

Jon Snow of Channel 4 News says we must tackle tax havens.

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Jon Snow of Channel 4 News is one of the most respected journalists in the UK. [He wrote from Davos yesterday](#), noting stories in the media, on IKEA and hedge funds, all of which pointed to tax haven activity.

As he then noted, tellingly:

We have been repeatedly told by Brussels that Liechtenstein and its tax activities have been dealt with. Allegations of tax laundering by high street traders in Britain, let alone foreign owned companies, have been rife for many years. In recent years, successive UK Governments have claimed that these tax loopholes will be closed.

There is no one who intersects with the UK's current deficit related woes who does not know that if war were declared on these tax havens our financial position could be fast transformed. So why is nothing done? Why is it still permissible for British Citizens to avoid taxes by living, or locating funds in the Caymans, Liechtenstein, or indeed much closer to home in Channel Islands for 'tax purposes'?

As the World Economic Forum opens in Davos, might it be a relevant question for the great brains assembled there? Don't hold your breath!

He is right, of course.

We do know an attack on tax havens would be of immense benefit to those suffering the woes of the current recession.

We know that because a [few of us set out to tell that tale](#).

So why is nothing being done?

Brown started late, that I have accused him of, but then did good work - as did ministers such as Stephen Timms.

But what now? Where is the willingness to tackle this issue?

There is none. Instead we have a government willing to [offer 8% corporation tax to any British company](#) that wants to hide its profits - including those abusively transferred out of developing countries - in a tax haven.

That's what we have now - a government promoting abuse, encouraging the non-payment of tax in developing countries and offering a tax rate of 8% - yes I mean that - a tax rate of 8% to British companies when everyone else is seeing tax increases.

And yet Jon Snow is right:

There is no one who intersects with the UK's current deficit related woes who does not know that if war were declared on these tax havens our financial position could be fast transformed.

In other words, this is a choice.

A choice to allow the abuse of developing countries.

A choice to allow companies to pay almost no tax.

A choice to shift the burden onto ordinary people.

A choice to turn a blind eye to increasing income disparities.

A choice to allow the rich to get richer relative to everyone else.

A choice to allow the avoiders and evaders to get away with it.

The wrong choice.

And one for which this government must be held to account.