

CHARTIST

International Special

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International Labour – breaking with the Washington consensus

During Labour's honeymoon period Rachel Reeves grabbed the headlines with her – fully justified – complaint that Starmer's government had inherited the worst economic black hole since the end of WWII.

Meanwhile, the global political scene is equally dire; disputes and disruption operate at every level, from leadership (the demise of the EU as a moral authority with Hungary holding the presidency), governance (the United Nations/World Bank/IMF exhibiting policy-making paralysis), and security alliances (NATO calcified into a 'fighting the last war' stance).

This is happening in the midst of a climate emergency, the rising power and influence of Asia, authoritarian populism, widening global inequalities driving migration, and the deepening of conflicts illustrated by genocide in Gaza, Sudan and other regions.

This special Chartist Supplement focuses on the need for an internationalist response to multiple crises. Articles range from **Richard Corbett's** clear-cut advocacy of a return to the Euro-

pean Customs Union as a first step in undoing the damage caused by Brexit. **Cat Smith** MP adds an appeal for collaboration with the EU to achieve targets on climate change, whilst **Cecilia Eve** makes the case for people to people contact.

Mary Kaldor looks at the Labour government's planned Strategic Defence Review. **Glyn Ford** makes the case for defence alliances based on partnership with European allies. **Patrick Costello** urges Labour to invest more confidence in common assets shared by the UK and other European states. **Don Flynn** takes a look at immigration and combatting the far-right narratives.

On Ukraine as with Palestine Labour must up its game not just calling for an end to occupation but taking decisive action ergo arms to Ukraine, ending arms to Israel and voting in the UN for an immediate cease-

fire.

Labour could revive the UK as a beacon for democracy, international collaboration and progressive foreign policy based on social justice and human solidarity.



(N)either Washington or Brussels?

Whatever the US election result **Glyn Ford** puts a case for ending the special relationship and embracing the EU Security Alliance

Britain is embedded in an increasingly dangerous world. The shadows of our imperial past continue to darken yesterday's tomorrows. We punch well below our weight as the white elephant of our quasi-independent Trident nuclear deterrent bleeds resources away from conventional army, navy and airforce. Despite the fact we spend significantly above NATO's recommended 2% of GDP per year, this sterile and vain nuclear spend

leaves our conventional forces under-resourced and under-equipped. All abetted by the bizarre twin trophy aircraft carriers Queen Elizabeth II and Prince of Wales demonstrating the old adage that states prepare to fight the last war, not the next. UK perceptions trail far behind today's reality that there are only two types of military vessel, submarines and targets.

We continue to prepare to fight the wrong wars. Tomorrow's conflicts will either be tackling the likes

of the Taliban - a new Al-Qaeda or ISIS - or the modern day version of trench warfare fought under the eyes of swarming drones as in eastern Ukraine and Russian borderlands. The first's choice of weapon is the assassin's bullet or the terrorist bomb, while the second is conducted with the baton of incremental orthodoxy, not radical innovation. These fights of necessity require either the delicate stiletto of Special Forces or production line precision-guided munitions.

The UK needs to be capable of intervening in our own near-abroad. President Bush argued a quarter of a century ago that he would not have intervened in Kosovo and the interlocking civil wars in former Yugoslavia. Yet in the absence of the US, the EU was incapable of intervening to stop atrocities and war crimes that killed tens of thousands and the mass production of refugees in their hundreds of thousands. The same was largely true of Syria. Labour threatening to spend 2.5% or even 3% on defence is never going to bridge the credibility gap between past empire and pedestrian present. The very notion of the UK standing alone was a fantasy even for the Tories. The question then is, who do we stand with? We either look to the continent or across the Atlantic. They aren't mutually exclusive, yet decisions today write tomorrow's future; direction of travel is the signal key.

Politically, even absent Trump, Washington has habitually taken Britain to places it never should have gone. The Iraq War was justified by a toxic mix of lies, disinformation and misdirection. Washington was drilling for oil and power, while their creaky cause for war left a Labour government forlornly seeking weapons of mass destruction that were never there and a Saddam Hussein Osama bin Laden link that never was, and never could have been. The intervention in Afghanistan was soundly reasoned, but woefully managed up to the point where the world watched a mercenary reprise of the US flight and evacuation from Saigon in the skies above Kabul, with the UK playing a macabre comedic walk-on part as it prejudiced people for pets.

The war in Gaza has a Labour government second-guessing Washington. No ban on weapons exports to Israel and no recognition of the Palestinian State to avoid offending the next former President, Joe Biden, as he ekes out a hapless end of term. As Laurel and Hardy said, Another Fine Mess (1930) you've got us into. In recent years, at the behest of current US adventurism, the RAF has been undertaking joint military exercises in the Indo-Pacific in Hawai'i, Japan and South Korea. Save us from our allies! The past was a travesty, the future a tragedy. A possible Trump-Vance victory makes the bad worse. The US and Trump - that both bear responsibility for creating the situation leading to the war in Ukraine - threatens to abandon Kyiv and its people to Putin as it pulls the purchasing from its own military-industrial complex to supply the



Nuclear spend leaves our conventional forces under-resourced?

Ukrainian front, expecting the EU to obediently pick up the tab and spend vastly increased European money in American arms factories. Forcing a Russian withdrawal from Ukraine was never going to be easy, but Washington is now closer to colluding in defeat. That message to Moscow threatens us all. It's not just parsimony, it's personal. Second, there is no guarantee that a Trump US commanded NATO will continue to have our backs.

After all, Trump during his first term threatened to leave NATO and in this long campaign for his second term wished Russian retribution on those countries not prepared to pay Washington's tithe to fund self-serving US interests. The trust has gone and the object hijacked. NATO's US determined future is being re-purposed and re-targeted to the Indo-Pacific to serve as a putative armed wing to US forces as their new 'Cold War' with Beijing threatens to turn hot, leaving Europe complicit in its own marginalisation. The next big US push is to amend Article 6 of the NATO Treaty to include Hawai'i in the North Atlantic. In contrast Europe has frequently applied the brake in the last long quarter century to US overreach. The probable election in November of Harris-Walz will be a pause for celebration, a time gifted to prepare as the world awaits the arrival of the Republican's next Trump homunculus with the Republicans winning control of Congress in 2026. It doesn't change direction, only duration.

