

# Britain Covertly Bombing Syria

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

*In August 2013, UK parliamentarians rejected military intervention in Syria – voting 285 – 272 against it.*

At the time, Prime Minister David Cameron said voting reflected popular sentiment. “(T)he government will act accordingly.” He lied.

On July 17, the UK-based human rights group [Reprise](#) reported UK pilots bombing Syria – despite Cameron’s earlier pledge not to and recent claim about refraining from intervention without parliamentary approval, illegal whenever authorized without Security Council approval.

Documents Reprise obtained through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to Britain’s Defense Ministry revealed UK pilots “operating in Syrian airspace...flying...(s)trike missions” illegally.

Defense Secretary Michael Fallon told MPs government policy would require their approval. None was gotten. Clandestine bombing continues – not against ISIS, against Syrian infrastructure like US airstrikes, waging war on Assad, not imported terrorists ravaging Syria, now with US/UK/Canadian air support.

In response to Reprise’s FOI request, Britain’s Defense Ministry said in part:

“UK military personnel embedded with the USA, French and Canadian armed forces have been authorized to deploy with their units to participate in coalition operations against ISIL” – self-authorized targeting Syrian and Iraqi infrastructure targets, not IS terrorists as claimed.

“These personnel include pilots flying ISR and Strike missions against ISIL targets using the equipment of those units. Of these three nations only the USA and Canada are operating in Syrian airspace” – a bandit operation in both countries.

Claiming “UK Embeds operate as if they were the host nation’s personnel, under that nation’s chain of command” belies reality.

Iraq may or may not have willingly accepted what’s ongoing – for sure not Syria, objecting strongly to largely US bombing without its permission.

Britain’s Defense Ministry contributed to IS hysteria, saying it “poses a direct threat to the UK and to countries around the world.”

Apparently before FOI documents were revealed, he lied saying Britain “is not conducting

airstrikes in Syria.” Now we know they’ve been ongoing since last year.

Tory MP John Barron outspokenly said “no to military intervention. These troops or individuals should be withdrawn from the embedded program whilst this vote holds sway, while it stills hold authority, until we vote again.”

Tim Farron replaced Nick Clegg as Lib Dem leader. He said unauthorized Syria airstrikes were “done with our name and therefore should be done with our approval.”

Convenor of the UK-based Stop the War Coalition Lindsey German condemned covert Britain bombing, saying:

“Parliament voted against bombing Syria two years ago. Now we find that the government ignored this and allowed British pilots to bomb under US command.”

“This was a political, not a military decision and shows the contempt our Prime Minister has for democratic decisions. This should stop now and we should oppose all further attempts to bomb Syria.”

On Friday, Cameron’s spokeswoman admitted UK warplanes have been bombing Syria covertly since September 2014 – operating from a Persian Gulf-based US aircraft carrier.

Defense Secretary Fallon ludicrously compared IS terrorists to Nazi fascists during WW II. New Labour officials want Cameron to explain UK involvement in Syria by Monday.

Reprieve staff attorney Jennifer Gibson said the following:

“Documents obtained by Reprieve indicate that UK personnel have already been involved in bombing missions over Syria for some time – making the current debate over whether Britain should carry out such strikes somewhat obsolete.”

“It is alarming that Parliament and the public have been kept in the dark about this for so long. Yet more worrying is the fact that the UK seems to have turned over its personnel to the US wholesale, without the slightest idea as to what they are actually doing, and whether it is legal.”

“We need an open and honest debate about UK involvement in Iraq and Syria. We can’t have that, though, until the UK comes clean about what actions its personnel are already undertaking.”

#### A Final Comment

Britain and America won’t feed their hungry, house their homeless or provide universal healthcare to all their citizens – in Britain, the way its National Health Service once operated before massive neoliberal cuts and increasing privatization of a publicly run program.

But both countries spend billions of dollars annually bombing one country after another to rubble along with other military operations. War-making takes precedence over social justice. So does serving corporate interests over public ones.

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