

“Loving” Trident Weapons Systems and the “Nuclear Button”, Crucifying Corbyn

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The near slanderous assaults on Jeremy Corbyn continue like calculated outpourings of hysteria, finding room in columns, and taking shape across the papers and commentary of the British political spectrum. No paper is seemingly sympathetic to this movement that still continues to stun the establishment, from toff to technocrat.

The people’s labour movement is being sneered at, from the greyish, haemorrhoid fold of the Times, to the sceptical, constipated ranks of the Guardian. The former tends to be obsessed by Corbyn’s supposed inability to lead, given his evident lack of a nuclear edifice complex; the latter is characterised by regular reports that Corbyn has lost another portion of the electorate with the next statement, or principled stance.

Polly Toynbee provided an example of the latter, suggesting that Corbyn’s principles – because we cannot have a politician who obviously has any – potentially lost him a good deal of support because he would not, under any circumstances, push the nuclear button. Like Christ, Corbyn had readied himself for the crucifixion.[1]

This needs a moment of consideration: a politician is regarded as suspect because he does not, under any circumstances, countenance the use of weapons that would exterminate living matter, rather than resolve a human dispute.

At the end of last month, Corbyn told the BBC’s Radio 4 that he opposed the £100bn renewal of the “obsolete” Trident weapons system. Far from suggesting that such money be used to turn swords into ploughshares, Corbyn had heeded the views of many in the military who wished to “see it spent on conventional weapons.”

In any case, if he did win office in 2020, he would refuse to direct the generals to use it. “I am opposed to the use of nuclear weapons. I am opposed to the holding of nuclear weapons. I want to see a nuclear-free world. I believe it is possible.”[2]

Trident is psychological imperial refuse, a reminder of British insufficiency and self-compensation, rather than viable potency. There is nothing virile about having nuclear weapons in your closet, a sort of political Viagra when the chips are very down and people are walking away. Such potency suggests, as Germaine Greer did of Ernest Hemmingway, that when you cannot get it up anymore, you are bound to blow your brains out.

It is Corbyn’s honest sanity on this score that is so unnerving, frightening those tenured illusionists who think that Britain’s strategic relevance is tied to a weapons system that

could never be used, despite those sanguinary bomb lovers who think otherwise. Corbyn has arrived to tell them the solemn truth. “Why should those five [declared nuclear states] need them to protect their security? We are not in the cold war any more.”

Britain’s current Prime Minister has no fear of falling out of love with Trident, having announced that four new nuclear submarines are on the way. At the Conservative Party conference in Manchester, David Cameron explained why. “If you... believe like me that Britain should keep the ultimate insurance policy of an independent nuclear deterrent, you have to accept there are circumstances in which its use would be justified.”[3]

This nonsensical circularity is evidenced by the assertion that the presence of weapons is justified because the use of such weapons is justified. One follows from the other, a seamless contrivance. This recipe for delusion and state sanctioned murder is unimpeachable for Cameron, who seeks to end any arguments to the contrary by claiming that any other answer suggests that “you are, frankly, undermining our national security, undermining our deterrent.”

The Labour Party conference evidently agreed, finding their own political Viagra hard to avoid. Corbyn’s attempt to even place the motion abandoning Trident for debate never materialised. He had to yield to his reptilian colleagues who fear the next unit dip in the polls. The main source of opposition came from the Unite and GMB unions who have demonstrated their own infatuation with the bomb complex.

Corbyn’s own shadow cabinet is also permeated by nuke love. Lord Falconer, shadow justice secretary, threatened resignation over the issue of losing Britain’s military sweetheart. His remarks say much about the British nuclear fetish – Trident as a pedestal bound lover, generally unreachable but available on the off chance that humanity has taken sense of reason. “As far as Trident is concerned, it is really important to me.”

Labour’s shadow defence secretary Maria Eagle used Cameron-styled logic to justify why such a weapons system was needed. “It has been our position for decades that Britain needs a credible independent nuclear deterrent while taking a lead internationally to push for a world without nuclear weapons.”[4]

In taking this position, Eagle has to be credited with stellar marks in staged, perpetual hypocrisy, both in the British policy context, and that of international disarmament. (She did so before the party conference podium in front of the Labour slogan: “Straight talking. Honest politics.”) By all means we should insist on a world without nuclear weapons *and* an independent nuclear deterrent. Never say that British Labour cannot be the party of jingoes and the disingenuous when needed.

In any case, such a weapons system is unusable, unless you have joined the ranks of the suicidal, mad or both. Some argue that the nuclear option can be put down more to diplomatic heft than actual usability. But this thinking is itself covered in the grime of obsolescence. Islamic State fighters could hardly care one jot whether Britain, France, or the US for that matter, can resort to such weapons. They simply won’t.

The nuclear deterrent is the grandest lie of military history, and it continues to be sold as a well respected product. That such tendencies are acceptable, long assimilated in feeble military doctrine, says much about the durability of the ruse. The problem is not Corbyn, but the nuclear Viagra complex that needs systematic deconstruction.

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Notes

[1]

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/01/jeremy-corbyn-nuclear-deterrent-prime-minister-labour>

[2]

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/sep/30/corbyn-i-would-never-use-nuclear-weapons-if-i-was-pm>

[3]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-says-that-he-would-use-nuclear-weapons-a6679256.html>

[4]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3251894/Britain-needs-nuclear-deterrent-says-Labour-s-shadow-defence-secretary-challenge-Corbyn-s-anti-Trident-stance.html>

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