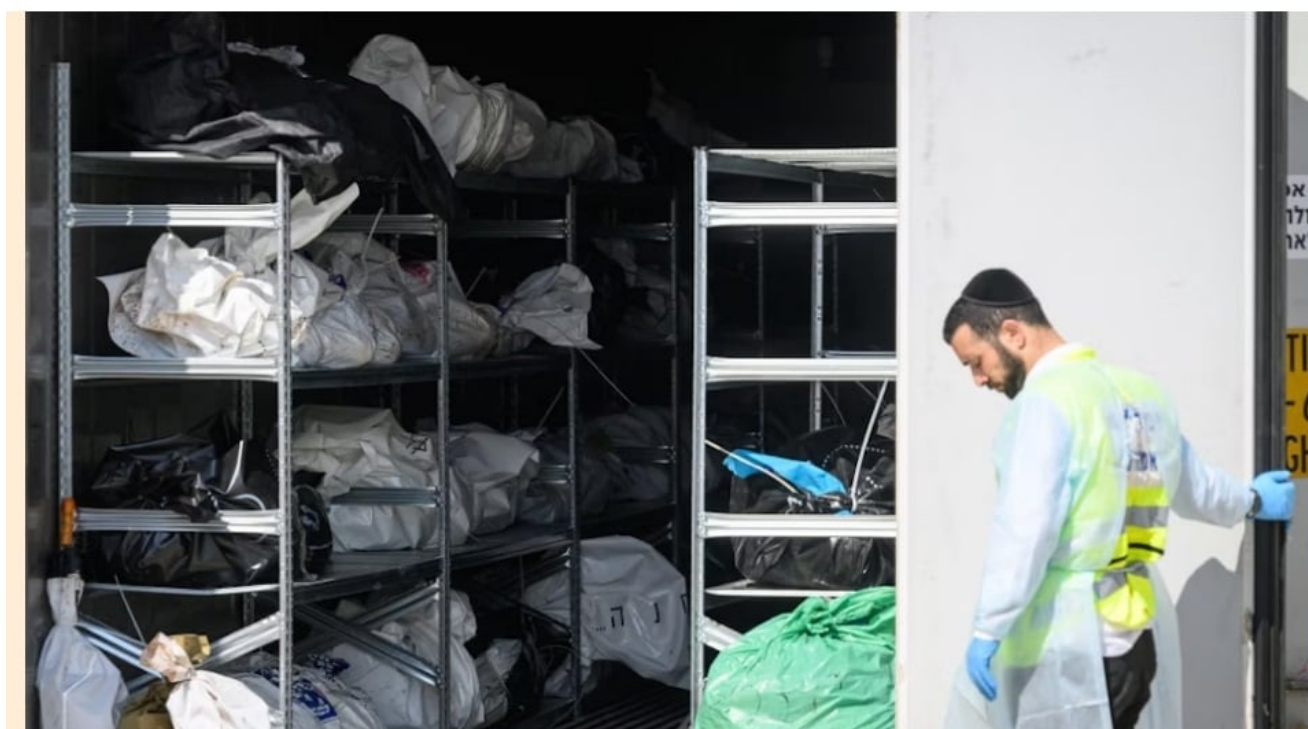


Hamas butchery goes on, UK response is arms embargo against Israel

By Conrad Black

The British Foreign Secretary David Lammy announced this week a partial arms embargo against Israel, the day after the discovery of the bodies of the six hostages who had been shot in the back of the head at close range by Hamas in the tunnels of Rafah, in a clear indication of Hamas's opposition to a genuine peace with the Jewish state.



Wrapped and refrigerated, how many more corpses before Lammy says Israeli defence must be totally supported? (Photo by Leon Neal/Getty Images)

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tterly disgraceful episodes in the history of the British Foreign Office and shames me and millions of others as British citizens. It is not only a morally contemptible appeasement of a criminal terrorist organisation and a treacherous betrayal of a friendly and democratic country fighting for its life against violent racist aggression. It is an incoherently trivial attempt to appease the chronic anti-Semitism that the

current Labour Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer takes credit for purging from his party, while the senior members of his regime utter unctuous platitudes about their support for Israel's right to self-defence.

