

Blood on the Streets of London: Who will Protect us from the Real Extremists?

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Two men armed with knives and gun(s) apparently hack to death an off-duty soldier outside an army barracks in Woolwich, London. As the soldier lies dead or dying in the road, one of the alleged attackers approaches a man filming the scene on his mobile phone and makes a political speech about the British state's role in killing Muslims in foreign countries.

According to the attacker, what he and his associate have just done basically represented pay back for the lives taken by British soldiers on behalf of the British government. The two alleged assailants do not flee the scene, but, with weapons still in hands, talk to passers by. The police arrive and both men are shot and wounded as they quickly approach a police car. Later on in the area, English Defence League (EDL) supporters hold a protest and express their usual anti-Islam sentiments. The EDL has had some success in garnering support in recent years by tapping into working class frustrations by using Islam as a proxy for the economic and financial woes impacting Britain.

On just another day in an ordinary district, a heady mix of class, empire and retribution left their marks on a London street. But what made this particular attack so stark was the brutal nature of the incident and that the alleged perpetrators made no attempt to escape. They took advantage of the situation to tell the world why the incident took place.

Over the last couple of days since the attack, there has been much debate over what happened and why it happened. A dominant narrative via the mainstream media has been that of two crazed men (at least one spoke with a London accent), possibly acting on their own, who had been indoctrinated or radicalised by strands of Islam.

Questions are being asked about what can be done to stop this type of thing happening again. The media, politicians and commentators have been quick to talk about preventing the radicalisation of Muslims living in Britain. All well and good.

When certain acts of terror have taken place in Britain in the past, however, senior politicians have denied any link to British foreign policy. This time, one of the alleged perpetrators in Woolwich is on video explicitly stating his reasons for his actions and linking them directly to foreign policy. It doesn't justify the attack, but it certainly helps to explain the motives.

Most politicians and commentators have tended to avoid the foreign policy issue by focusing on the horrific nature of the attack and 'crazed, indoctrinated people' who carry out such deeds. It has at times all been understandably quite emotive. The fact that the dead soldier was said to be wearing a 'hope for heroes' t-shirt at the time has further fuelled the

outpouring of national grief and anger. Hope for Heroes is a charity offering support to soldiers returning from conflict zones.

Politicians and the media have been quick to shape the debate over the incident by referring to it as an act of terrorism and by asking what could be done to stop such an act ever taking place again. Perhaps they should turn to Noam Chomsky for an answer. When once asked how to prevent terrorism, he replied “stop committing it.”

Chomsky’s views on The US and NATO’s role in committing acts of terror in and on other countries are well documented. Either overtly or covertly, the British government has been involved in the ‘war on terror’ or ‘humanitarian militarism’ across the Muslim world, from Libya, Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan and Pakistan. At the same time it has been a staunch supporter of brutal, undemocratic puppet dictators throughout West Asia.

The notion that terrorism is simply a predictable consequence of an interventionist foreign policy, the propping up of dictators and the embrace of empire is downplayed by the mainstream media. The dominant political and media message is that British military involvement in West and Central Asia is necessary to prevent terrorism reaching its shores. Without a hint of hypocrisy on their part, politicians and commentators use incidents like Woolwich to say to the public – look, this is what happens if we do not keep vigilant and do not go into these countries to root out such people.

The media likes to compartmentalise issues. Focus on the Woolwich attack, not civilian deaths in Afghanistan. Focus on one of our lads who was butchered by a couple of maniacs, not on drone attacks that terrorise whole communities. Focus on protecting ‘freedom and democracy’, not Guantanamo, Palestine or actions or support for regimes that have nothing to do with either. Do not connect any of the dots for a comprehensive analysis, but focus on specific incidents and emotive platitudes.

And anyone who criticises British foreign policy and linking it to Woolwich, while even condemning the attack there, is regarded with a degree of suspicion, is regarded as ‘unpatriotic’, as not supporting the troops – the brave heroes ‘out there’ thousands of miles away protecting our freedoms..

Of course, you will never hear any TV news channel or political debate in parliament bring up the Project for a New American Century (<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1937.htm>), a plan devised by US neo-cons and which sets out the underlying reasons for the West’s ongoing wars, destabilisations, covert operations, killings, murders, death squads and torture that have nothing to do with humanitarianism or ‘fighting terror’ and everything to do with securing world domination. No mention of it or Britain’s role in supporting it. Such things are not to be discussed.

Such things are beyond the scope of ‘rational political discourse’. We must keep to the ‘facts’ – the facts as designated by those who wish to bury the real facts at every available opportunity.

In the meantime, we must stick to the story about the proper way of preventing terror at home is by stopping the indoctrination or brain washing of young Muslims. Do not focus too much (if at all) on the Western-fueled barbarity and hacked to death bodies on blood stained streets in far away lands. Out of sight, out of mind, thanks largely to the media. Just who is being indoctrinated here? And who is to protect us from the real extremism?

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