

# Britain's Royal Navy "Should Develop a Reign of Terror". "Russia Should Go Away and Shut Up."

Statement by UK Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson

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Global Research, February 14, 2019

[Left Foot Forward](#) 11 February 2019

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Military](#) and [WMD](#)

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*The Royal Navy should be able to "develop a reign of terror down enemy coasts", **Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson** said today.*

During a speech outlining military spending priorities, Williamson said:

"In 1940, Winston Churchill said: "Enterprises must be prepared with specially trained troops of the Hunter class who can develop a reign of terror down enemy coasts".

Our actions mean we will deliver on Churchill's vision for our Royal Navy and for our Royal Marine commandos."

According to the National Army Museum, Churchill's quote ends by proposing a "butcher and bolt policy" of commandos behind enemy lines, "leaving a trail of German corpses behind them".

Williamson's speech was interpreted as a show of force against both Russia and China, as he said he would send the military's new aircraft carrier to the South China Sea.

**The Defence Secretary also defended the concept of foreign military intervention, saying that the price of not intervening is often higher than the price of intervening.**

Williamson's "reign of terror" comments are characteristic of the inflammatory language he favours. He was widely mocked when he said that "Russia should go away. It should shut up."

When asked four times by Richard Madeley if he regretted these words, he failed to answer and Madeley ended the interview.

According to BuzzFeed News, [Williamson's general use of language has angered his colleagues in the Ministry of Defence](#). One former adviser reportedly said:

"The shooting from the hip and choice of words has raised a few eyebrows

because it's not particularly statesmanlike.

There is a tendency for some who arrive in the department to want to play with the toys and grandstand, which is something to be avoided – it's not great. The language has been a little bit alarming to those in the services.”

Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary Nia Griffith also criticised Williamson's "sabre-rattling". In response to his speech, she said:

“The Conservatives have slashed the defence budget by over £9bn in real terms since 2010 and they are cutting armed forces numbers year after year.

“Instead of simply engaging in yet more sabre-rattling, Gavin Williamson should get to grips with the crisis in defence funding that is happening on his watch.”

On the other hand, Campaign Against Arms Trade criticised Williamson's current planned increase in military spending instead of the cuts of the past eight years.

The anti-arms organisation also objected to Williamson's comments about increasing "lethality" and "hard power". Spokesperson Andrew Smith said:

“With the UK at a crossroads, the Government should redefine its role, but that should mean an end to interventionism and the focus on projecting military strength around the world – not more of the same failed policies that have done so much damage.

Williamson rightly condemns those that flout and ignore international law, but the Government is arming and supporting Saudi forces widely accused of violating international humanitarian law in atrocities against Yemen.

At a time when budgets are being squeezed and cut across the country, and when millions are being hit by austerity, the Government is finding even more money for the military.

It's time for Williamson and his colleagues to take a different view on security. Where the UK, and other rich nations, can make a positive difference is through overseas aid, supporting civilian peace-building efforts, and investing in renewable energy and green technologies to combat climate change, which is the number one threat to our security and that of the world.”

Williamson is rumoured to be planning either a Tory leadership run himself, or to support another candidate in exchange for a top job under the next leader.

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