This is the same cowardly sophistry that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have offered: Israel has a right physically to expel invaders such as those who massacred over a thousand Israelis, including many women and children on October 7, 2023, but it has no right to attack those who committed this act of war on their own territory. Unabashed, hateful Jew-baiting and even the utterance of blood libels against Jews, unspeakably offensive though they are, are somehow not quite as contemptible as attempting simultaneously to profess solidarity with Israel while throwing an ineffectually small bone of moral support to those who would destroy Israel and massacre, expel, or subjugate its Jewish population. It is to some extent consistent with the fact that the United Kingdom is the chief author of this problem, in that in 1915, when the area was part of the Ottoman Empire, Britain undertook in effect to give the same territory to two different sharply contending parties. A "Jewish homeland" would be created without compromising the rights of the Muslim and Christian Arabs who lived there.

The subsequent thirty-year British occupation of the League of Nations Palestine Mandate made practically no progress toward a sustainable demarcation between the Jewish homeland and the non-Jews and the mandate expired amid circumstances that guaranteed durable and merciless conflict between the nascent Jewish state, just three years after the liberation of the death camps of the Third Reich in which half the Jewish population of the world was exterminated, and Arab nations and organizations that professed unwillingness to tolerate the existence of Jewish state in the ancient land of Israel, where Jews had lived for over 5,000 years.

Ever since then, British policy has essentially been to await

American proposals and then join Europe in suggestions more favourable to the Arabs. The Foreign Secretary told the House of Commons that a two-month review had revealed a "clear risk" that UK arms might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law, and so Britain was suspending 30 out of 350 arms export licenses to Israel, including components for warplanes, helicopters, and drones. This is tokenism as it represents less than ten percent of the categories of authorized British arms exports to Israel, so it had no possibility of impressing or satisfying the Israel-haters, malignant lunatics as most of them in the United Kingdom are.

The assertion of such risk against international law is unutterable bunk and is made in complete isolation from the undisputed fact that Hamas is a terrorist organisation and that it incited and provoked any legitimate acts of war that Israel has a clear right in international law to take in response to the barbarous assault upon its civilian population and invasion of its of territory last October. The proportion of verifiable civilian casualties to authentic military casualties among the population of Gaza is extraordinarily small in comparison to the numbers usually achieved in urban guerrilla war, and particularly so given that Israel's enemy openly boasts that civilian casualties are useful for arousing haemophilic-bleeding-heart international opinion, and accordingly routinely hides in or under schools, hospitals, houses of worship, and other places where they may attract Israeli fire and assure civilian casualties.

The *pièce de résistance* in the fatuous stance of the British government is in Lammy and Defence Secretary John Healy's protestations of Britain's continued "steadfast support" for Israel as a "staunch ally" of that country. When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the British action as "shameful" and certain to "embolden Hamas," the UK prime minister's office "refused to accept" that diplomatic

relations with Israel had been damaged. They can safely rely upon the government of Israel to be the judge of that. The foreign office thoughtfully identified its sources for its information, and they are a uniform congeries of informal pro-Hamas propaganda outlets: Palestinian NGOs, ministries of the so-called Gaza government of Hamas, and media sources that the foreign office knows as well as any other informed person in the world are just conduits for Hamas' racist bile and myth-making.

As one of the world's senior nation states and a country with a long and intimate history with almost every region of the world, and normal relations with almost every sovereign country in the world, and with unique and generally discreditable experience in the Middle East, the United Kingdom's government knows that Israel is responding to an act of war by a regime that has proclaimed and demonstrated that it will never accept Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, which was precisely how Israel was constituted by the United Nations in 1948.

The British government knows that unless such war is victoriously concluded, there will be no peace. Hamas will make peace impossible and the only alternative to continued intermittent atrocities such as Hamas committed, and the British government certainly identified as such in October, is to give whatever assistance is appropriate to Israel in eliminating Hamas as a terrorist operation. That is the only legitimate object of the war for Israel that Hamas unleashed. As a country that has been involved in scores of wars over many centuries, Britain's government knows that the only satisfactory outcome of this war is the destruction of Hamas as a source of terrorism. It should stop shilly-shallying and truckling to the abomination of genocidal racism.

Mr. Lammy as foreign secretary sits in the chair of Viscount Palmerston and many other distinguished predecessors and he should contemplate the dignity and the duty of the

statement *Civis Britannicus sum*, as Palmerston defined it. The behaviour of the present British government in the Gaza war is thoroughly dishonourable. It is ghastly, morally bankrupt relativism, and will be completely and deservedly unsuccessful.

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