

The Cameron-Blair Way Of Going To War. UN Consent Is “Not Required” to Bomb Syria

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Those who criticised the way Tony Blair took the UK to war may reflect that the present Prime Minister expresses similar sentiments.

Here at Westminster, in the motherland of parliamentary democracy, David Cameron has announced that as far as he is concerned it is not necessary to get the consent of the United Nations to start British bombing in Syria.

Of course, that is a repeat of the transition to war adopted by Tony Blair in 2003. It was an apparent flagrant sweeping aside of the authority of the UN. So it is again. The bigger picture is different, but there is one disturbing similarity between Blair and Cameron’s reasoning.

In 2003 Tony Blair had been told by the then US President George W. Bush that if there were to be political hassle for him (Blair) then there was no need to send in the British forces. Political support would be just fine.

Blair believed that if the UK military was not on the start line then his famed support of the US after 9/11 would be meaningless.

He must have also known that Britain and he personally would be seen as what Dean Rusk, the former US Secretary of State, called “a nation that had lost an empire but had not found a role in the world”.

Blair would be a second-team player. Nice guy, but what the White House would always see as someone in the ‘unsigned’ Christmas card column.

And Cameron? Go back to the intervention in Libya. There is every indication that Cameron joined the operation there in a hurry because the then French President Nicolas Sarkozy was leading on this, had decided to go in and that Cameron was being left behind. That could not happen again.

So Cameron told the Commons this lunchtime that whatever the UN said, and presumably however his law officer the Attorney General described the legality of bombing, he (Cameron) would be going to the House to say the UK was joining the US, France & Co.

Cameron may be right in what he said but he’d do best to remember the following things: the UK’s bombing capability will make little difference to the campaign, and a military role that has status value only is not today needed.

Best stick to reconnaissance; re-read about Dean Rusk and, most importantly, mission creep.

Christopher Lee is [BFBS](#)' Defence Analyst - He can be heard on [Sitrep](#), the only place on radio where you can hear comprehensive analysis of the week's significant events in defence.

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