

Labour's fence-sitting does not represent an ethical ...

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I continue to struggle with the actions of the Labour government.

Yesterday we learned that it has banned some sales of arms Israel, but not the majority of them. Around ninety per cent of all export licences remain in place.

This is because Labour cannot, apparently, decide whether Israel is acting in breach of its international humanitarian legal obligations.

David Lammy did, apparently, commission a review on this issue on the day he became Foreign Secretary. So far it would appear that the review is generally inconclusive even though it is clear the United Nations and international courts are certain that Israel is in breach of such conditions.

I cannot help but compare what is happening with what happened in 1997 when Robin Cook became Tony Blair's Foreign Secretary. He declared at the time that he would lead an ethical foreign policy, and to his credit, that is what he tried to do before eventually resigning, on a point of principle, over the invasion of Iraq.

I am not, for a moment, claiming Robin Cook set a standard by which all other should be judged. What I am saying is that he explicitly brought ethics into his decision-making. So far, David Lammy appears to be as far removed from this position as it is possible to be, for two reasons. The first is that I cannot identify his ethics. The second is that I cannot identify his decision-making.

We are, as a consequence, still a country supporting the supply of arms to a government that is commanding its armed forces to undertake genocide. I can only presume that Starmer, Lammy and others within Labour can reconcile themselves to this because of their explicitly stated Zionist beliefs.

My suspicion is that this will, however, very rapidly become an untenable political position with those supporting it likely to be condemned as roundly as Tony Blair, Jack Straw, and others were over Iraq.

If that were to happen, it would be justified. Those who permit the export of arms to a state undertaking genocide have to, in my opinion, accept responsibility for their actions, the consequences of which are quite hideous.

How in that situation Labour thinks its position justifiable is exceptionally hard to work out. If their version of ethical foreign policy is fence-sitting of this sort the public will not accept it for long.