Labour is conducting a Strategic Defence Review over the next six months with the laudable desire to create jobs and added value. The answers are clear. For the next generation fighter aircraft do we go with the concept of Tempest with Tokyo, Rome and promised sales to Saudi Arabia or the Future Combat Air System with France, Germany and Spain with the involvement of Airbus? For the new medium heli-

copter is it Lockheed Martin or Europe with a UK element?

Currently Europe's armies are static and stuck. Almost 80% of Europe's soldiers are incapable of being transported to an emerging conflict before it is likely to be over, with a lack of heavy lift capacity. Even transported there, they would struggle to fight efficiently alongside European allies because of the lack of inter-operability. Addressing these failings is work in progress. Ukraine was the starting gun. The new European Commission in December will include a Defence Commissioner and a serious drive to create a single market for defence procurement and EU-wide military R&D. European countries are upping their military spending. The danger is new money will disappear down the same black holes as the old. The easy options are the wrong options, either to just buy more of the same from the US, or think it's clever to switch to cheap American by design South Korean 'knock-offs'. Building and buying European will cost more in the beginning, but save us all in the end.

Europe needs to build its arms industries for mass production rather than the batch production of the past to supply an indigenous demand whose scale is such that it ends any imperative to export to the countries of the Middle East. Britain needs, in next year's revisit of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, to enthusiastically embrace the EU Security Alliance being pushed by Berlin in promoting continent over a tired 'special relationship' closer in reality to grooming rather than bonding. Look to self-interest rather than self-subordination. This will make us - and the world - safer than if we recycle the mistakes of the last Cold War in the west to the manifest US pursuit of a second Cold War in the east. Freedom to choose is the way forward.



Glyn Ford was a Labour MEP. His latest book is *Riding Two Horses-Labour in Europe* (Spokesman)

Credit: Center for Open Science/DoD

What should Labour aim for in Europe?

As opinion continues to shift against Brexit, **Richard Corbett** says Labour needs to rethink its stance especially on the single market and customs union if it is to achieve economic growth

In the election campaign, Brexit was the elephant in the room. The Conservatives did not dare mention it because public opinion is now firmly of the opinion that Brexit was a mistake with them to blame (with some polls indicating that over 60% would vote to rejoin if a referendum were held now). Labour did not mention it (much) because it was still afraid of losing votes in a few traditionally Labour areas that had supported Brexit. Labour made no commitment to rejoining the EU and even ruled out joining the customs union or the single market. This, as we shall see, is likely to come under pressure as it contradicts the pledge to focus relentlessly on economic growth.

What Labour did say in its manifesto was that it will seek “an improved and ambitious relationship with our European partners”. And since the election, it has moved swiftly to re-establish cordial contacts with European partners.

Specifically, the Labour government will seek to:

- Reduce some of the barriers to trade between the UK and the EU. This would involve, notably, a veterinary agreement, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, visa exemptions for touring performers (such as musicians and actors) and regulatory alignments in key sectors such as chemicals.
- Rejoin some of the EU's technical agencies (at least as observer or associate members), such as Europol.
- Negotiate a security agreement with the EU. This may turn out to be of great significance in view of the situation in Ukraine and especially if Trump is re-elected in the USA. It would include security in the widest sense of the term - not just military cooperation but sanctions, cybersecurity, counter-terrorism, fighting traffickers, combatting climate change, and more.
- Build on the still shared commitment to achieve net zero emissions, to cooperate on climate and energy questions (presumably including cross-border energy interconnectors, and the carbon border adjustment mechanisms).



Credit: ChitraJon/Flickr

Brexit protest at Westminster

This is all well and good. And the government might also seek to participate again in the Erasmus+ student and youth mobility scheme, that the Johnson government pulled out of at the last minute during Brexit negotiations despite having previously pledged to stay in it – a bit of gratuitous cultural vandalism by the Tories.

But the realities of government may force Labour to go further and faster. The biggest challenges it faces in government are the lethargy of the economy and the catastrophic state of public finances. With both debt and taxes at levels not seen since the aftermath of the second world war, the election campaign was characterised by debates on whether it might be possible to spend or save an extra £3billion here or £4billion there. These figures are dwarfed by the £40billion a year of lost tax revenue which has been caused by Brexit (according to the government's Office of Budgetary Responsibility). Similarly, if the Labour government is to re-ignite economic growth, it cannot ignore the 5% loss to GDP, the lost trade with our main export market (and main source of our supply chains), and the extra costs for businesses caused by Brexit.

In this context, the over-cautious

red lines mentioned by Labour in the election campaign – saying no to joining the customs union and no to full single market membership – will severely limit the potential improvements. There will be costly border checks for as long as there is a customs border. There will be no return to the frictionless trade that existed pre-Brexit, where any product manufactured in the UK could be sold without further ado (i.e. no extra conformity tests, VAT forms, export permits, labelling requirements, etc.) across the whole of the EU and the EEA, unless we align with single market standards and rules (standards that we helped set when we were a member). There will be little scope to improve trade in services (even for touring performers and musicians) without some free movement.

What seems to hold the government back is a belief that full participation in the single market would require a full restoration of freedom of movement. Given the public concerns about record levels of migration to Britain, freedom of movement is therefore seen to be an insurmountable obstacle. But in fact, most migration to Britain is from outside the EU, which is (and was, even when we were a member of the EU) a matter for national reg-



Richard Corbett
is a former MEP
for Yorkshire &
Humber and
former Labour
Party Leader in
the European
Parliament

ulation. It is for Britain to decide how open or restrictive it wants to be.

Migration from the EU was always a smaller number and is now considerably so. And here, we are talking about a reciprocal right, with millions of Brits living in other EU countries; indeed Brits were the EU's biggest beneficiaries of the right to settle anywhere in the EU, with more British people living in other EU countries than any other nationality. But it was not an unconditional right: those exercising it had to find work or be self-sufficient, conditions which Britain failed to enforce at the time, but could if free movement (perhaps re-named as "conditional free movement" to emphasise this point) were to be restored. Nor was EU freedom of movement a cost to the exchequer, as EU citizens in Britain paid one third more in taxes than they received in benefits and services combined.

