# UK government, media demand punitive action against Moscow over MH17 crash

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UK Prime Minister David Cameron has seized on Thursday's tragic crash of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine to demand a "reset of European-Russia relations."

Writing in the *Sunday Times*, Cameron warned: "This is not about military action, plainly, but it is time to make our power, influence and resources count."

His statement underscores the recklessness with which Britain's ruling elite are exploiting the death of 298 people to ratchet up Western provocations against Russia. Before any serious investigation into the crash has begun, the government and all the official media have enthusiastically joined in the propaganda war—led by Washington—to insist that blame rests with separatist forces in eastern Ukraine and, by extension, Moscow.

Even while doffing his cap to the need to "establish the full facts of what happened," Cameron insisted: "the growing weight of evidence points to a clear conclusion: that flight MH17 was blown out of the sky by a surface-to-air missile fired from a rebel-held area."

Unless Moscow halted any support for separatists in eastern Ukraine and established "proper long-term relationships" with "the European Union, NATO and the wider West," then "we must respond robustly," he wrote.

His threats were echoed by new Defence Secretary Michael Fallon in an interview with the *Mail on Sunday*. "I don't think we are at the start of World War Three," Fallon said, "but NATO has to respond. It's clearly a threat to NATO's eastern flank and that's why we must offer as much reassurance as we can, particularly to the Baltic states."

Pressed as to whether "there were any circumstances in which Britain would defend Ukraine from a Russian attack," Fallon said he would not speculate. "That's for NATO to respond to—I won't be drawn."

Cameron's charge against Moscow for "destabilising a sovereign state, violating its territorial integrity" and "backing thuggish militias" is especially spurious. It is the Western powers that engineered the right-wing coup in Kiev as part of their geo-strategic offensive against Russia, and have supported the bloody offensive—led by fascist brigands—to suppress opposition in eastern Ukraine.

Even as Cameron demanded the separatists lay down their arms, Kiev's right-wing militias continued to wreak death and destruction in Luhansk, close to the crash site. Reuters reported "fierce fighting" at the weekend as government forces retook the south-eastern district of the city. Electricity and water supplies have been destroyed and at least 20 people were killed on Friday alone. Almost 1,400 people have been killed in eastern Ukraine since mid-April, nearly 500 of them civilians.

The already catastrophic situation in the centre of Europe is set to get much worse. Referencing the EU's failure last Wednesday to follow Washington's lead and impose tougher sanctions, Cameron hit out at the "reluctance on the part of too many European countries" to act over events in Ukraine.

His criticism echoed President Barack Obama's assertion that the crash was a "wake-up call" for Europe. This is the line now taken almost universally by the British media, who go so far as to imply that the EU's "feeble" sanctions are responsible for the disaster.

The *Financial Times*, for example, opined: "The bloc has been disappointingly divided between those, like the central Europeans, who take a tough approach to Russia and those, like Italy and parts of the German government, that are reluctant because of the threat to economic ties. As a result the EU has passed far less

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stringent sanctions than the US. If the death of 298 people—among them at least 198 Europeans—on a flight out of Amsterdam does not make EU leaders think again, nothing will." The nominally liberal press are even more strident in their demands for "action." The *Independent*, owned by Russian oligarch Alexander Lebedev, thundered: "though he cannot have wished it, the Russian President is responsible for this massacre."

Citing approvingly US senator John McCain's pledge that there will be "hell to pay" for Moscow as a consequence, it editorialised: "those pledges need to be upheld. Hell, in this case, means further damage to the Russian economy, adding to the economic sanctions already implemented."

Similarly, the *Observer* slammed German, Italian and British qualms at losing "Russian gas … or Russian cash" and demanded wide-ranging sanctions against Moscow.

The belligerence of the political establishment is aimed not only at Moscow, but at intimidating and silencing widespread domestic opposition to its war-mongering while preparing an explosion of British military aggression.

In the *Telegraph*, Dan Hodges, columnist and former Labour Party official, said that while "it's still not clear" who was responsible for the deaths of 298 people, "this we know for certain: their deaths also mark the death of British 'soft power'."

Complaining that military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq had led to "the British public at large" adopting as its motto "Why should we be involved?" he wrote contemptuously: "The passengers of MH17 would no doubt have said the same thing, if you'd asked them about the situation there [eastern Ukraine]. After all, how far is Kiev from Kuala Lumpur?"

The *Telegraph* 's US editor Peter Foster took a similar line, blaming "a detectable sense of complacency among the coddled citizens of Europe and America" for a reluctance to intervene assertively in the "new world disorder."

Drawing an analogy with the outbreak of the First World War 100 years ago, Foster included amongst the "worrying number of serpents starting to rear their ugly heads" the Middle East, China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and India.

At the *Times*, Ed Husain from the US Council on Foreign Relations think tank made explicit exactly what it is that the ruling elite has to overcome and to what end.

Under the headline "Britain's cowardice threatens our security," he wrote disparagingly of "A consensus … emerging in British public life that conflicts and killings in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Nigeria, Pakistan and elsewhere are not our problem. Quietly we hope the Americans deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We want to keep our heads down, pay our mortgages and enjoy holidays in the sun."

He added, "Whether we like it or not, we have had a hand in mismanaging, if not creating, many of the world's conflicts. Now, in partnership with our US friends, we must shoulder what Kipling, in the politically incorrect parlance of his age called the 'white man's burden'."

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