

Class, War And David Cameron. “Keep our Country Safe, ...Military Action against ISIS”

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British Prime Minister David Cameron has said it is time for Britain to join air strikes against Islamic State in Syria (ISIS). After the killing of 130 people in Paris, he feels the tide has now turned in favour of military action against ISIS. Cameron has told the British public that such action is vital to protect Britain from similar attacks.

Although in 2013 Cameron lost a vote in parliament on air strikes against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces (based on [the lie](#) that government forces had used chemical weapons), he is now arguing that Britain does not have the luxury of being able to wait any longer to launch attacks on Syrian territory, this time supposedly on ISIS. Some anticipate that Cameron might push for a vote on the matter in parliament within the coming week.

However, any talk about attacking Syria to make Britain 'safer' is based on hollow rhetoric, as [Graham Vanbergen](#) writes:

“In the 12 years preceding the Invasion of Iraq, 65 people in Europe were killed by various ‘terrorist’ attacks, mainly in France, Italy and Greece. In the 12 years since that fateful invasion, the terrorists kill rate has increased by nearly 600%. Far from making its citizens safer, politicians have achieved the opposite.”

For all Cameron's seemingly high-minded utterances about protecting Britain by attacking the territory of a sovereign state thousands of miles away, it is worth reflecting on [Felicity Arbuthnot's](#) observation that what he is advocating is wholly illegal:

“David Cameron is morphing in to his pal, alleged war criminal Tony Blair and is attempting to persuade Parliament that Britain must join those illegally in Syrian air space and equally illegally drop its own bombs with no UN mandate for such action. The Cameron backing media is beating the war drums along with America's partisan hacks...”

Like Blair before him, Cameron is using a good old dose of fear mongering and a grab for the moral high ground in an attempt to disguise the illegal nature of what he is advocating. The hypocrisy is palpable.

Earlier this year, in response to Syrian refugees arriving in Europe, Cameron said that he felt deeply moved by the image of a Syrian boy dead on a Turkish beach. As pressure mounted on Britain to take in more of those fleeing to Europe, he added that the country would fulfil its moral responsibilities.

Anyone who had been following the Syrian conflict at that point could not have failed to detect the hypocrisy. Former French foreign minister [Roland Dumas](#) has stated that Britain had planned covert action in Syria as early as 2009. He told French TV:

“I was in England two years before the violence in Syria on other business... I met with top British officials, who confessed to me that they were preparing something in Syria. This was in Britain not in America. Britain was preparing gunmen to invade Syria.”

Writing in *The Guardian* in 2013, Nafeez Ahmed discussed leaked emails from the [private intelligence firm Stratfor](#), including notes from [a meeting with Pentagon officials](#), that confirmed US-UK training of Syrian opposition forces since 2011 aimed at eliciting “collapse” of Assad’s regime “from within.”

According to [retired NATO Secretary General Wesley Clark](#), a memo from the Office of the US Secretary of Defense just a few weeks after 9/11 revealed plans to “attack and destroy the governments in seven countries in five years,” starting with Iraq and moving on to “Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran.” Clark argues that this strategy is fundamentally about control of the [region’s vast oil and gas resources](#).

In 2009, Syrian President Assad [refused to sign](#) a proposed agreement with Qatar that would [run a pipeline from the latter’s North field](#) through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and on to Turkey, with a view to supply European markets in direct competition with Russia and in the hope of further undermining and helping to break the energy-dependent Russian economy. Russian ally Assad refused to sign and instead pursued negotiations for [an alternative \\$10 billion pipeline plan with Iran](#) crossing Iraq and into Syria that would also potentially allow Iran to supply gas to Europe. Thus Assad had to go.

Last year, Cameron told the United Nations that Britain was ready to play its part in confronting “an evil against which the whole world must unite.” He also said that that “we” must not be so “frozen with fear” of repeating the mistakes of the 2003 Iraq invasion. He was attempting to drum up support for wider Anglo-US direct military action against the Syria under the pretext of attacking ISIS.

A year on, it’s the same story with added impetus due to the attacks in Paris. Cameron is again trying his hand again at pushing Britain into war: one that it is already covertly involved up to its neck in and one that Britain has already ‘subcontracted’ out to a bunch of anti-Assad terror groups, the foot soldiers of US-led imperialism in the region.

Cameron’s call for an urgent military response by Britain comes on the back of the events in Paris, which occurred at a highly convenient time as Russia’s (wholly legal and UN-backed) actions in Syria were severely undermining the anti-Assad militias – trained, funded and supported by the West, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and others (see the forthcoming book ‘The Dirty War on Syria’ by [Tim Anderson](#)). Russian intervention has turned the tide against the West’s proxy forces in the region, including ISIS.

David Cameron is manipulating a war-fatigued public into getting behind yet another military intervention disguised as yet another component of the bogus ‘war on terror’. Whether it involves rhetoric about ‘Russian aggression’ or it involves a US-backed coup in Ukraine, the destruction of Libya or NATO-Saudi-backed terror in Syria, these components are not for one minute to be regarded by the public as the planned machinations of empire

with the aim of [destroying or at least severely weakening Russia](#). The public must be kept confused and most of all fearful of the designated bogeyman of Washington's choice.

If Cameron is serious about defeating ISIS, he would do better to join with Russia and help sever the logistics that enable ISIS to function as a fighting force in Syria. [All roads lead to Turkey](#) (quite literally) and Saudi Arabia. But Cameron's role is to dance to the neocon's tune in Washington, to deceive the public, to lie to it and to push the world ever closer to a major conflict with Russia.

His sidekick, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon is also on cue. [Speaking on Britain's Radio 5](#), he stated the need

"to spend less on some things like the welfare system and to spend more on things that really matter to keep our country safe."

With a £12 billion saving on cuts to the welfare budget, Fallon was attempting to justify a £12 billion increase to the military budget to help pay for eight BAE warships, nine Boeing maritime patrol crafts, surveillance drones and Lockheed Martin jets.

Add on the cost replacing the Trident nuclear programme put at around £31 billion, with another £10 billion being set aside for contingencies, and it is clear where Britain's priorities lie: not with ordinary people whose jobs have been sold to the lowest bidder abroad and who now see their liberties and welfare state being dismantled under the lies of 'austerity' (a manifestation of 'class war', as Noam Chomsky correctly states) and tackling terrorism but with arms companies and militarism.

Cuts to welfare, increases in military spending and events in Syria form part of an ongoing war on working people. That's because militarism is but one arm of a neoliberal agenda that seeks to bend all working people and regional elites – whether Assad, Putin, Saddam or Gaddafi – to the will of Western capital. It is ordinary working people who ultimately pay the price, whether refugees fleeing from conflict, civilian deaths in war zones or those subject to the types of structural violence that 'austerity' or other forms of economic warfare brings courtesy of the IMF, World Bank, WTO or trade agreements like NAFTA, TPA and TTIP. And, ultimately, it is the Lockheed Martins, the Blackwaters (XE Services) and the BAEs, the Chevrans and Occidental Petroleums, the Halliburtons and Monsanto and the financial interests on Wall Street and in the City of London that benefit.

As the media get ready to cheer lead Cameron into war with the unstated aim of removing Assad from power, this fact should not be lost on anyone, not least the British public.

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