In short, EU freedom of movement was not really a problem. Furthermore, far from enabling Britain to "take back control" of its borders, Brexit has actually removed key tools for controlling that border. When we were in the EU, Britain could use the internal EU agreement that asylum-seekers should be processed by the EU country in which they first arrived. You could waive that rule, if you wanted, as Germany did. But Britain used it to send thousands of asylum-seekers back to the EU country they first arrived in — something it can no longer do. Britain was also able to participate fully in the EU's system of cooperation among police and intelligence forces. This meant it could, when needed, get information on people when they arrived at the border, from fingerprints to criminal records. It also meant cooperating to fight international gangs of people traffickers. Brexit was a shot in the foot as regards its supposed major benefit of controlling the border.

If economic reality forces the Labour government to go further, and to at least rejoin the single market and the customs union, and even if that includes conditional free movement with EU countries, it will find that this does not throw up as many problems as it fears. It may even be popular. Many businesses, universities, artists, and others want it. So do Labour Party members. Above all, if the tracker opinion polls show that public opinion continues its gradual but relentless shift in favour of rejoining the EU, then surely these smaller steps, at least, should be easier.

Beyond law and order on riots

Don Flynn says the response to far-right rioting must also challenge the narrative on immigration

The view that most mainstream politicians have of immigration doesn't seem to have moved on since the then German interior minister, Horst Seehofer, described it in 2018 as being "the mother of all problems."

Since that date the number of governments who have attempted solutions which involve attacks on the rights available to migrant and refugee people has multiplied.

Among these are the examples of Greece and other south-east European states which have marshalled exceptional police and military resources to impede the movement across their region. The Greek coastguard is being investigated for allegations of actions which led to the death of over 40 refugees in 15 separate incidents in the Mediterranean Sea, according to the BBC.

Across Central Europe obstacles are thrown up to impede the movement of non-EU nationals, with razor wire and the mobilisation of militias ready to confront people with baton charges, gas grenades and gunfire.

Far right, anti-immigrant parties now hold government positions in six EU countries - Italy, Finland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and the Czech Republic, whilst in Sweden a party with historic roots in neo-nazism, the Sweden Democrats, is the second largest force in the country's parliament. Perhaps most notoriously, the strident Islamophobe, Geert Wilders, is in a four party coalition government in the Netherlands,

The UK also figures in the list of immigrant hostile countries along with Austria and Denmark. Although the commitment to the unworkable Rwanda Plan has been ditched by the new Labour government, the commitment to reduce immigration remains as strong as it was under Conservative predecessors, with prime minister Sir Keir Starmer being prepared to embrace the 'post-fascist' Brothers of Italy government,

headed by Giorgia Meloni, at a meeting of the European Political Community in Oxfordshire in the summer. Starmer's call for closer cooperation between European leaders to curb immigration seems to be heavily dependent on the actions of hardliners like Meloni and Orban in Hungary to play their role in policing the internal frontiers.

The antipathy of the world's industrial states to migration has deep and contradictory roots, fraught with tensions which arise from nationalistic and xenophobic prejudice against foreigners and also in the critically important role that migrant labour plays in maintaining the overall prosperity of the Global North nations. The UK provides a casebook example of this, with anti-immigrant attitudes proving decisive in securing the country's sham-bolic exit from the EU because of opposition to its free movement policies, only to find that the need for foreigner workers is integral to the functioning of its labour market.

To the apparent surprise of people who thought that Brexit would mean less immigration, all this has led to the straightforward replacement of European migrants with nationals of third countries sourced from even further afield.

The UK is not unique in manufacturing this paradoxical outcome for itself. The Italian government is having to confront drastic shortages of workers – arising from its rapidly ageing demographic profile – with a set of policies that envisages the recruitment of 425,000 workers from outside the EU over a two year period from 2023 until the end of 2025.

The same is true even with the similarly xenophobic Victor Orban, who has rubber-stamped a programme allowing the recruitment of so-called guest workers from 15 non-EU countries to stay in the country for up to three years, with citizens of Mongolia, Vietnam, Brazil, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Venezuela and



**Don Flynn is
Chartist
Managing Editor**

Colombia being included in the list.

But this mixture of quietly acknowledged dependency on migrant labour in European countries clashes with the far-right populist rhetoric offered up to the electorates of the various nations. In an age of severe distrust of politicians of all stripes there is the danger that it simply shifts the rhetoric to challenger parties even further to the right.

We are getting a taste of what these might look like in the UK, with the mobilisation of disaffected individuals engaging with fake news on social media, propelling them into acts of violence against people perceived to be migrants. This was seen most sharply in the riots in the aftermath of the tragic attack on a group of children in Southport at the end of July. The slogans carried forward at these events – Stop the Boats, Deport Refugees, England for the English – were either taken directly from official government policies or at least echoed their content.

Many will have hoped that the reaction of communities in counter-mobilisations which proclaimed solidarity with refugees

would give government pause for thought about the direction it has been moving in. What became clear in these reactions, to what can properly be described as race riots, has shown that there is a large constituency of people who are looking for leadership from their politicians which will move immigration policy in very different directions.

What we saw in those days was an echo of actions taking place in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and all the other countries of Europe. However, the lack of a consistent response to calls from communities showing responsibility towards the migrants and refugees they live with should cause concern. They/we want respect for the human, social, political and economic rights of the people who are moving across borders.

This is not how things stand at present. Europe's hallmark immigration policy, the Pact on Migration and Asylum, aims at little more than a coordination of the deterrence and expulsion policies of the most immigration-hostile states. The plan is to achieve harmonisation across the EU by appeasing the lowest common

denominator of anti-migrant prejudice.

The challenges to the ideologies which underpin xenophobic anti-immigrantism are being worked out across networks like the Transnational Institute, a think tank and hub for human rights activism, which promotes the campaigning work of Transnational Migrant Platform – Europe (TMP-E). It's a good start, constantly refreshed by the practical experience of rights activists in countries like Spain, France, the Netherlands, and the UK.

TMP-E's rights caravans roll across the region and work to communicate the case for solidarity with migrants and refugees to trade unions, anti-poverty campaigners, and municipalities. The sense that an alternative approach to migration is possible is becoming stronger as the irrationality of current policies is confronted in the different countries. We'll know real progress is being made when we start to see the case for solidarity being put in left and social democratic parties, and a generation of politicians emerge who are willing to make it the cause they are committed to taking forwards.

