

UK: Starmer outlines Labour's militarist agenda, including use of nuclear weapons

Robert Stevens
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Central to the Labour's Party securing the backing of the ruling elite ahead of a UK general election in 2024 is to proclaim its readiness to wage war.

Party leader Sir Keir Starmer and his Shadow Defence Secretary John Healey ended the year with a trip to NATO's Tapa base in Estonia. This coincided with a December 26 article in *The Times* under the headline, "Labour pledges urgent review of Britain's defence capabilities", which introduced a personal statement by Healey.

In it, Healey promised, "As the party that helped found Nato and established the UK's nuclear deterrent, defence is in our DNA... in our first year [in office], we'll conduct a strategic defence and security review to assess the state of our armed forces, the nature of threats and the capabilities needed."

He continued, "With war in Europe and increasing threats further afield, we have all been reminded of the importance of security at home and abroad as the cornerstone of our nation."

The Tapa base was chosen as it is not only a critical front of NATO's encirclement of Russia—fewer than 100 miles from the Russian border—but also the location of the British military's largest overseas deployment globally.

ERR News reported in August after a conversation with Brigadier Giles Harris, commander of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup, that "around 11,000" British soldiers "have already passed through on rotation to the battlegroup".

This constitutes "well over 10 percent of the total regular British Army's current personnel strength, while that figure will continue to rise given the open-ended commitment the U.K. has made and the fact more and more personnel will be deployed to Estonia for the first time, in addition to returnees."

On arrival in Tapa, and speaking on X while wearing an army camouflage flak jacket, Starmer noted that this was

his second visit following another in March last year. He declared "this morning we had the opportunity to watch a [military] exercise where the Trojan [armoured battlefield engineer vehicles] equipment was used to break through a pathway through a very snowy and cold forest and get a sense of just how hard the work they do is".

Referencing British imperialism's critical role in the NATO-led war against Russia in Ukraine and Israel's genocide in Gaza, Starmer gave thanks "from the whole of the Labour Party" that while Britain's population were sat down to their Christmas dinners, "our soldiers, sailors and aviators will be patrolling, delivering vital aid to Ukraine, reassuring our NATO allies on the border with Russia, and working to maintain stability in the Middle East."

The Labour leader is widely hated for his endorsement of Israel's war crimes, including its denial of food, water and medicine to the Palestinians. To stirring background music, he declared, "Serving in our armed forces is the ultimate public service. You embody the values of courage, integrity, loyalty, discipline and service that the British people most admire."

Speaking to the right-wing GB News, Starmer replied to a question now asked of all party leaders in general election campaigns that he would indeed be prepared to use nuclear weapons against another state. GB News reported, "Asked directly if he would fire nuclear weapons to protect the UK, Sir Keir said: 'The nuclear deterrent is very important to us. Obviously, I'm not going to discuss with you the circumstance in which they may or may not be used, but it is a very important part of the defence of our country that we are strongly committed to, along with our commitment to NATO and to the security of our nation, which is paramount.'"

Starmer told the broadcaster, "There's been an unshakable commitment to NATO ever since NATO was first created, which of course was under a Labour

government.”

Placing Labour firmly in alignment with the US Biden administration and Downing Street, he insisted, “the defence of the UK starts in Ukraine and we will stand with Kyiv for as long as it takes to win.”

Britain and its NATO allies “need to be prepared, we need to deter”, he said, adding, “I think we have to be mindful of that threat from Russia to Europe, to ourselves in the UK and the interference that goes on.”

Among the posts on X by Starmer and Healey during their trip was one dated December 22 from Starmer reading, “Britain’s armed forces are a beacon of hope this Christmas. Labour stands with them, supporting Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression.”

This included a video with shots of Starmer and Healey atop a tank and Starmer helping feed the troops in the army canteen, while a talking head from BBC Radio is heard describing the significance of the trip: “Keir Starmer can’t get enough of opportunities to show that he has a different view of the world to the one the Labour Party presented to the public at the 2019 general election. He’s not just meeting British forces, he’s doing so at a NATO base.”

This was a denunciation of Labour’s election platform under Jeremy Corbyn. While Corbyn—as a pivotal element of his capitulation to the party’s right-wing—upheld Labour’s support for NATO and the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons programme in the 2017 and 2019 manifestos, he refused to declare that he would use nuclear weapons. His stance was met with threats from the military, with a senior serving UK general declaring that if Corbyn came to power, there was “the very real prospect of an event which would effectively be a mutiny.”

Corbyn was also denounced by Theresa May’s Tory government and Labour’s right-wing for his refusal to immediately blame Moscow for the still unexplained poisoning, in March 2018, of the Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia.

In Estonia, Starmer solidarised himself with the militarist and intelligence agency cabal in London and Washington who orchestrated this campaign to remove Corbyn. Warning of a “real and constant threat from Russia, measured in years, and measured back home in the UK as well,” he said, “The Salisbury attacks [the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in the Wiltshire city] and sinister influence of Russian money in Britain are a reminder that Putin’s malign influence will extend beyond Ukraine if we fail to stand up to it.”

Taking over the Labour leadership after Corbyn’s defeat in the 2019 general election, it was Starmer who delivered the coup-de-grace to Corbyn, expelling him from the parliamentary party in a matter of months utilising lies that Corbyn and his supporters were antisemites.

The purpose of Starmer and Healey’s Estonia trip was summed up in Healey’s piece in *The Times*. He reassured the ruling class, “Soon after he became leader of the Labour Party in 2020, Sir Keir Starmer pledged: ‘Never again will Labour go into an election not being trusted on national security’”.

Starmer has refused to list a single policy, ahead of the election, that would increase spending on public services lest he jeopardise his pledge to “fiscal discipline.” But he was specific in a commitment to ramp up military spending. GB News reported, “Sir Keir said that he was keen to increase defence spending from the current level of 2.12 percent of gross domestic product, perhaps to the 2.5 percent level it achieved when Labour lost power in 2010.” He told them, “The ambition is for an increase. Well, when the last Labour government was in power, it was 2.5 percent. But you know, there is a NATO commitment here, which we will always make sure that we maintain.”

The Times noted of Healey’s message, “In particular, he is concerned that the UK does not currently have the capacity to shoot down hostile missiles aimed at a settlement or piece of strategic infrastructure, such as a nuclear power station.”

The paper promoted Israel’s Arrow 3 air exoatmospheric hypersonic anti-ballistic missile systems, developed by Tel Aviv and the US and used “to shoot down a Houthi ballistic missile in space last month”. The cost of such technology is staggering, with Germany having already signed a €4 billion deal to buy the system.



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