

UK announces new NATO military force, declares terror alert

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1 September 2014

Prime Minister David Cameron, who is hosting this week's NATO summit in Wales, is to announce that the imperialist alliance will create a new joint expeditionary force (JEF) of at least 10,000 troops for rapid deployment in crisis situations.

Previewing the plan Friday evening, the *Financial Times* reported that the new force is being created "to bolster NATO's power in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine."

The FT said, "The force will incorporate air and naval units as well as ground troops and will be led by British commanders, with other participating nations contributing a range of specialist troops and units. Countries involved at present include Denmark, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Norway and the Netherlands. Canada has also expressed an interest in taking part."

The "model for the new JEF will be Britain's expeditionary force with France, which has been years in the making and is due to be fully operational by 2016."

In 2010 Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy signed treaties on defence and nuclear co-operation, that included the eventual creation of a combined joint expeditionary force of 5,000 soldiers from each country, for training and possible operations.

Of the new plans, the FT article continued, "While the 28-state alliance has stopped short of permanently deploying troops in eastern Europe—a measure that would violate several long-standing agreements with Russia—it has committed to a programme of significant military exercises and the development of more flexible, rapid reaction forces."

This strategy is in line with calls by sections of the US political establishment for "rotating" NATO forces to be placed in a number of countries bordering Russia, specifically the Baltic States.

Last week William J. Perry, secretary of defence in the Clinton administration, and George P. Shultz, a secretary of state in the Reagan administration, wrote an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, "We should reassure the Baltic States by deploying forces in those countries. A permanent deployment would contravene the NATO-Russia Founding Act, but a rotating force could be consistent with the Act while indicating to Russia how seriously we take their military actions."

The Royal United Services Institute, a British defence and security think-tank, backed up the new JEF plan and troop rotation with its international director Jonathan Eyal telling the FT, "We need to end the idea of different zones of security in Europe. We need to be talking about prepositioning, regular rotation of troops and making it very clear that we do not accept that the eastern Europeans are in some different category of membership of NATO."

The plan is the starkest confirmation that the ruling elite in Britain are now firmly on a war footing.

Cameron recently stated that the UK's "military prowess" is available for use in the Middle East. The ongoing crisis in Iraq and Syria and the war being carried on by the Ukraine government against separatists has prompted demands from significant figures in the British Armed Forces that the government intervene militarily in order to defend its "national interests."

The FT commented, "The British army has been intensively lobbying for more deployments abroad in order to keep it fighting fit. For the first time in their history, almost all of Britain's land forces will be permanently based on home soil after the withdrawal from Afghanistan is complete."

Ever watchful for an opportunity for the ruling elite to reap any financial advantage over their rivals, the FT

said of the plans, “[T]he requirements for participating states to integrate into a harmonious command and control structure may produce benefits in encouraging the use of British-produced equipment.”

The military buildup is being bolstered by efforts to create a crisis atmosphere at home. Home Secretary Theresa May announced Friday that the UK’s terrorist “threat level” had been raised from “substantial” to “severe,” the second-highest of the five threat levels.

The declaration was the decision of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), a branch of the MI5 domestic intelligence agency. May said the “increase in the threat level is related to developments in Syria and Iraq where terrorist groups are planning attacks against the West.”

This deliberately vague statement aside, the government did not give any specific reason as to why a terrorist attack on the UK was now deemed “highly likely.” Rather the Home Office added, “This means a terrorist attack is highly likely, although there is no intelligence to suggest that one is imminent.”

The decision was used by Cameron to make a fear-mongering speech in which he beat the drums ever louder in support of new wars. He used the Islamic State (IS) jihadist forces operating in Iraq as the bogeymen, saying they represented a “greater and deeper threat to our security than we have known before.”

“We now believe that at least 500 people have travelled from Britain to fight in Syria, and potentially Iraq,” Cameron added. This is hardly a surprise, especially given that the British government was actively promoting the “rebel” forces in Syria fighting against the government of President Bashar al-Assad, although the prime minister made no mention of this fact.

Referring to the 2003 US-British-led invasion of Iraq, Cameron insisted, “We must use all resources we have at our disposal—aid, diplomacy, political influence, and our military. Learning the lessons from the past doesn’t mean that there isn’t a place for our military.”

Cameron said that because there were “foreign fighters who travel from Britain to Syria and Iraq, taken part in terrorist acts and now come back to threaten our security here at home,” it was necessary to further curtail democratic rights.

There were “some gaps in our armoury,” he said, and

“we need to strengthen them.” He added that on Monday he would announce further measures “to stop people travelling, to stop those who do go from returning, and to deal decisively with those who are already here.” New legislation would be introduced “that will make it easier to take people’s passports away.”

Last week the Tory Mayor of London and prospective MP Boris Johnson urged, “We need to make it crystal clear that you will be arrested if you go out to Syria or Iraq without a good reason,” he said.

Johnson, who is routinely promoted as the next likely leader of the Conservatives, said, “The law needs a swift and minor change so that there is a ‘rebuttable presumption’ that all those visiting war areas without notifying the authorities have done so for a terrorist purpose.”

Conservative MP Bob Stewart commented supportively, “Perhaps we should be hard line on this and say it’s not you’re innocent until proved guilty, we will assume you are guilty until you are proved innocent. If you do become stateless you can always join the new caliphate called the Islamic State.”

Johnson also called for the restoration of Control Orders, first introduced by a Labour government in 2005, a form of house arrest preventing any form of contact not explicitly authorised by the state.

Labour Party leader Ed Miliband gave his support for the return of these authoritarian measures. “[T]he government should strengthen existing powers, including revisiting the case for control orders,” he said.



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