Words into action on Gaza

It's time for Labour to break with the Washington consensus. The death toll in Gaza has topped 40,000 - mainly civilians, women and children. Two thirds of buildings have been destroyed. Of nearly 30 hospitals only a handful are barely functioning. Food, electricity, water and medical supplies have been reduced to a trickle by Israeli blockades.

Famine threatens. Life in Gaza is a living hell. Labour must come off the fence and reinforce its manifesto call for an immediate ceasefire by stopping all arms sales and supplies to Israel; by supporting the International Court of Justice view that Israeli state action constitutes a breach of the Genocide Convention and voting accordingly in the UN. Mark Smith, a senior British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office diplomat, has resigned in protest at arms sales to Israel, saying the UK government "may be complicit in war crimes."

Standing Together, a cross Jewish-Palestinian international organisation based in Israel, is also campaigning hard for a permanent ceasefire, hostage-prisoner exchange, a massive increase in humanitarian aid and complete Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories.

Voting and acting for a Palestinian state without conditions must be more than words in the manifesto. There can be no peace with an Israeli occupation of Gaza or other illegal settlements in the West Bank and elsewhere. Labour must act now.

The words of Palestinian writer **Jehorah Baker** should be a spur to action:

Once heard that anger is not a real emotion, but a cover for other feelings such as sadness, disappointment or fear. You need to peel back that outer layer to understand what is really going on inside.

Strange how this has lately resurfaced for me, but I think I know why. Lately, I and surely, millions of other Palestinians, have been filled with a blinding rage - at Israel, at the United States, and at the world overall. This is a rage that is all-encompassing, the depth of which is palpable at the cellular level, permeating every molecule and every atom of our being. The genocide in the Gaza Strip has grated our emotions raw and we are left stinging and burning from our head to our toes.

... finally, our anger is a survival mechanism to shield us from our own grief. Our sorrow over the murdered men, women and children, defenceless, homeless, starving and shivering in the cold, is so deep, so immense, we ourselves cannot fathom it. If we dare peek behind this anger and truly feel a fraction of the aching in our hearts, it will paralyze us for sure, because no people can endure the magnitude and scale of such suffering and not lose their minds.

We Palestinians know we cannot let go and that a new day is near. We know we must hold on just a little bit longer, because Palestine depends on it. We are no strangers to oppression, suffering and sacrifice and we know the price our freedom has and continues to be painfully high. Still, we also know that a life without shackles and the yoke of oppression around our weary necks is the only life worth living.

MAGA chariot stalled

Paul Garver reports that the Harris/Walz partnership has boosted Democrats' Presidential chances but Gaza equivocation harms outcome

Joe Biden's announcement that he would not seek a second term as President disengaged the locked gears on the vehicle that seemed to be conveying Donald Trump to inevitable victory in November.

The centrist Democratic Party had been acting like a deer paralyzed by the headlights of the speeding MAGA (Make America Great Again) chariot with its swollen orange buffoon at the wheel. Ominous tracking polls suggested not only that Trump would win a substantial majority in the Electoral College, but that the collateral damage could deliver Republican majorities in both the Senate and the House. Together with the existing far right supermajority on the US Supreme Court and Republican control of most state legislatures and governorships, the stage was being set for the establishment of a blatantly pro-corporate White Christian Nationalist and anti-democratic regime. Unlike after Trump's surprise victory in 2017, the far right actually had a plan for governing that would cement their proto-Fascist regime in place for decades to come. The Project 2025 document published by the right-wing ideologues of the Heritage Foundation lays out that plan in gruesome detail.

Like most of the American Left, DSA opposed Biden's backsliding on refugee policies and his approval for certain fossil fuel pipeline projects. But denunciation of Biden reached fever pitch with his largely unconditional backing for Netanyahu's genocidal conduct against civilians in Gaza and the West Bank. DSA joined the pro-Palestinian movement in organizing campaigns to persuade Democratic primary voters to vote Uncommitted rather than for Biden, and in successfully campaigning within several major unions for a permanent ceasefire and an end to military aid to Israel.

The final push to pressure Biden to drop out of the Presidential race came not from the Party's Left, but from major donors, and from Centrist Democrats terrified that their own reelection campaigns in 'purple' districts were endangered with Biden at the head of the ticket. Sanders, AOC and most of the



Credit: The United States Senate

Harris at a protest

Squad, have been focused on trying to persuade any Democratic candidate to campaign on a more clearly pro working-class and progressive platform, including stopping unconditional military aid to Israel.

DSA elected officials have been targeted by pro-Israel lobbyists. Crippled by drastic redistricting to remove most of his African-American constituency, Jamaal Bowman lost his congressional New York primary to an opponent heavily funded by the American-Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC). Bowman was also the target of negative campaigning from ultra-left sectarians within national DSA, who regarded him as insufficiently pro-Palestinian, though New York City DSA did endorse and canvass for him.

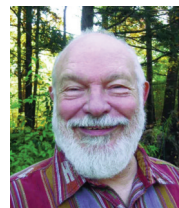
On August 6, another incumbent Squad DSA member, Cori Bush, a working class African-American nurse, Black Lives Matter activist and advocate for Palestinian rights, narrowly lost a Democratic primary in St. Louis to an opponent heavily funded by the United Democracy Project, associated with AIPAC. Despite strong assistance from progressive groups including DSA, she could not overcome massive negative campaigning against her.

DSA played an important role in the campaign to persuade Kamala Harris to select Minnesota governor

Tim Walz as her vice-presidential running mate. Young DSA activists launched a social media campaign against the selection of Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro, primarily because of his denunciation of the pro-Palestinian campus encampments and positions favoring private charter schools. Shapiro, supported by much of the Democratic Party establishment and mass media, was considered the front-runner because it was thought that his candidacy would help the Democrats win the battleground state of Pennsylvania. But Walz seems to be an excellent unifying choice for the Democratic Party. He has been an effective governor, winning major gains for working class people in Minnesota despite a very slender legislative majority. Walz also 'speaks American', in a way that should be accessible to alienated white male dudes, particularly in rural areas of the Midwest, who are not necessarily prone to vote for women of color.

