

Obama, Cameron Discuss War and State Repression Following Charlie Hebdo Attack

By [Chris Marsden](#) and [Jerry White](#)

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British Prime Minister David Cameron is meeting with US President Barack Obama in the White House today to discuss the escalation of military operations by the two countries in the Middle East, further NATO provocations against Russia and, in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attack in France, greater domestic repression in the name of the “war on terror.”

On the eve of their meeting, Obama and Cameron issued a joint statement published by the Rupert Murdoch-owned *Times* in London. “By confronting the terrorists who threaten us, standing together against Russia’s aggressive acts and continuing our efforts to advance our economic growth, we will continue to advance the security and prosperity that our people deserve,” the two declared.

The two heads of state—whose countries have tortured in violation of national and international laws, launched wars based on lies and deployed police state measures against their own populations—wrote, “We won’t let the voice of freedom be muzzled.” They added that “our ability to defend our freedoms is rooted in our economic strength and the values that we cherish—freedom of expression, the rule of law and strong democratic institutions.”

The statement continued,

“Whether we are facing lone fanatics or terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda, Islamic State (ISIS) or Boko Haram we will not be cowed by extremists. We will defeat these barbaric killers and their distorted ideology, which tries to justify the murder of innocents, whether children attending school in Peshawar, or girls forced to become suicide bombers in northern Nigeria.”

The two did not, of course, mention that the havoc in the Middle East has largely been authored by US and British imperialism, which, along with Turkey and their Gulf allies, has funded and armed Islamic extremists for regime-change operations in Libya, Syria and other countries.

As for Ukraine, Obama and Cameron backed ultranationalists and neo-Nazis who led the Western-backed coup last February, which overthrew Viktor Yanukovych and installed a pro-NATO and anti-Russian regime. The expansion of NATO forces to the borders of Russia has threatened to drag the planet into a nuclear world war.

Cameron is specifically seeking Obama’s cooperation in putting “pressure” on US Internet

companies such as Facebook and Twitter to work more closely with UK intelligence agencies. He has pledged to implement a “snoopers’ charter” Communications Bill giving the British intelligence agencies MI5, MI6 and the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) the power to access encrypted communications.

Both Obama and Cameron have provoked popular hatred within their own countries for spearheading attacks on the wages and social programs of the working class while pursuing policies that have enriched the financial criminals responsible for the 2008 crash.

The French government, like its counterparts in the US and Britain, is now using the “war on terror” to justify militarism abroad and a crackdown of domestic opposition. President François Hollande—whose Socialist Party government is the most unpopular in Europe since World War II—has dispatched 10,000 troops throughout the country, courted the leader of the fascistic National Front and extended air strikes in Iraq and its joint naval presence with the US in the Persian Gulf.

US Secretary of State John Kerry is scheduled to meet with Hollande in Paris today to discuss “cooperation against radical extremists,” according to NBC Nightly News.

The Paris attacks have been followed by a European-wide security crackdown. On Thursday, special paramilitary units of the federal police killed two people and arrested a third in the eastern Belgian town of Verviers, close to the German border. Prosecutor Eric Van der Syt told reporters that police had targeted a group of suspected jihadists returning from Syria and claimed, without providing evidence, that the police assault prevented imminent “large-scale” terrorist attacks in Belgium. Officials said the two unidentified suspects were killed after opening fire on police with assault weapons.

Cameron told reporters in Washington that the events in Belgium “look like yet another indication of the huge risk we face from Islamist extremist terror in Europe. We have to remain extremely vigilant, we have to take all the steps we can to beat this evil,” the BBC reported.

In France, the Hollande government paid for the expanded print run of the latest issue of *Charlie Hebdo*, which contains another provocative anti-Muslim cartoon on its cover. Most media outlets in the country reproduced the front page, justified with declarations of a commitment to free speech even as a state clampdown on speech is underway.

For the first time since it was introduced on November 13, 2014, France has employed a law criminalizing both “directly provoking” or “publicly apologizing” for acts of terrorism, punishable by five years imprisonment and a €75,000 fine. Sentences for apologizing for terrorism committed on the Internet, whether on social networks, a blog or a video, are raised to seven years imprisonment and a fine of €100,000.

Over 50 people are under investigation related to charges of glorifying terrorism and terrorism threats, and Prime Minister Manuel Valls is seeking greater powers to target Internet sites.

In Britain, many newspapers, from *The Times* to the nominally liberal *Guardian* joined the BBC in showing the cover of *Charlie Hebdo*. In Germany, *Deutsche Welle*, *Der Spiegel*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau* and the Green Party-affiliated *Die Tageszeitung* prominently featured the cover image.

The publication by the *Australian* of the image was used by Prime Minister Tony Abbott to declare, "I rather like that cartoon."

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