

Time for Her Majesty to step up to the mark or for the ...

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It is now clear that Boris Johnson will seek to prorogue parliament to deny it the chance to debate alternatives to leaving the EU without a deal. I have already commented on this. But there is a dimension that needs to be specifically referred to.

Johnson is seeking to suspend the power of parliament to hold his government to account. He wishes to suspend the normal democratic process of the Crown in parliament as a result. It is my suggestion that his attempt to do so has to be challenged by the Crown, and in this case that does mean it has to be challenged, and denied, by the Queen.

It is often suggested that the Queen seeks to stay out of politics. That's nonsense. She has had weekly briefings from prime ministers for more than fifty years and is intimately involved in the political processes of this country. What this claim actually means is that she exercises power without apparently being accountable for it, which is something entirely different.

But on this occasion she cannot avoid responsibility precisely because her role is constitutional and it is the constitution that is in jeopardy. She does, therefore, have to act. It is her duty to reject Johnson's call, which has the sole purpose of denying parliament its proper role.

If she does not do so then I think the days when she has a role are over.

And in that case there is no justification for the civil list.

Her Majesty should think long and hard: I'd suggest there is rather a lot at stake here for her and her legacy as well as the rest of us.