First reactions from young DSA media activists to Harris's choice of Walz were quite positive. Those whose major issue is Israel/Palestine continue to demand a clear and effective break by the Biden/Harris administration from the genocidal and aggressive policies of Netanyahu. This was the major focus of protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where DSA supported the Palestinian diaspora communities in the USA in vocal demonstrations. The 30 'Uncommitted' delegates decided to vote 'Present', all that is allowed by DNC rules, but each nominated a child, woman or man who had been killed by the Israeli offensive in Gaza.

At the time of writing, the Harris-Walz ticket is polling well, with the gloom and doom that beset the Democratic Party replaced by cautious optimism with the evident rallying of the Democratic base. Without a faltering Joe Biden to pillory, the Trump-Vance campaign now seems like the deer transfixed in the headlights. But the MAGA base remains intact, and the election may still be so close that the structural advantages Republicans have in the Electoral College might still allow the Supreme Court to tip it to MAGA.



Paul Garver is a member of Democratic Socialists of America. A longer, earlier version is on chartist.org.uk

A new internationalism for a Labour government

Patrick Costello on ways for Labour to make an impact on the global scene

The world is a very different place for David Lammy than it was for Robin Cook in 1997. Then, a relatively stable world order was led by the United States, with western power globally dominant and operating through strong revived multilateral institutions including the UN and its agencies, the newly created WTO and the international financial institutions. Britain's diplomatic power was also amplified through its EU membership: as Herman Van Rompuy, the first President of the European Council put it, "for the UK to make its voice heard in the world Europe acts as a megaphone".

That world is no more. Thanks in no small part to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, when those running the rules-based order decided that the rules didn't apply to them, it is now looking more than shaky. The UN Security Council is paralysed and unable to deal with the most basic violations of international law, whether by Russia in Ukraine or Israel in Gaza. China's global reach has accompanied its economic rise resulting in it becoming an ever stronger competitor to the US led West. However, unlike in the Cold War, most countries across the world are refusing to take sides with either great power. Instead, they are taking decisions based on maximising their own national interests, choosing the best for them of the economic offers being made by China and the West. Meanwhile the UK has lost its European "megaphone" and in recent years has looked ever more irrelevant to the decisions on the global stage.

So what should Labour be demanding of Foreign Minister Lammy's strategy for UK diplomacy. The following are a few initial pointers to the way a Labour government might strengthen the UK's voice, reputation and impact in this new multipolar world:

1. Use available assets: The UK remains one of a handful of countries with a diplomatic network capable of global reach. It is still a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a member of the G7. Combined with the soft



Foreign Secretary David Lammy meets Polish counterpart

power of the English language and the ability to project that soft power through a combination of the World Service, the British Council (reversing the self-harming cuts to these two will be essential), the Commonwealth and the continuing attractiveness of UK universities, the UK should have many advantages over other middle-ranking powers.

2. Reframe the UK's relationships with its former colonies: Many of the UK's diplomatic assets are a legacy of what, for many countries around the world, is a painful imperial past. British diplomacy still tends to tell others what to do more than it listens and responds to the concerns of others. It is impossible to change the past but it is possible both to acknowledge it and to develop more equal relationships with our former

colonies, possibly through a radical reinvention of the Commonwealth. The ever increasing diversity of British society can be actively mobilised as an additional asset in this work.

3. Use the whole of Government: Diplomacy will only work if backed up with the full range of policies across government. This means it is time to make demands on levels of development aid (currently scheduled to drop in the next 12 months) and to restore the UK's reputation as a donor. It also means insisting that the Treasury puts debt relief back on the agenda in the G7, demanding the Education Department supports providing extra scholarships to UK universities and more.
4. Actively seek UN reform: The demand for UN and IMF/World Bank reform has been an insistent one for decades from the Global South. Institutions set up after the Second World War were simply not designed for responding to the climate emergency, and their structures no longer reflect the global balance of power. If the UK could become an effective voice within the G7 and the UN Security Council supporting those calls for reform, it would go a long way to rebuilding relationships with the Global South as well as putting pressure on other Security Council members to support reform. Labour should be demanding this also because it is in the national interest.

All of this could emerge from David Lammy's announced progressive realism and Labour should seek to develop a common platform on this agenda with sister parties across the world.

What will make it harder in practice is where this approach clashes with the deep and longstanding Foreign Office reflex to align with the US. So far on the Middle East, by renewing funding to UNRWA and removing the objection to the ICC case against Israel, the signs are good but the real test will be over the full suspension of arms sales to the Israelis over Gaza.

Patrick Costello is a Brussels based writer who has served as an EU official for 27 years

Put human security first

Mary Kaldor examines challenges for Labour's Strategic Defence Review and argues for a collective rather than national security approach and putting nuclear arms reduction in the mix



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New Defence Secretary John Healey heads defence review

On 16 July, the Government announced that it planned to undertake a new Strategic Defence Review (SDR). The terms of reference (ToR) for the SDR are curiously old-fashioned. They focus on defence (meaning military capabilities) whereas earlier security reviews assumed a much broader concept of security including economic, environmental, health or virtual threats, and proposed a more integrated set of different capabilities. They prioritise geo-political military threats, mainly from Russia and China, reminiscent of the Cold War period. They talk about partnerships and alliances, mainly NATO and AUKUS, but do not mention multi-lateral or regional organisations such as the UN, the EU or OSCE. And finally, the ToR are explicit that the independent nuclear deterrent cannot be questioned although issues of effectiveness and efficiency are allowed.

Nevertheless, the Government have appointed three independent experts to conduct the review, including George Robertson, Defence Minister under the Blair Government, who was the first to

order the arrest of war criminals in the former Yugoslavia and later became Secretary General of NATO, and Fiona Hill, the Russian expert who has advised several US Presidents, as well as a military expert. They can be expected to be open to new ideas and arguments so it is worth putting forward some considerations that are more in tune with contemporary circumstances. There is also a case for focussing on how defence capabilities need to change within a wider conception of security.

