

All I want for Christmas is a government capable of act...

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I know it is Christmas week. And I do know the significance of Christmas for many, although I will admit that my mother's distaste for the commercialisation of it has never quite gone away in my case, although most else of her thinking has long since been rejected by me.

But, there are things more important than Christmas, parties, family meals and all that goes with them. Amongst those more important things are public health, protection of people from harm and the safety of those delivering essential public services.

The job of the politician is to make the decision that is in the greater good. We can argue the ethical basis some other time. When it comes to public health the rule is pretty simple. It is 'do no harm'. In that case prevention is key long before cure is considered.

No one pretends that the scientists on SAGE and independent SAGE are clairvoyant. They cannot be. Their forecasts will always be best judgements based on available evidence, which itself might be flawed. However, the opinion of both groups is quite remarkably consistent right now. It is that immediate action on a significant scale is required. What is more, what they are saying is that the steps to be taken must be deliberately designed to reduce social interaction. In the case of a massively transmissible airborne virus it is their suggestion that nothing less will do, Christmas or not.

No one would want to impose such measures pre-Christmas. But politicians should not be in office to make popular decisions. They are there to make the right ones, allowing for the passage of time to prove that they did just that. This is quite possible in the current circumstance when a forecast of the possible deaths that timely decisions might avoid is available. Any politician reflecting on this decision right now can reflect on the glory they might claim from their having saved lives.

Only it seems that our government does not want to do that. A weak government, unable to decide on almost anything, living in fear of its far-right MPs, it is doing

nothing. And whilst it does nothing the number of omicron cases doubles every two days. In that case doing nothing is very much a decision.

The trouble is that, as has ever been the case with this government, the decision they are taking by apparently deciding not to act is a decision to let Covid rip through the population with the aim of creating what it thinks to be herd immunity. They still appear to be unable to comprehend that this will not afford protection when the next variant comes along, as it surely will.

In that case by its inaction this government is doing three things.

It is harming public health.

It is deliberately putting people in harm's way. Many will die as a result. Others will suffer life-changing consequences.

It is putting the delivery of essential public services, including those relating to health, at risk.

And all for the sake of the short-term gratification of Christmas.

This is what a failed government looks like.

This, come to that, is what a failing state looks like, because it would seem that we are still willing to tolerate this.

This government is choosing to be democidal, and it thinks it can get away with it, so compliant does it think the people of this country to be so long as they get their turkey with grandma and the chance to go to football or the sales on Boxing Day.

Are we really that compliant? Will we really tolerate this? Is that where we are?

I hope not.

So what do I want? All I want for Christmas are three things.

First, a population willing to demand effective government that acts in their best interests.

Second, a democratic mechanism to choose that government.

Third, the politicians up to the task of delivering this, meaning that they embrace the required ethic to do so.

Is that too much to ask?