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Westminster Attack – Courage, Cowardice and Double Standards

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Global Research, March 30, 2017

Region: Europe
Theme: Law and Justice, Terrorism

The attack outside and inside London's Westminster Parliament just before 4 pm local time on Wednesday 22nd March resulted in five deaths, including the assailant and forty injured. The confirmed British-born attacker, Adrian Elms – but with a number of alias' including the much quoted Khalid Masood – drove a grey Hyundai SUV over Westminster Bridge, which spans the River Thames as it flows past Parliament, mounting the pavement and mowing down pedestrians crossing the great span, with its panoramic city views.

Some forty people were injured, twenty nine treated in hospital, with seven initially in a critical condition. Speaking in Parliament the next morning Prime Minister, Theresa May listed the injured including twelve Britons, three of whom were police officers returning from an Award ceremony, three French children, two Romanians, four South Koreans, one Pole, one Irish, one Chinese, one Italian, an American and two Greeks.

Killed was American Kurt Cochran who ran a recording studio from his home in Utah who, with his wife, Melissa had been touring Germany, Scotland and Ireland before arriving in London to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary, it was the last day of their visit. Melissa was seriously injured. Also killed was Aysha Frade, originally from the municipality of Betanzos, Spain, an administrator and Spanish teacher at a nearby College, on her way to collect her daughters, aged eight and eleven, from school. Seventy five year old Londoner, Leslie Rhodes also died from his injuries the following night.

The car turned left at the end of the bridge, driving outside the Parliament building, crashing in to the wrought iron railings. The driver then ran through gates in to the New Palace Yard entrance, just below Big Ben, reportedly armed with two knives, fatally wounding unarmed Parliamentary Protection Officer and former soldier, PC Keith Palmer who attempted to stop him.

An act of courage and compassion came from MP Tobias Ellwood, Minister for Middle East and Africa, who gave CPR and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to PC Palmer, in spite of the chaos breaking out after the attacker was shot, ignoring possible threat to his own safety. Ellwood's attempts failed and his bent body as he looked down at Keith Palmer, his mouth and face smeared with Palmer's blood as the cuffs of his formerly immaculate shirt and suit are both a haunting image of grief and a tribute to one who gave no thought but to trying to save a familiar face. There was courage from countless police, paramedics, doctors and nurses who rushed unhesitatingly towards potential danger with emergency equipment from the nearby hospital to help the injured.

Ellwood himself is no stranger to violent tragedy having lost his brother Jonathan in the 2002 Bali bombing. He wrote a searing account of dealing with the seemingly endless official

bureaucratic "red tape" involved in both countries whilst trying to bring his brother's body home whilst stricken with grief. "I actually ended up nailing the lid of the coffin down myself," he said. "That can't be right."

Not everyone showed the courage of Mr. Ellwood and others. As Parliament went in to total lockdown with MPs and all staff trapped inside for hours, the Guardian reported:

> "Theresa May, the Prime Minister, was rushed into a car 40 yards from the gates outside Parliament where shots were fired minutes after the incident occurred, according to footage filmed by a member of staff."
>
> "She was ushered by at least eight armed undercover police, some with their firearms drawn, into a waiting black vehicle in Speaker's Court, the footage seen by the Guardian shows. Loud bangs can be heard in the background as she is ushered into the car, but it is unclear whether the bangs were gunshots."

Safely back in her official residence, behind Downing Street's fortified walls and soaring iron gates, guarded by colleagues of PC Palmer, she paid tribute to the emergency services:

> " … these exceptional men and women ran towards the danger even as they encouraged others to move the other way."

She talked of terrorists targeting Parliament because they hated the: "values our Parliament represents – democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law" and the "spirit of (it's engendered) freedom that echoes in some of the furthest corners of the globe.

It has to be wondered whether those still under bombardment from the UK or it's ally the US, in Afghanistan after sixteen years, Iraq after fourteen years, in Libya, Syria, Yemen; Palestinians remembering the decimation the Balfour Declaration has wrought on them for generations – when May had declared that in this, it's centenary year it is to be remembered in special UK "celebrations" – share quite such a starry eyed view of the "values", "human rights" and "freedoms" etc., emanating from "the Mother of Parliaments."

