

Boris Johnson is trying to treat Yemen like one of his guilty secrets – Emily Thornberry

Emily Thornberry, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, responding to the speeches by Boris Johnson and Michael Fallon at the Conservative party conference, said:

"Today, we heard yet another 4,000-word personal manifesto from Boris Johnson, name-checking no fewer than 21 countries around the world. But two countries were conspicuous by their absence – both in his speech and just as disgracefully in Michael Fallon's – Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

"Yemen is facing the world's greatest humanitarian crisis, being made worse every day by a conflict to which Britain is a party in all but name, one in which thousands of civilians – many of them children – have already been killed by British-made bombs dropped from British-made planes.

"But about this enormous tragedy neither the Foreign Secretary or the Defence Secretary were prepared to say a single word today. Boris is trying to treat Yemen like one of his guilty secrets, hoping that people will forget about it as long as it's never discussed in public, but that will not wash.

"It won't wash for him to boast of Britain's permanent seat on the UN Security Council when the members of that Council have now been waiting over a year for Britain to meet its responsibilities and bring forward a draft ceasefire resolution for Yemen.

"It won't wash for him to boast that this country's greatest export is British values, when the only British exports experienced by the children of Yemen are the almost £4 billion of arms we've sold to Saudi Arabia since the conflict began.

"And it won't wash for him to describe his disgust at the treatment of the Rohingya by the military in Myanmar, while continuing to supply the weapons that the Saudi military is using to inflict death and displacement on the people of Yemen.

“Indeed, together with his false praise for Theresa May and his false protestations of loyalty over Brexit, it made his whole speech an exercise in hypocrisy and dishonesty. But it will not wash.”