# Corbyn makes his appeal to become Britain's next prime minister

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Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn gave his response to the Manchester suicide bombing yesterday, amid the further unravelling of Prime Minister Theresa May's lie that Salman Abedi was a "lone wolf" known only "to a degree" by the security services.

As Corbyn stood to speak, police carried out further raids, bringing the total of those arrested in the UK to eleven, including Abedi's younger brother who lives in Manchester and his father and other brother in Libya. Evidence shows that his entire family were known Islamic extremist elements. Abedi himself had been the subject of warnings to the police and security apparatus regarding his terrorist sympathies on at least five occasions over five years.

In sum, what emerges is that the dead and horribly maimed in Manchester—mainly young people—were the victims of the illegal regime-change policies pursued by British imperialism.

This was especially damaging to the Conservatives who authorised the Libyan uprising and murder of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi using such extremist elements in 2011. But their efforts to whip up a backlash against Corbyn as a "threat to national security" who is "soft on terrorism" have singularly failed to win traction among working people—whose suspicions and animosity are directed against May and her attempts to politically capitalise on the terrorist outrage.

The Conservative lead, based on a YouGov poll—taken on Wednesday and Thursday of this week—is now down to just 5 points. Such is their disarray that the planned relaunch of the Tories' own election campaign—to be overseen by Brexit Secretary David Davis—was postponed just as Corbyn relaunched Labour's.

Corbyn's assertion that Britain's involvement in numerous wars in the Middle East and North Africa had contributed to the terror threat facing the UK has popular support. A poll taken yesterday showed that 65 percent agreed that UK foreign policy has played a direct role in such attacks.

But rather than showing how foreign policy is driven by the class interests of the British bourgeoisie—both against the working class at home and its rivals overseas—Corbyn presents it solely as a "wrong" policy choice that can be rectified with clear thinking.

In particular, Corbyn advanced himself as someone who can heal the bitter social divisions that threaten to explode if the Tories continue to believe they can impose their class war policy without opposition.

His was a patriotic speech that invoked traditions of British respect for democracy, human rights, fairness at home and abroad—and which cast Labour as the guardian of national unity against division at a time of acute crisis.

His brief foray into the question of Britain's foreign policy was only made after Corbyn had made clear his support for the police, the security services and the army—linking them all with doctors and nurses and firefighters as the defenders of the public's safety.

Corbyn's address, replete with numerous references to "our country", began with a plea for national unity. The Manchester bombing "could have happened anywhere and that the people in any city, town or village in Britain would have responded in the same way [to help and assist the dying and injured and take those stranded into their homes]... That is the solidarity that defines our United Kingdom."

His statement that he has spent his "political life working for peace and human rights and to bring an end to conflict and devastating wars" was followed by the ringing declaration, "But do not doubt my

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determination to take whatever action is necessary to keep our country safe and to protect our people on our streets, in our towns and cities, at our borders."

To overcome the threat of terrorism meant reversing "the cuts to our emergency services and police… Austerity has to stop at the A&E [accident and emergency] ward and at the police station door."

As opposed to cuts in police numbers that have taken place under May, Corbyn stressed, "There will be more police on the streets under a Labour Government. And if the security services need more resources to keep track of those who wish to murder and maim, then they should get them."

What was required on British foreign policy was a necessary course correction, he insisted. His argument did not reference popular opposition to wars in Iraq, Libya and Syria or their devastating consequences, but the citation that "Many experts, including professionals in our intelligence and security services, have pointed to the connections between wars our government has supported or fought in other countries, such as Libya, and terrorism here at home."

This was his one oblique reference to the fact that Abedi's family are from Libya and that his father was a member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.

Corbyn stated, "We must be brave enough to admit the war on terror is simply not working." What was needed was not a retreat from UK interference in other countries, but a "smarter way to reduce the threat from countries that nurture terrorists and generate terrorism."

Labour's approach to foreign policy would be "focused on strengthening our national security in an increasingly dangerous world," he pledged. This is why it was imperative to support "our Armed Services, Foreign Office and International Development professionals…"

One of the most significant statements made by Corbyn was his personal address to soldiers. Tory Prime Minister Theresa May's decision to send an initial 1,000 troops on to the streets—out of a 5,000-plus that is possible under the provisions of the secret "Operation Temperer" she helped devise while home secretary—is unprecedented. That it could mean an election held June 8 under barely disguised martial law is so potentially explosive that even loyal mouthpieces such as the *Guardian* have sounded a note of caution.

In contrast, Corbyn declared on the Westminster rostrum, "I would like to take a moment to speak to our soldiers on the streets of Britain. You are doing your duty as you have done so many times before... I want to assure you that, under my leadership, you will only be deployed abroad when there is a clear need and only when there is a plan and you have the resources to do your job."

He concluded his paean to the army, "That is my commitment to our armed services. This is my commitment to our country."

Only then did Corbyn issue his own guarded and carefully worded caution to Britain's rulers—not to risk the explosive consequences of the on-going lurch towards authoritarian forms of rule and not to be so blinded by their hostility to all things "left" that they misjudged the entirely benign aims of a Corbyn government.

"Democracy will prevail. We must defend our democratic process…and stand united against those who would seek to take our rights away, or who would divide us," he said. Democracy was "at the very heart" of "British values... our General Election campaigns are the centrepieces of our democracy..."

His loyalty to the British capitalist state should not be questioned. The "Labour Party was about bringing our country together," he concluded. "Let's have our arguments without impugning anyone's patriotism and without diluting the unity with which we stand against terror."

There is no doubt that Corbyn's appeal for unity encompassing everyone from public sector workers to soldiers and for democracy and a saner foreign policy will have its appeal to large sections of workers and youth. But in his smart suit and newly cropped beard, Corbyn and his backers will hope that he has also convinced a more important target audience in Britain's boardrooms, banks, editorial offices and military command centres.

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