

Starmer's Labour: The “party of NATO” prepares a UK government of genocide and war

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The Labour Party's key pledge to Britain's ruling elite is that it can be trusted in government as “the party of NATO” and national security.

Sir Keir Starmer's keynote June 3 speech pledged to make the military “fit to fight”, as he boasted that Labour had ditched the pacifist baggage of his predecessor Jeremy Corbyn. Starmer did so alongside 10 of the party's 14 general election candidates with a military background. This was a record number for the party said Starmer repeatedly.

On June 11, with Starmer about to launch a militarist manifesto, Labour boasted that the number of armed forces and veteran candidates had risen to 19.

Labour's manifesto states that every policy the party will pursue in government is subordinate to the primary mission of national security. “No policy commitment in pursuit of Labour's missions matters unless we uphold the first duty of any government: to keep the country safe. Peace and security are hard earned. They require constant vigilance.”

The manifesto complains that “over the last 14 years geopolitical tensions have risen, while the Conservatives have hollowed out our armed forces.”

This is followed by a commitment to NATO's de facto war with Russia, declaring that “Now Putin is attempting to break European security with his full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Labour will meet this challenge by strengthening our armed forces and protecting our national security.”

All defence policies are listed in this context.

“Our commitment to the UK's nuclear deterrent is absolute. It is a vital safeguard for the UK and our NATO allies. As the party that founded NATO, we maintain our unshakeable commitment to the alliance, and we will apply a NATO test to major defence programmes to ensure we meet our obligations in full.”

Without naming Russia and China, the document then states, “in recent years, threats to our safety and security have multiplied and diversified. Alongside greater conventional threats, we are faced with the growing emergence of hybrid

warfare, including cyber-attacks and misinformation campaigns which seek to subvert our democracy. To ensure the UK is fully prepared to deal with these interconnected threats, Labour will conduct a Strategic Defence Review within our first year in government, and we will set out the path to spending 2.5 percent of GDP on defence.”

Labour's commitment to Britain's nuclear weapons programme bears a staggering cost. The upgrade and maintenance of a new generation of nuclear submarines and warheads could cost up to £209 billion—far more than the cost of running the entire National Health Service for a year (£178 billion for 2024-25), including the wages of its more than 1 million strong workforce.

The increase by the Conservative government from 2.3 percent of GDP to 2.5 percent by 2030—which Labour says it will match—will cost an additional £70 billion.

The manifesto then outlines Labour's plans for the militarisation of the entire economy:

“Strengthening Britain's security requires a long-term partnership with our domestic defence industry. Labour will bring forward a defence industrial strategy aligning our security and economic priorities. We will ensure a strong defence sector and resilient supply chains, including steel, across the whole of the UK. We will establish long-term partnerships between business and government, promote innovation, and improve resilience. We will prioritise UK businesses for defence investment and will reform procurement to reduce waste. Labour will support industry to benefit from export opportunities, in line with a robust arms export regime committed to upholding international law.”

To facilitate moving Britain to a war economy, “Labour will establish a fully functioning military strategic headquarters and a national armaments director to create a strong defence centre capable of leading Britain in meeting the increasing threats we face.”

This deliberately mirrors the declared agenda of Britain's new chief of the Armed Forces, General Roland Walker, who declared earlier this month, “The only real measurement of an army is its fighting power, is lethality in the face of very real

and converging threats. In the near term, my challenge to the British Army is to double that lethality in three years and treble it by the end of the decade.” This would require partners in industry as “we cannot do this alone”. Army personnel would be required working with defence corporations, to “track backwards and forwards from the foxholes to the factory” to keep weapons constantly kept up to date.

Labour commits to backing NATO’s proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and the advanced preparations for a direct confrontation, insisting, “With Labour, the UK’s military, financial, diplomatic and political support for Ukraine will remain steadfast. Labour will support efforts to hold Putin’s Russia to account for its illegal war, backing calls for a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression. We will work with our allies to enable the seizure and repurposing of frozen Russian state assets to support Ukraine. And we will play a leading role in providing Ukraine with a clear path to NATO membership.”

Starmer personally endorsed the genocide in Gaza and Labour’s manifesto calls for no action against Israel, stating only that “Labour will continue to push for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the upholding of international law, and a rapid increase of aid into Gaza.”

Backing US imperialism’s conflict with China, the manifesto says of the US/UK/Australian military alliance, “Labour is fully committed to AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership with Australia and the United States... After 14 years of damaging Conservative inconsistency over China, Labour will bring a long-term and strategic approach to managing our relations. We will co-operate where we can, compete where we need to, and challenge where we must. We will improve the UK’s capability to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities China poses through an audit of our bilateral relationship. We will always act in our interests and defend our sovereignty and our democratic values.”

Britain’s role as the junior partner and provocateur-in-chief for US imperialism will continue whoever occupies the White House after the presidential election in November. The manifesto states, “The United States is an indispensable ally. Our special relationship is crucial for security and prosperity, and transcends whatever political parties and individuals are in office. We will continue to work with the United States on the basis of our shared values and common interests including on economic co-operation, defence and intelligence.”

Labour’s pro-war manifesto has been long in the making. On January 2023, the *Huffington Post* revealed that Labour had drawn up a “Hit List Of Armed Forces Seats to target in a General Election,” with the party “parking its tanks on the Tories’ lawn by targeting constituencies with military links...”

“Led by shadow defence secretary John Healey, they are concentrating on seats with communities of serving personnel, veterans or defence and aerospace workers.” Among the 28 constituencies targeted were “the seat of veterans’ affairs minister Johnny Mercer in Plymouth Moor View - as well as

Hastings and Rye and Dover and Deal.”

The article noted, “Labour is standing veterans in a number of those constituencies as it aims to transform itself into the party of defence and national security.”

So complete was this transformation by the time the general election was announced that the Tory MP Labour was planning to unseat in Dover and Deal—the anti-immigrant agitator Natalie Elphicke—defected to join Starmer’s party.

Among Labour’s military candidates are Louise Jones and Mike Tapp, both previously in army intelligence. Since leaving the military around a decade ago, Tapp has worked for the National Crime Agency and Ministry of Defence.

Alistair Carns is a former Royal Marines colonel. He served in the imperialist occupation in Afghanistan between October 2010 and March 2011.

Another significant figure among Labour’s military slate is Dan Jarvis, a member of the Parachute Regiment from 1997 to 2011. Having served in Iraq and twice in Afghanistan, he is the sitting MP for Barnsley Central and was Mayor of South Yorkshire from 2018 to 2022.

Central to the snap general election being called was that a government be installed able to prosecute an escalated war against Russia. These plans are to be discussed at the upcoming NATO summit in Washington DC beginning July 9, just five days after the July 4 ballot and two days after the final round of elections to the French National Assembly. It will almost certainly be attended by Starmer as Britain’s war prime minister.

Warning of these dangers and beginning the political mobilisation of the working class against them on the basis of socialism has been the essential purpose of the general election campaign of the Socialist Equality Party. It is why we have stood Tom Scripps against Starmer in Holborn and St Pancras. It is time to read our manifesto and to act on it.

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