Funding the Future

Labour are charlatans

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I was heavily involved in debates on development for well over a decade. The whole purpose of the Tax Justice Network, of which John Christensen and I were the co-leaders for a long time, was to provide the fourth leg in development finance.

The first was aid.

The second was fair trade.

The third was debt relief.

The fourth was our goal of supporting the capacity of developing countries to collect tax owed to them.

Development does, then, matter to me, and I believe it the fundamental duty of high income countries like the UK to redistribute some of their prosperity to poorer nations to assist them in the global desire to relieve the serious poverty from which we all might suffer but for the accident of our place of birth.

Now the totally and utterly despicable people who form the UK Labour cabinet (and I make no exceptions: my description applies to them all) have decided that a £13 billion increase in defence spending here in the UK should be paid for by reducing support for some of the most vulnerable people in the world, many of them children, and a majority likely to be woman and girls in countries where their lives are especially hard. I hope they feel pleased with their day's work.

For the record, and as utterly inappropriately, the Tories would take the money from the UK welfare budget. The most vulnerable people in this country would instead pay for defence in their case.

No one in any media interview I saw asked the obvious questions, which are:

* What are we defending?

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Why are we defending it?

* What does the attacker want?
* Who stands to lose the most?
* Why aren’t those benefiting paying the price of this defence?

The answers are, in order:

* UK property and tax revenue streams
* Because the wealthy want their privilege defended
* UK owned assets
* The wealthiest in the UK
* Because Labour is a party run for the benefit of the wealthiest in the UK.

Literally, no one asked why tax couldn’t be increased to cover this cost if it was so important to undertake this spending or why borrowing could not be used instead - as would be economically appropriate.

Why, oh why, oh why? What are these Labour ministers, all of whom now seem to have had empathy bypasses, thinking they are doing?

I am not saying do not spend money on defence, but I am saying that they need to be honest about what they are really defending, and who therefore needs to pay the price. That the most vulnerable are being asked to defend the wealth of the most privileged is unconscionable, and yet it is happening.

I make no pretence that I am trying to hide my anger. I loathe these people for a very good reason. They are the enemies of justice.