

## War and the London Riots. Some thuggery is more worthy of condemnation than others.

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*Don't hold your breath waiting for David Cameron to express outrage over the "sickening violence" of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq or the bombing of Libya.*

Iraq March 2003 It in no way justifies or excuses the rioting witnessed in London this week to say that some forms of thuggery, theft and criminality seem more worthy of condemnation than others.

A brick thrown through a shop window, a furniture store torched, a bus burnt out, certainly warrant condemnation, but it's hard to imagine that David Cameron would condemn the devastation and mass slaughter visited on Afghanistan and Iraq over the past decade — or the bombing of Libya — as "sickening violence".

On the contrary, this is the kind of "sickening violence" that he and the majority of MPs now tripping over themselves to voice their outrage over the rioters trashing high streets across Britain, are quick to justify as motivated by the superiority of "our values".

Many of the same MPs who voted along with the majority in parliament for the war that reduced much of Iraq to ruins and killed a million Iraqis, take to the moral high ground when alienated youths from our ghettos of deprivation commit their mini-version of "shock and awe".

And which of the politicians now demanding that the London rioters must be subjected to "the full weight of the law" has said the same of Tony Blair, guilty of international war crimes in the lies and deceptions he used to take Britain into an illegal war. Where is the outrage that he has not been held to account and remains free to accumulate vast wealth directly from the political and business contacts he made when he was committing these crimes?

When it comes to condemning theft, however many trainers, mobile phones and designer clothes have been stolen by the London rioters, they are petty crooks compared to the thievery that has BP, with the aid of the western powers, quite literally stealing control of Iraq's most valuable resource: the oil which was the main motivation for the invasion in 2003.

And as for the cost of clearing up after the London riots, which it is estimated will be £100 million, this is roughly how much has been spent on just 15 missiles among the dozens Britain's military has fired into Libya over the past few months.

While the politicians' reaction to the London riots ranges from those who say lock 'em up and throw away the key, to those few who say we need to seek explanations for how this could have happened, it's hard to believe that the imminent report by the Iraq Inquiry will lead to anything more than a fleeting wringing of hands, with no one held to account for a war that brought such suffering to millions of Iraqis, the deaths of 179 British soldiers and serious injuries of hundreds more, and terrorism onto the streets of London.

Politicians quick to lament that young people in deprived areas of our cities seem "out of control" and have no respect for authority, are themselves no sluggards when it comes to endorsing uncontrolled bombing in wars abroad without any respect for the sovereignty of the countries attacked, as defined under international law.

The London rioters, we're told, are "uncivilised" — often by the same people who thought it was right to invade Iraq and Afghanistan and bomb Libya in the name of what they call "civilisation".

Making these comparisons does not condone the behaviour of the rioters that has brought such mayhem to the streets of Britain's cities, and it is to be hoped, as Owen Jones, author of *Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class*, said yesterday in a BBC interview, that there is now a real attempt at understanding and explaining why young people in deprived areas feel they have nothing to lose by collective acts of rampant vandalism.

It is too much to hope that our politicians, so free with condemnation over the rioters' action, will try to understand and explain their own willingness to support war policies that have brought death and destruction on a monumental scale to the people of Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

To paraphrase the late Amy Winehouse, what kind of thuggery is this?

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