A starting point is that we live in a world in which we face existential threats to humanity, including, but not only, a major war. National security used to mean the defence of British people and British territory from attacks by a foreign state. Nowadays, the only way to guarantee the security of British people and British territory is through a more secure world. This is why a contemporary version of national security needs to be based on human security, which is about the security of individual human beings and the communities in which they live anywhere in the planet, from both physical threats (violence) and material threats (famine, climate

change, pandemics etc.), not to mention virtual threats emanating from cyber attacks and misinformation. Human security is linked to the idea of a law based world, especially international humanitarian law and human rights law, what Ruti Teitel calls 'humanity's law'. And human security entails a collective approach where the UK contributes to global efforts to address existential threats.

Defence has an essential role to play in this but the kind of defence capabilities needed for a human security based approach are different from a classic war-fighting approach. The Ministry of Defence has already established a human security unit and issued a Joint Service Publication in 2021 aimed at mainstreaming human security throughout the armed forces. While there are continuing debates within MoD about what this means, I would argue that the central issue has to do with the protection of civilians. Within the framework of human security, the central goal is the protection of civilians whether from the threat of aggression, genocide or other crimes against humanity, rather than something to take into account when engaged in war-

fighting against an enemy.

Under International Humanitarian Law (the 'laws of war'), the killing of civilians is permitted provided it is necessary for military victory and is proportionate to the gains that would be achieved by victory, something that is open to very elastic interpretation as we have seen in the Israeli justifications for its attacks on Gaza.

Within the framework of human security, it is the other way round. The killing of enemies (combatants) is permitted provided it is necessary to protect civilians. Nowadays the goal of protection of civilians is the only way to establish the legitimacy of military operations, something the UK emphasises in contingency training for Ukrainian soldiers. As a UK MoD official put it, in an interview with me, 'Russia is focused on delivering human insecurity – brutality towards civilians, destruction of cultural heritage, sexual violence, looting.'

So what would this mean in terms of the issues raised by the ToR? First, in terms of geo-political threats, there is no doubt that we need to be concerned about Russia and China, especially Russian aggression against Ukraine and Chinese provocations against Taiwan and in the South China Seas. Both countries have modernised their armed forces and China, in particular, is challenging Western air and naval superiority. But military threats are not the only issue. The Russian talk about 'non-linear' war to describe the blurring of war and peace, and the use of unconventional means such as cyber attacks and malicious disinformation to destabilise a society. Brexit could well be an example of this type of non-linear interference. Most authoritarian states have armies of hackers aimed at disrupting both politics and infrastructure.

A human security approach would contribute to collective defence against aggression, whether virtual or real, but this is different from engaging in military competition along geo-political lines. Rather than matching capabilities of potential aggressors, the idea is to be able to demonstrate effective defence and societal resilience, to show that neither military nor cyber aggression can succeed, without at the same time being perceived as a potential threat to other states and a pretext for further armaments. The main military threat posed by Russia and China is to their own populations as well to neighbours, and we need to contribute to their defence as in the case of Ukraine, but a continued

war-fighting posture by the West, however intended, provides an ongoing argument for denying democratic demands. While I do not accept that NATO expansion 'explains' the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it did provide a fertile basis for justification.

During the 1980s, there was much concern about the offensive posture of NATO and the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. At that time, proposals were put forward for what was known as defensive deterrence, i.e. deterring foreign attacks through a credible conventional defensive posture rather than through the threat of nuclear or conventional retaliation. It was the idea behind Gorbachev's notion of 'reasonable sufficiency'. Proposals for area defence or in-depth defence were put forward that would have meant drawing down nuclear weapons as well as conventional offensive capabilities, such as bombers or massed tanks (though evidently some are needed for defensive purposes).

Today, within NATO, a similar debate is being conducted, especially in the Baltic states about deterrence by denial rather than defence by punishment. What this implies is that defensive and human rights considerations need to be integrated into the design of military capabilities, including the training of personnel and the development of new technologies such as cyber, drones and AI.

Secondly, there is still an important role for UK forces in global crisis management. The UK continues to contribute to KFOR in Kosovo and to UN operations in places like Mali and Somalia. There is a desperate need to address the continuing intractable violence in large parts of the world - Syria, Yemen, Sudan, DRC, Somalia, not to mention Gaza and the Red Sea. It is not just that literally millions of people face the daily threats of killings, displacement or starvation but also that these 'black holes' cannot be insulated from the rest of world whether as a consequence of forced migration, transnational crime or terrorism, or the obstacles they pose to dealing with climate change or pandemics.

There is a role for military capabilities within a multilateral framework in efforts to dampen down violence. The tasks include: protecting civilians from attack and creating a safe environment in which a legitimate political authority can be established; monitoring and upholding local peace agreements and ceasefires as part of multi-level peacebuilding involving civil soci-

ety, especially women; establishing humanitarian space through corridors and safe havens that allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and arresting war criminals.

A similar approach was adopted by the British in Northern Ireland and the EU-led anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden, which combined the arrest of pirates with non-military measures such as the introduction of fishing licenses on the coast of Somalia.

Thirdly, multilateral organisations like the UN and the EU are key partners in a human security approach. Alliances like NATO and AUKUS need to reorient their postures towards human security. Like the UK, NATO has established a human security unit and the new Strategic Concept, adopted in Madrid in 2022, emphasises the need to 'integrate human security' across all the core tasks, although there is still a debate about how this should be interpreted. A new security arrangement with the EU, whose external policy is based on human security, as proposed by David Lammy, could be very important.

Finally, even though this point is excluded from the ToR, the possession of nuclear weapons contradicts a human security approach. A single UK warhead is a hundred times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. Any use of nuclear weapons would be a humanitarian catastrophe. Further, in the UK case, there are major issues of efficiency and effectiveness. Recent test failures of UK missiles, said to be 'event-related' call into question effectiveness, while the mind-boggling official cost of £31 billion (with £10 billion in reserve) seems an incredible diversion of resources from both conventional defence and other badly needed repairs to public services. Getting rid of nuclear weapons seems to have been ruled out for the moment but it would be important to revive nuclear arms control efforts especially, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Iran nuclear deal.

These are some of the questions that need to be raised about Britain's defence posture. At the very least, the SDR offers an opportunity. Perhaps the most useful recommendation is to conduct a public consultation about security and defence, as has been done in Ireland. In particular, the debate about nuclear weapons has become a taboo issue – it would be important to open it up to the public. Indeed, an inclusive approach to security is a necessary part of any strategy designed to strengthen societal resilience.



