

Is foreign policy a reason for Scotland to leave the Un...

Published: January 12, 2026, 9:13 pm

I have [my regular weekly column in the National](#) newspaper this morning.

In it I discuss the potential consequences of the SNP government in Scotland having already created a quite successful, internationally recognised, foreign policy with regards to Gaza that is distinctly different from that being adopted by the government in London.

The implications of Scotland having an identifiably separate foreign policy from the rest of the UK are quite significant.

Firstly, it aligns Scotland with states like Ireland and Spain, which are calling for a ceasefire by all parties in Gaza.

Secondly, it also has implications for the entirely different priorities that the UK and Scottish governments will have. As I noted in the article:

A state that promotes peace does not spend as much of its national resources on as much weaponry or on so many armed forces as one that wishes to pursue war. In contrast, a state that wishes to pursue peace will spend more on diplomacy, overseas missions, representation at the United Nations and on the supply of relief for those caught up in conflict.

These are fundamental differences of emphasis that flow from differing approaches to foreign policy and the pursuit of armed aggression.

It is, of course, the case that as things stand the Scottish parliament cannot prevent the UK government spending as it wishes with regard to the conflict in the Middle East, or anywhere else. However, the greater the apparent social divide between Scotland and the rest of the UK, the more obvious the demand for independence will be.

If, as I think likely based upon the opinion that I see and hear, people in Scotland really do think differently on this issue from the main parties' politicians in Westminster then the chance that this independent approach to foreign policy will create another basis

for the call for independence is, I think, very real, although I have not seen it widely debated. That is precisely why I made the case for that discussion to take place in the National.