

# The hypocrisy of the political classes and commentators

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IT IS INTERESTING to read and listen to politicians speaking about the Ukraine war and the crisis it has thrust upon the world.

They now profess great clarity on what must be done. We must massively increase our military spending says Jeremy Hunt. Peace does not come by accident or luck he espouses, as though he deserves to be seen as an elder statesman expressing a long held profound wisdom that has been revealed to him alone.

This is being wise after the event and hypocritical to the highest degree.

The realities of Putin have been evident for many years. It is the politicians who have refused, arguably wilfully, to see the truth as demonstrated by the facts. When were politicians vocal about the need to increase defence spending rather than carry out annual cuts and want to claim a 'peace dividend' for which they were somehow responsible for creating and could now bestow the benefits on a grateful people? The 'peace dividend' of course was just spent on throwing more money into welfare but none of it was calculated against a realistic view of geopolitical risks to which they were opening us all up to taking.

"If you want peace, prepare for war" is hardly new thinking,

although it seems to have dawned on Jeremy Hunt like a modern-day Pauline conversion. Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus penned these thoughts 1600 years ago and previous sages uttered similar thoughts.

History tells us that the weak are far more likely to be the targets of aggression. Aggressors are very reluctant to take on those who are strong and prepared.

When have politicians entered defence debates to support significant and permanent increases in defence expenditure to ensure modernisation, ample resources and technical excellence against the background of aggressive military expansion by tyrannical regimes? When have they expressed the clear-sighted view that we live in a dangerous world? When have they drawn attention to the obvious tyrants and tyrannical regimes who must be kept in check by the strength of our military resources and the fortitude of our country to defend our way of life? They have done quite the opposite. They have framed our defence policy against an assessment that there will never be another world war and any conflict will be confined to minor skirmishes involving minor countries.

Think back to the agonies of the political debate to ban Huawei technology being embedded in our communication systems and the outrage produced by the proposal. In truth it was a no brainer when you look at China without rose tinted spectacles. We should not let China anywhere near any nuclear power project, but our politicians don't want to entertain any debate. They don't even want to discuss the likelihood that the Chinese Covid virus that has paralysed the World leaked from a Chinese lab. We must not do anything to upset China seems to be the policy. Well what about them upsetting us?

President Trump called out NATO allies for not spending up to their NATO commitment of 2% of GDP. Was he lauded for pointing this out? No indeed not! Western politicians ran for cover, changed the subject and refused to point fingers at failure to

honour commitments. The UK trumpeted that we were meeting our commitments, probably with dodgy accounting. They failed to press home the point and give him 100% support. They certainly did not suggest that 2% was woefully inadequate.

Our governments have pursued economic policies, epitomised by energy supply, that have made us dependent on Russia and for that matter, much of our economy on China. MPs and those in the political 'know' now say we must have independence of energy supply so that we are not held in the thrall of Putin, a political tyrant, as they now call him or others. Why have they come so late to such an obvious conclusion? Where has been their sensible perspective on the world and their obligation to keep this country safe? So far to the back of their minds that it was never given any real attention must be the answer. Even now they cannot seem to get it that exploiting our own energy resources makes far more economic and environmental sense than importing energy from halfway round the world. We live in a clear and present danger of military aggression. That demands immediate action to secure our safety. It must not get bogged down with debates on climate change over the next 100 years with all the margin for error that such forecasts entail.

There is no doubt the Western world now has a major problem on its hands with Russia. We cannot wait for progress to be made on that before we engage in a major and radical reset of our relationship with similar regimes. It is pretty easy to list them. China, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela. It is a bad idea to solve the problem with Russia by elevating the relationship with say Iran or Venezuela. They are failed states that we should not wish to enrich and make more powerful by increasing their capacity to cause us even more trouble in future. Perhaps one of our first actions should be to clear out Chinese money and students from our Universities and research programmes.

A reset of our foreign policy on this scale will be costly.

However, the cost will be substantially lower than dealing with the aggression of these states in years to come. Every year that passes sees us filling their coffers with huge transfers of money and know-how from the West to them. It is that money that they spend on military and economic power that one day will be unleashed on us. When that happens, our current problems with Russia will look like a little local difficulty.

We need politicians to face up to reality, recognise they have failed us, take action to rapidly reverse direction and level with us on what sacrifices we must make now. Only by this will we secure a safer future and lay the foundations of a new prosperity as our legacy to future generations.

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