Mary Kaldor is Professor Emeritus of Global Governance and Director of the Conflict Research Programme at The London School of Economics and Political Science

Operation Reset

Big benefits will flow if Labour re-engages with international allies says **Cecilia Eve**

Labour's secretly planned 'Operation Reset', as it was termed in the media, evidently got off to a flying start. Foreign Secretary David Lammy, who pre-published an article extolling the virtues of international cooperation, spent a lightning weekend in July visiting influential European foreign ministers. Between visits, Lammy also conducted 16 introductory phone calls with EU and world diplomats including Josep Borrell, EU foreign affairs chief, and Antony Blinken, US Secretary of State. Defence, security, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the climate crisis, critical minerals and artificial intelligence are the top shared priorities that have recurred in recent talks.

Although President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, had to skip the European Political Community Summit in July in order to secure her second term, a meeting between her and Starmer was also being organised. Leaders from Scholz, to Sanchez, to Macron have echoed the 'reset' narrative, and European Commission spokesman Eric Mamer stated it was for the UK to say what it wanted in terms of "making this relationship move forward". The political appetite to reboot is unquestionable, but will Labour seize or squander the opportunity?

Benefits of re-engaging?

While the speed at which these positive multilateral relations are being reignited is cause for optimism, more needs to be done to achieve real depth in a relations reset. With the looming possibility of a Trump US presidency, conflicts and gender apartheid raging in the Middle East as well as the war in Ukraine, it has never been more important for European nations to stand together and renew the European Project. Rather than reinventing the wheel, Labour must work with its allies within the European bloc.

Labour is a member of the Party of European Socialists, and the Progressive Alliance, and holds observer status in the Socialist International. These bodies bring together political parties and their leaders, policy experts and grassroots campaigners representing socialist, social-democratic and



labour movements across Europe and beyond, connecting directly with the lived experience of citizens. They collectively fight for progressive policies and advise on important issues identified in part by the European Committee of the Regions. Branches such as PES Women and Rainbow Rose are integral to advancing diverse political representation, amplifying under-represented voices and making recommendations on proposed EU strategies and legislation. International groups such as these are uniquely placed to make political processes and decision-making far more representative by establishing civic spaces and thereby creating a bedrock for democratic resilience.

In the recent EU elections, the centre-left Socialists and Democrats managed to retain their position as the Parliament's second largest pan-European grouping, with 136 seats to the centre-right European People's Party at 188 seats in the 720-seat European Parliament. Had Brexit not been implemented, the gap between them would have been narrower with Labour MEPs swelling their ranks, and Labour politicians taking top jobs in the Commission. Although the lost opportunity rangles, Labour now has a chance to boost the UK's reputation and once again become a governmental actor known for integrity, reliability and good-faith modus operandi. The best route to re-engagement is to work with what Labour already has - strong alliances within these bodies.

Looking ahead

To lead effectively and ensure that European leaders do not think engaging with the UK is a waste of

time Labour must meaningfully invest in the future. It is vital therefore to engage with youth organisations such as Young European Socialists (YES), Young European Federalists (JEF) Europe, and Young European Movement (YEM), to nurture the leaders of tomorrow. These organisations support and mobilise young people to advocate for youth priorities and set the political agenda for the future, as well as mitigating the decline of youth engagement in politics. YEM is particularly unique as the only organisation specifically focused on strengthening UK-EU relations which engages youth.

YEM spearheaded a recent campaign in partnership with the British Youth Council (now the National Youth Agency) and its parent organisation to reinstate UK membership of the EU's flagship educational exchange scheme, Erasmus+. Withdrawal from the scheme is estimated to have a net cost of £243m to the British economy, with British universities being particularly hard hit. The loss isn't just fiscal - it's also cultural, and such a loss is incalculable. Generations of young people are missing out on the opportunity to broaden their horizons, engage in cultural exchange and forge career-boosting connections. YEM's campaign to rejoin Erasmus+ amassed over 40k signatures, was reported internationally, and won the backing of London mayor Sadiq Khan plus a multitude of MPs and MEPs.

Deeds, not words

Labour in government faces huge challenges - a polycrisis, rising geo-economic confrontation and increasing nationalism. The UK is beset with systemic failures and frankly, it needs all the support it can get. European leaders have made their willingness to help reverse the Conservative legacy clear, and polling has shown that Labour's electorate want it to go much further, with 71% in favour of the UK rejoining the single market and customs union. Reinstating Erasmus+ and engaging with international socialist groups would be a good start to unpicking the Gordian Knot of frayed relations that has been left along with the keys to 10 Downing Street. After all, alliances are made and maintained with deeds, not words.



Cecilia Eve is Director and President of Young European Movement, an award winning public speaker, a UK delegate for EuropeTalks and a Control Commission member of the Young European Socialists

Climate emergency

Cat Smith says Labour must work closely with Europe and at speed to meet climate goals

At the end of July the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) painted a bleak picture of the future. Its scientists predicted that even if all current climate policies were implemented fully, global temperatures would rise by 3.2 degrees by the end of the century. This is tragic for our planet and for millions of people around the world, many of whom are already facing the impacts of natural disasters exacerbated by climate change.

The prognosis is dire. However, climate experts believe that if governments around the world meet their current climate targets, it may be possible to keep global warming below 2 degrees, averting the worst possible outcomes of climate change.

The UK has enshrined climate commitments in law, which include the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), Paris Agreement and a legally binding commitment to reach net zero by 2050. While the UK has made some progress, we are not set to meet our goals. Indeed, in May 2024, the High Court ordered the UK government to redraft their climate policies as they would have resulted in the UK missing our legal obligations. This is frustrating but unsurprising given the erratic climate policies of successive Conservative governments, epitomised by Rishi Sunak's government granting new oil and gas licenses in the North Sea.

In the short weeks that the Labour government has been in power, it has already taken significant strides in pro-climate policy. From removing barriers to new wind and solar energy, to establishing Great British Energy. These actions are an early indication of the intent of the Labour government. This government is serious about climate change and will put its money and policy where its mouth is, in delivering on climate and energy security.

