

Labour ignores the independent nature of Scotland and W...

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I am aware that I am an atypical East Anglian without Scottish origin who nonetheless takes a serious interest in Scottish politics. Might I suggest for a moment that everyone else should do so, at least on the issue I note here.

As [The National](#) newspaper in Scotland (declaration of interest: I am a paid columnist) notes this morning:

THE UK Government will consider "sanctions" that could be imposed on the Scottish Government for spending money on areas such as independence, a Tory minister has said.

In other words, the Tories are intent on limiting the powers of the Scottish parliament.

This comes only days after it was reported that Starmer will, after this weekend, be cracking down on the Labour Party in both Scotland and Wales, demanding that they follow his line on all issues and have no independent policies of their own.

No doubt the London hierarchies of both the Tories and Labour think this makes sense. To them, no doubt it does.

What I am equally sure of is that on the ground in Scotland and Wales the policy will backfire badly. Even those who are not pro-independence in either of these countries have got very used to devolved power now. To be told that the right to exercise this no longer exists - which is the message coming from the leadership of both Labour and the Tories - will feel like a smack in the face.

There are big assumptions made by many of those who think that Labour will be forming the next government of the UK, including that it can win a considerable number of seats in Scotland and maybe some more in Wales.

Partly that is based upon the confusion created within the SNP by the inactions of the Scottish police in the Sturgeon case.

I think those assumptions are wrong. Just because the SNP is undoubtedly in a bit of a mess right now (and I would add, I have long been a critic, so this mess does not surprise me), I think any Labour or even Tory politician would be very wrong to think they will gain an electoral advantage as a result. Nor is there a LibDem alternative choice that might be acceptable to almost anyone in Scotland when they have performed so badly at Holyrood.

Instead, what I think is going to be discovered is that nationalists will hold their noses and vote SNP in Scotland in the forthcoming general election and, most likely, for Plaid Cymru in Wales precisely because the option of English arrogance is so much worse.

Labour could win in Scotland and Wales but only by respecting their right to be independent-thinking countries. Starmer clearly cannot tolerate that. He may pay a high price for his failure.