She concluded:

> " Any attempt to defeat those values through violence and terror is doomed to failure.
>
> "Tomorrow morning, Parliament will meet as normal. We will come together as normal.
>
> "And Londoners – and others from around the world who have come here to visit this great City – will get up and go about their day as normal.
>
> "They will board their trains, they will leave their hotels, they will walk these streets, they will live their lives.
>
> "And we will all move forward together. Never giving in to terror."

Breathtaking stuff from the woman who gave in instantly, running away, protected by eight

armed guards, in a bullet proof limo, rather than remaining in solidarity with her colleagues and the extensive staff who were in lockdown, not knowing whether further unhinged potential assassins were prowling Parliament.

No doubt if challenged she would say that such an emergency demanded she convened the COBRA group – another silly acronym which refers to the crisis response committee which meets in instances of national or regional crisis. However there are plenty of telephones in Parliament and an on line conference is not exactly rocket science.

The following morning she told MPs:

> "Yesterday an act of terrorism tried to silence our democracy, but today we meet as normal, as generations have done before us and as future generations will continue to do, to deliver a simple message: 'We are not afraid and our resolve will never waver in the face of terrorism'."

Her "resolve" it seems not so much "never wavered", it collapsed in a pile of dust.

What a contrast to President Bashar Al Assad and his wife, who with their children have never fled in terrorist attacks on their country ongoing since March 2011, terrorist attacks which include entirely illegal, massive bombings by UK and US air power. See for example (1) for just one month's UK decimation from the UK government's very own horse's mouth.

A week before the Westminster attack a suicide bomber blew himself up in the Syrian capitol, Damascus', Palace of Justice killing reportedly thirty nine people. President Assad and his wife stayed put in their residence in the city. Their "resolve" has absolutely "never wavered in the face of terrorism", indeed "never giving in to terror", plotted from inside the US Embassy in Damascus in 2006 and in Washington well before, he has been called by the US, UK and their allies a tyrant, a despot and a war criminal.

The Western backed "moderate" head choppers are now a mere several kilometres distance from Damascus, still the first family remain.

"I was born in Syria and I will die in Syria", the President has stated. Given that Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi also refused to abandon their people in the face of Western onslaughts and remembering their terrible fates, whatever observers varying views, it is undeniable Assad shows a particular kind of towering courage seemingly rare in the West. George W. Bush of course, on 9/11, although already over 1,000 miles away in Florida, was rushed to a top-secret military bunker in Louisiana.

Not alone the standards but the language differs in the West. Attacks in Paris, Brussels, Nice, London, are undoubtedly "terrorism." In Syria attacks of enormity are declared "a rebel offensive" usually quotes provided by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights which is allegedly funded by the EU and another government, thought to be the UK. (2) The founder, Rami Abdulrahman, with a couple of other aliases:

> " … has direct access to former (UK) Foreign Minister William Hague, who he has been documented meeting in person on multiple occasions at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London and shares (Abdulrahman's) enthusiasm for removing Assad from power."

The reaction to an attack in the West also differs. The UK Prime Minister's office received condolences from Heads of State across the globe. The lights of the Eifel Tower were shut off at midnight, Berlin's Brandenburg Gate was lit, in marks of sympathy. President Putin also conveyed his condolences, in spite of the street level insults he has received from the British parliamentary establishment.

The UN Security Council observed a minutes silence in respect of a tragic, horrific incident, but nevertheless one which would be an unusually quiet day in any of the countries the UK is enjoining in occupying, bombing or has invaded.

A friend also commented succinctly: 'If "terrorists will not succeed" in the UK and other Western countries, why should the West expect the Syrian government and its allies to allow the Western, GCC, Israeli backed terrorists, to succeed in Syria and seize control of the country after six years of global terror?' Terrorists from up to ninety countries gaining access via the borders left open by the occupiers of Iraq from the time of the 2003 invasion and via NATO ally Turkey's borders and blind eyes.

Coincidentally, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had said on the morning of the Westminster attack, after a series of verbal spats with European countries that:

> "If Europe continues this way, no European in any part of the world can walk safely on the streets. Europe will be damaged by this." A few hours later he stated that: "Turkey feels and shares deeply in the United Kingdom's pain" and that it stood in "solidarity" with Britain "in the fight against terrorism."

If "a week is a long time in politics", so, clearly, is six hours.

