

# Britain's Top Military Brass: The UK Must be Prepared "To Go to War". "We Must Risk War with Syria"

By [Global Research News](#)

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"Britain has to be prepared to "go to war" is the message of the outgoing British Chief of Staff General Sir David Richards.

In an interview in the Daily Telegraph, Richards criticized the British government for its ineptitude. According to the General, if the British government wishes to restrain the Syrian regime, it must continue arming the Al Qaeda rebels as well as implement a no-fly zone. "The (former) Chief of the Defence Staff also warns that the Government needs to clarify its "political objective" in Syria before a coherent military plan for dealing with the Assad regime can be recommended."

General Sir David Richards, however, emphasized that a "no fly zone" is not enough, and what is required is an all out ground war, implying the illegal land invasion of a sovereign country.

**"You have to establish a ground control zone. You have to take out their air defences. You also have to make sure they can't manoeuvre -** which means you have to take out their tanks, and their armoured personnel carriers and all the other things that are actually doing the damage.

The chief of the defence staff also warns that **simply introducing a no-fly zone on its own would not prove effective and that other military measures would be required.** (Con Coughlin and Robert Winnett, Daily Telegraph, 18 July 2013. Read Complete Daily Telegraph article: [Army chief: We risk war with Syria](#))

In his interview with The Daily Telegraph, General Sir David Richards said that "if you want to have the material impact on the Syrian regime's calculations that some people **seek**" then **"ground targets" would have to be "hit". ...**

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## Forces chief: we risk war with Syria

Declaring a no-fly zone would draw us into full battle, warns General Richards in parting shot

By **Col Coughlin, Defence Editor,** and **Robert Winnett, Political Editor**

BRITAIN has to be prepared to "go to war" if it wishes to contain the Syrian regime by implementing no-fly zones and arming the rebels, the outgoing head of the Armed Forces warns today.

In an interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, General Sir David Richards said that "if you want to have the material impact on the Syrian regime's calculations that some people seek" then "ground targets" would have to be "hit".

The Chief of the Defence Staff also warns that the Government needs to clarify its "political objective" in Syria before a coherent military plan for dealing with the Assad regime can be recommended.

Last month, the Prime Minister and President Barack Obama indicated that they would look at military measures after evidence emerged showing that the Syrian regime was using chemical weapons against its citizens.

However, in recent days, David Cameron's enthusiasm for further intervention appears to have waned following private warnings from Gen Richards and Sir John Sawers, the head of MI6, about the implications of being drawn further into the Syrian civil war.

Gen Richards today steps down as the country's most senior military officer. He is said to have had a strained relationship with Philip Hammond, the Defence Secretary. In an interview with this newspaper, Gen Richards sets out his concerns about the complexity of the situation in Syria.

"There is a lack of international consensus on how to take this forward," he said. "We are trying to cohere the opposition groups, but they are difficult to cohere because there are many different dimensions to them."

"So it is work in progress, so I am very clear in my military advice to the Government that we need to understand what the political objective is before we can sensibly recommend what military effort and forces should be applied to it."

He added: "That is something we debate a lot, from the Prime Minister downwards. We also need to do this with our allies. Allies have different views on the way ahead. Understandably there is a great reluctance to see Western boots on the ground in a place like Syria."

Gen Richards also warns that simply introducing a no-fly zone on its own would not prove effective and that other military measures would be required.

The 61-year-old said: "If you



*If you want the material effect that people seek, you have to hit ground targets, and so you would be going to war*

wanted to have the material impact on the Syrian regime's calculations that some people seek, a no-fly zone per se is insufficient. You have to be able, as we did successfully in Libya, to hit ground targets.

"You have to establish a ground control zone. You have to take out their air defences. You also have to make sure they can't manoeuvre, which means you have to take out their tanks and their unarmoured personnel carriers and all the other things that are actually doing the damage."

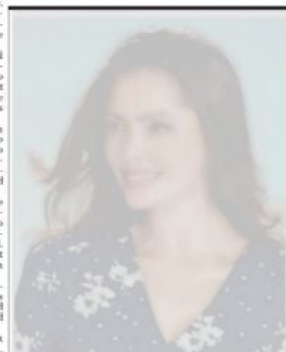
"If you want to have the material effect that people seek, you have to be able to hit ground targets, and so you would be going to war if that is what you want to do."

He added: "That is rightly a huge and important decision. There are many arguments for doing so but there are many arguments for not doing so too."

Gen Richards described the situation as "highly complex" and suggested that the focus of government action was also on ensuring the conflict did not "spread" to neighbouring countries. "We are making sure that as awful as things are there, it doesn't spread materially to other countries," he said.

At the recent G8 summit in Northern Ireland, the Prime Minister won plaudits for appearing to persuade

Continued on Page 2  
Interview: Page 17



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... There is a lack of international consensus on how to take this forward," he said. "We are trying to cohere the opposition groups, but they are difficult to cohere because there are many different dimensions to them.

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“If you want to have the material effect that people seek you have to be able to hit ground targets and so you would be going to war if that is what you want to do.” (Con Coughlin and Robert Winnett, Daily Telegraph, 18 July 2013. (Copyright the Daily Telegraph)

Read Complete Daily Telegraph article: [Army chief: We risk war with Syria](#)

*Michel Chossudovsky contributed to this report.*

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