

19 October 2023 - and the need for an honest debate on ...

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Will Scotland hold the consultative referendum on its future that Nicola Sturgeon promised yesterday? Combined legal weight of opinion suggests that this is unlikely as the Westminster government opposes it and it is thought that the Supreme Court will side with them. Joanna Cherry QC MP and others disagree, saying that the Scottish parliament does have the necessary powers to proceed on this issue. Time will tell who is right: I am not going to judge on that one.

What I do know are three things. The first is that when a body of people in a defined geographic area have a different sense of political priorities to those from another area that seek to govern them then the resulting conflict does eventually usually lead to a parting of the ways because the tension of staying together eventually becomes too much for those seeking to hold on to power from a distance. The process of attrition becomes too wearing to continually tolerate. So, I do think that Scotland will, as Ireland did, regain its independence and without violence, I am sure.

Second, I am certain that Scotland can be a successful mid-sized European nation, which is what it would be after independence. If so many other countries of around 6 million people can survive in Europe so too can Scotland, very well. Those arguing otherwise have not got evidence on their side. The Scottish government was right to point this out in its very first publication that opened this round of debate.

Third, to succeed the Scottish government needs to be honest about the biggest issues. None is bigger than the currency an independent Scotland will use. I have little doubt it will be called the pound. The only question is whether that is sterling or a Scottish pound. On this one, I have no doubt. I set out the arguments here:

https://youtu.be/rRaMgY_xmb0

This issue killed the Yes movement last time. Honesty this time is essential. I hope there is the courage to do that.