

Robert Kilroy-Silk writes on... 'The War on Terror'

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So this is what Tony Blair's New Labour Party has sunk to? It has become the party of fear. Vote for us, he says, or the bogeyman will get you.

New Labour is obviously so bereft of policies, so lacking in ideas, so short of political initiatives, that it has decided to resort to playing on peoples fear of terrorism and crime in order, it hopes, to secure victory at the next general election.

Tony Blair and David Blunkett have become agents of Osama bin Laden. Like him they are engaged in spreading terror. Like him they are preying on people's anxieties for political ends.

What a disgrace. How much lower with New Labour stoop? The leader of the Commons, the excitable Peter Hain, actually believes that attempting to frighten the electorate is a legitimate political tactic. He boasts that the strategy of creating fear will disadvantage the Tories and the Lib-Dems. He thinks the slogan, "the people will be safer under Labour", is a winner.

He is wrong. It's a big mistake. He's assuming that the electors are stupid. They're not. Doesn't he and his Prime Minister realize that no-one, but no-one, will swallow their blatant and duplicitous scaremongering? Isn't Tony Blair aware, yet, that the voters know him to be a liar?

Surely he knows that they will see this as yet another 45 minutes? "They're at it again", I can hear my canny constituents laughing. "It's just like they did over WMD, over immigration, over asylum, over crime. They're telling fibs, again".

What degrading, gutter-style politics will New Labour stoop to next? There's not much left, is there? They've done all the authoritarian right wing scares to get their illiberal legislation on the statute book. Will it be: "there are Islamic fundamentalists climbing the cliffs of Dover? There's a terrorist in every town, in every street"?

This is the politics of deceit and desperation. It's despicable politics. It degrades and demeans all those who engage in it. It is unworthy of a governing party. It is a disgraceful electoral gambit.

Apart from the fact that the government is deliberately exaggerating the threat from terrorism, not one of the draconian policies – not compulsory ID cards, not the new crime busters, not the abolishment of trial by jury – will increase our safety. Not one of them.

Indeed, if they are so important why hasn't the government introduced them already? If they are so necessary why will we be waiting years, until 2012 in this case of ID cards, for these laws to be implemented?

I'll tell you why, because it's all a con. This is all about general election window dressing. It is not about our safety.

Are Labour MP's who like to think of themselves as reformers, good socialists, happy with this demagoguery? Are they content to be part of the hysterical neo-conservative electioneering? Are they prepared to go along with this cynical, manipulative and deceitful electoral ploy? Aren't they ashamed of what Blair has done to the Labour party?

Labour and elections should be about principles, about values, about beliefs. They should be talking the language of hope, of inspiration. They should be doing what is right for the British people, not scaring them into the ballot box. And the British people deserve better than to be governed by a bunch of manipulative self-serving scaremongers.



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