In Iraq in just two "catastrophic" "liberation" assaults on Mosul's ancient, beautiful city, US "coalition" bombings killed up to three hundred and fifty souls, wiping out entire families in the week before London's one man attack: "Journalists saw children and a pregnant woman among at least 50 bodies recovered from the rubble, with limbs and shoes protruding from destroyed houses." (3) No condolences from world leaders, no Eifel Tower or Brandenburg Gate markings for them.

A spokesman for the US led Mosul slaughter: "Operation Inherent Resolve", responded with:

> "The coalition respects human life, which is why we are assisting our Iraqi partner forces in their effort to liberate their lands from ISIS brutality."

He has clearly forgotten what the US has demonstrated in Iraq – with a brief break – fourteen years of their "respect for human life" – and the comment from a bewildered senior US military man to Major General Antonio Taguba during his investigation in to the horrors, torture and death inflicted by US forces at Abu Ghraib:

> "But they were only Iraqis."

Another friend provided me unwittingly with the conclusion for this inadequate piece on towering double standards. Thank you:

Do we not all bleed the same?

8/3 Kabul, Afghanistan – 49 dead. Silence

9/3 Tikrit, Iraq – 30 dead. Silence

11/3 Damascus, Syria – 74 dead. Silence

15/3 Damascus, Syria – 40 dead. Silence

16/3 Al-Jineh, Syria – 46 dead. Silence

21/3 Raqqa, Syria – 33 dead. Silence

21/3 Westminster, London – 5 dead.

22/3 Mosul, Iraq – 240 dead. Silence

They say we are all born equal.

But only the (Western deemed) "worthy" die as humans.

The others are simply forgotten.

UK residents have responded with generosity to funds for Westminster's injured and grieving families with large sums being raised including £500,000 for the family of PC Palmer. Muddassar Ahmed set up the Muslims United for London page after witnessing the attack from Parliament's Portcullis House: "I happened to be trapped inside the building yesterday, and saw the carnage …" His appeal raised £3,000 in the first hour.

Last weekend hundreds of Muslim women joined hands along Westminster Bridge, in memory and solidarity – as the UK continues to bomb or threaten many of their countries. Their gesture should both humble and shame.

And since the perpetrator of the London attack is dead, it will likely never be known whether it was a coincidence that the attack was on the first anniversary of three suicide bombers killing thirty two people and injuring three hundred and sixteen in Brussels on 22nd March 2016. (4)

In another other coincidence, on 19th March, armed anti-terror police carried out "a terrifyingly realistic" boat drill a little further down the Thames: "A sightseeing vessel became the scene of a fierce mock-gun battle between armed officers and police volunteers posing as terrorists shortly after 11am on Sunday …" (5) 'At least one "body", played by a police volunteer, was cast overboard, and officers were deployed in an effort to assess the effectiveness of rescue operation tactics in life-like conditions.'

"The multi-agency operation was carried out between the Met, the Port of London Authority, London Coastguard, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), London Ambulance Service and London Fire Brigade."

Police stressed that there was no specific threat but with London on high alert for two years:

> "I do hope there is a deterrent effect in this when they see how effective our people are."

After last Wednesday's attack Romanian architect Andrea Cristea was pulled from the Thames, alive but badly injured, it is uncertain whether she jumped to escape the car or fell off in the chaos.

On the day of the 7th July 2005 London tube and bus bombings, Visor Security were running a live exercise outside every tube station affected. Managing Director Peter Power told the BBC:

> "At half past nine this morning we were actually running an exercise for a company of over a thousand people in London based on simultaneous bombs going off precisely at the railway stations where it happened this morning, so I still have the hairs on the back of my neck standing up right now." (6)

Tragic fact really can truly be stranger than fiction.

Notes

1 . https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-forces-air-strikes-in-iraq-monthly-list/raf-air-strikes-in-iraq-and-syria-july-2016

2 . https://www.sott.net/article/329117-Propaganda-spin-cycle-Syrian-Observatory-for-Human-Rights-is-funded-by-US-and-UK-governments

3 . http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/mosul-offensive-isis-islamic-state-latest-iraqi-forces-pause-civilian-casualties-deaths-us-air-a7650136.html

4. http://www.globalresearch.ca/london-terrorist-attack-westminsters-jihadis-come-home/5581670

5 . http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/19/armed-anti-terror-police-terrifyingly-realistic-thames-pleasure/

6 . http://www.globalresearch.ca/7-7-mock-terror-drill-what-relationship-to-the-real-time-terror-attacks/821

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