While we need resolute commitment, and creative and effective policy in the UK, we cannot solve climate change alone. For global challenges, we need global solutions.

In an increasingly unstable geo-



political environment, with a rapidly warming climate, our government must seek to work collaboratively with other countries on global issues. Not least our closest neighbours, our European counterparts, with whom we share so many values, and climate goals. Unfortunately, since Brexit successive Conservative Prime Ministers have actively antagonised our European allies. This has left the UK's relationship with our closest political and geographical neighbours and largest trading partner in tatters. However, for our new government, a re-setting of the relationship is possible. Encouragingly, signs indicate that the EU would welcome a renewed relationship. Rebuilding this new relationship will need to be accompanied by rebuilding trust in the UK's commitment to climate which was undermined by the granting of new oil and gas licences by the last Conservative government.

There are clear avenues for collaboration with Europe. The UK and EU have ratified the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC and have separately committed to achieving net zero by 2050. The war in Ukraine has shown that the UK and EU can work together, and that our fortunes and energy prices are intertwined. There is scope for partnership on creating

green energy markets as a way of creating sustainable energy and energy security for the EU and UK. This should be a particular priority for the government as it establishes Great British Energy.

Labour has promised not to rejoin the EU or single market, and the democratic will of the people must be respected. However, in recent years we have seen UK trade with Europe face costly delays and trade barriers, represented by the lines of lorries at Calais. Closer alignment on environmental standards in trade would reduce regulatory bureaucracy and lead to greater certainty for businesses and investors. This in turn would lead to growing trade and would improve UK environmental standards, particularly around forest risk commodities and raw materials.

Closer collaboration on shared goals is both possible and an imperative if we are going to keep global warming below 2 degrees. The new government has a choice to make; does the UK go its own way or does it reach across the Channel to work on our shared climate, energy and security challenges collaboratively? I will be working in Parliament to influence our government to do more to protect our planet, our home and to work constructively with our European allies to do so.



Cat Smith is Labour MP for Wyre and Lancaster

Labour in Power – time to boost solidarity with Ukraine

Labour's victory in the UK general election offers an opportunity to boost solidarity with the Ukraine people. Ukraine's offensive into Russian territory has been a morale booster and put Putin on the back foot. However, Russia has continued an offensive in the Donetsk region, bombing mining communities and forcing thousands of civilians to flee their homes, expanding the occupation to almost one fifth of Ukraine. Below is a statement put out before the General Election, signed by a number of Labour MPs and trade union representatives. We urge newly elected MPs to endorse this statement and join with the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign in expanding support for the Ukrainian people in seeking to defeat Putin's occupation.

The General Election takes place at a time when Ukraine is at a crossroads and with it the fate of this key battle for democracy with the new authoritarianism. The war on Ukraine should be a key issue of the election, and 4th July should be an opportunity for change to help Ukraine win and secure a just peace.

We have seen new Russian offensives, increased attacks on civilians and infrastructure, a situation made worse by aid delays due to obstruction by far-right forces such as Orban and Trump.

Recent advances by the far-right in Europe, and risk of a Trump presidency, pose a serious threat to Ukraine and democracy globally, reinforcing efforts by Putin to undermine continued international support for Ukraine.

As representatives of the Labour and Trade Union Movement, we declare our continued solidarity with the Ukrainian people, including their trade unions, who against the odds are resisting Russian Imperialism.

We are calling for the new government to take the following key steps to help Ukraine:

- 1. Weapons to Win:** Ukraine has been made vulnerable by the fact that just enough weapons have been provided to help resist Russia, but not to defeat it. The UK must play a leading role in achieving a change, that Ukraine be given all the weapons needed to enable Ukrainians to free the entire country and end the occupation.
- 2. Stop Selling off Military Hardware:** It is a scandal that since the all-out invasion the Tory government sold off over 1044 military vehicles and 48 fixed-wing aircraft; this practice must stop. Equipment due to be replaced such as the Challenger 2 Tanks, Scimitar light tanks, Warrior vehicles and Typhoon aircraft should be gifted to Ukraine.
- 3. Justice for War Crimes:** Russia, is waging an illegal war of aggression against a sovereign nation, unseen in Europe since 1945. Russian state forces have perpetrated war crimes and other atrocities on a horrifying scale, with over 108,904 recorded by Ukraine. Urgent steps should be taken to convene an international war crimes tribunal to hold the Russian leaders and military to account.
- 4. Cancel Debt & Seize Russian Assets:** Ukraine's debts stand at \$100 billion. It is unjust that a nation fighting for survival should be expected to service debts - the debt should be cancelled. The new UK government must seize the frozen Russian individual and central bank assets and redistribute them to Ukraine. Whilst welcoming the \$50 billion of Russian financial assets in the West re-allocated to Ukraine, the total \$300 billion should be redistributed.



Credit:
Ukraine Solidarity Campaign

- 5. Socially Progressive Reconstruction:** Ukraine deserves a just and socially progressive reconstruction in which trade unions and civil society can democratically participate. International support should help to restore and expand universal health-care, education, rebuild affordable housing and public infrastructure, ensuring decent jobs and working conditions. No more advisors from the UK Government should be used to assist in retrogressive reforms of trade union and labour rights.

We call for renewed and expanded solidarity to help Ukraine win a just peace. On 4 July let us start making it a reality.

Clive Lewis, Labour MP for Norwich South
Nadia Whittome, Labour MP for Nottingham East
Rachael Maskell MP, Labour MP for York Central
Kim Johnson MP, Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside
John McDonnell, Labour MP for Hayes & Harlington
Ian Lavery, Labour MP for Wansbeck
Chris Kitchen, General Secretary of National Union of Mineworkers
John Moloney, Assistant General Secretary, Public and Commercial Service Union, (pc)
Simon Weller, Assistant General Secretary, ASLEF the train drivers union, (pc)
Vicky Blake University and Colleges Union, National Executive and former President, (pc).
Oksana Holota, representative of Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine
Yuliya Yurchenko, representative of Sotsialny Rukh (Social Movement) of Ukraine
Mariia Pastuk, Director CIC Vsesvit, Ukrainian solidarity collective London
Christopher Ford, Secretary Ukraine Solidarity Campaign

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