This morning's decision by the High Court, which has said that Parliament must vote on any decision to exercise Article 50 resulting in the UK leaving the EU, is very welcome.

I am absolutely certain that the decision to leave the EU in the referendum was wrong, and will say so often over the next few years, but that is inconsequential on this issue. I suspect that parliament will approve notice under Article 50, however much many may come to regret it doing so until such time when, as I suspect most likely, it will be reversed. The point of principle here though is that such is the constitutional and legal significance of all matters to do with Brexit that nothing of any consequence with regard to it should be decided by anyone but parliament.

I am not naive enough to think our parliamentary democracy is perfect: very obviously, from first past the post onwards, there are faults with it. Nor do I trust the judgement of all our elected representatives. But despite all its shortcomings parliament is sovereign in the UK and the idea that such a massively important decision would have been made without recourse to parliament was repugnant. For the same reason it is my belief that each and every stage of the Brexit process should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

In that case what should happen if the Supreme Court were to over-rule the decision? I would hope that the most extraordinary mass demonstration of anger at the abuse of the rights of the British people should follow. It may not, but that is what I think should happen. And I believe that it should gather support from both sides of the debate. After all, did 'taking back power' mean passing it to an elite? I don't think anyone really imagined that. In which case saying so will be vital.