Funding the Future

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The resolutions being tabled for debate today in the House of Commons are all available on the Order Paper for the day, which is available here.

The resolutions range from the appropriate demands of the SNP, through the weasel words of Labour, to the government's weak position that will do nothing for the millions who are suffering.

All but the SNP demand, in various ways and with varying hints, that Hamas be removed. This, I think, is why we can be sure that they are not serious.

I condemn what Hamas did and still do, as I once unequivocally condemned what the IRA did, and as I might have done ANC violence at one time.

But, my point by referencing both those situations is obvious. Sinn Fein was the political wing of the IRA, but the First Minister of Northern Ireland is now from that party. The ANC, for better and sometimes for worse, has ruled South Africa for a long time. There was no political solution in either place without involving the heirs to those who committed terror. Nor will there be in Gaza, whether we like it or not.

We can and should condemn Hamas, but to pretend that they have nothing to say about the grievances of the people of Gaza would be absurd.

Until that fact (for a fact, I think it is) can be recognised and a way of bringing people who reflect the agenda of the people of both Gaza and the West Bank into debate can be found, there can be no progress.

Looked at like this, demands that Hamas be removed make no sense, however much they might appropriately be considered terrorists. That is not to apologise for terrorism: that is to reflect the political reality that has given rise to it.

I worry that too many of our politicians seem to think they have a right to dictate who should represent the people of Gaza. They do not. That is for the people of Gaza to decide. And, of course, they may not decide on Hamas, which would be their absolute right. But there will be no peace until their voices are heard. Why is that so hard to understand?