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MPs poised to vote for third Iraq campaign

RAF jets ready to attack within 24 hours of vote, but not within Syria

Patrick Wintour
Nicholas Watt
Ewen MacAskill

Wary British MPs are expected today to back military action in Iraq, as part of a daunting mission to destroy Islamic State (Isis) that the defence secretary Michael Fallon said could endure for as long as two to three years.

The Commons motion, agreed unanimously by the cabinet yesterday and due to be debated by MPs for seven hours today, is couched in terms of protecting Iraq from the brutality of Isis and specifically excludes air strikes in Syria without a further Commons vote.

Fallon said the war would be "a long haul" and made little attempt to deny that Isis's destruction may eventually, subject to another vote from MPs, require coalition

The British jihadist
FBI believes it knows the
identity of the man who
appears in Isis videos of
hostages being beheaded



action against Isis militants in Syria. The motion, the product of extensive negotiations with the Labour leader Ed Miliband, also promises that the UK will not deploy troops in ground combat operations in Iraq, a wording that nevertheless permits the presence of trainers, intelligence and special forces to help guide RAF jets and strengthen Iraqi and Kurdish forces.

The motion asks MPs to support "the government of Iraq in protecting civilians and restoring its territorial integrity" by measures "including the use of UK air strikes to support Iraqi, including Kurdish, security forces efforts against Isis in Iraq".

The cabinet, handed clear advice from the attorney general justifying the war's legality, was also briefed by the home secretary Theresa May on the threat of reprisals by Isis supporters in the UK.

It is expected that six RAF Tornado jets will be in action within as little as 24 hours of the vote. The jets, based in Cyprus,

were out over Iraq on Wednesday night gathering intelligence in preparation for attacks that are being co-ordinated with the US led coalition, as well as Iraqi and Kurdish armed forces.

After the initial strikes it is likely there will be a pause as the RAF identify further Isis targets for attack. A similar pause occurred after initial French air strikes. A British source said: "This is not about hundreds of bunkers that will be targeted straight away."

Before the recall, MPs from all sides were expressing concern about the dangers of mission creep and the absence of identifiable or achievable war aims in the Commons motion that describes the war almost exclusively in terms of answering a request by the Iraqi government to defend its territorial integrity.

Despite that, whips from the three main parties have told their leaders that they will comfortably win the vote to authorise British involvement in air strikes against targets from Islamic State.

That will come in marked contrast to a year ago when David Cameron unexpectedly lost a Commons vote on air strikes designed to punish President Bashar al-Assad of Syria last summer. The prime minister has worked painstakingly to ensure Labour support in advance of today's debate with a carefully crafted motion that is precise about what it authorises.

As a result, in today's debate a modest but noticeable number of MPs on both sides will rebel against the three line whip imposed by all the party leaders calling on them to support air strikes against Isis forces in Iraq.

Keith Simpson, who served as William Hague's parliamentary private secretary during his four years as home secretary, told the Guardian: "A number of colleagues will, either in their speeches during the debate or in the form of interventions, raise serious questions because they do have concerns about the overall coalition strategy, 12 13 →

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Not being John Malkovich Actor's star-studded alter egos



John Malkovich as the fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier, one of 35 images of the actor created by the photographer Sandro Miller

24 25 →

Ukip 'using child abuse scandal to win votes'

Rajeev Syal

The father of the main prosecution witness in Britain's biggest child sex grooming scandal has accused Nigel Farage of exploiting the issue for political gain as the UK Independence party attempts to unseat Labour in a Manchester by-election.

The man, known as Tom, whose daughter's testimony led to the prosecution of nine Asian men and an overhaul of Crown Prosecution Service rules, said that Ukip had resorted to British National party-style tactics while campaigning to win Heywood and Middleton in Greater Manchester.

The town of Heywood, where Tom lives, was at the centre of the Rochdale scandal, after a sex-trafficking gang of men of mainly Pakistani origin were found to have preyed on at least 47 girls, all of whom were white.

Statements issued by Farage and leaflets distributed by his party have blamed Labour's "love affair" with "immigration, political correctness and multiculturalism" for the betrayal of "white working-class girls".

The by-election, due to be held on 9 October, was triggered when the veteran Labour MP Jim Dobbin died this month. Labour figures are concerned that Ukip could overturn the party's 5,500 majority.

Tom said Farage should stop adding to the distress of local families. "I find it abhorrent that Ukip are trying to make political gains from this and use it as a tool. It is not what my family wants."

"Ukip have rarely mentioned child abuse before they came here. It is obvious why they are mentioning it now. It's for the game."

Farage visited the constituency this month and told the media: "Just look at the local grooming scandal. This is a prime example of the local authority failing to protect vulnerable residents because the people in power were more afraid of being seen as racist."

Two leaflets distributed by the party in the campaign have highlighted the grooming scandal as evidence of Labour's "betrayal of the working classes because of political correctness".

Tom was moved to speak to the Guardian about Ukip's tactics after receiving the leaflets through this door. To heap blame on "political correctness" did not fully explain the many reasons why the abuse was allowed 8 9 →

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Waiting times are a national disgrace, says GPs' leader

Denis Campbell
Health correspondent

Intolerably long waiting times to see a GP have become a national disgrace that could endanger people's health, the leader of Britain's family doctors has warned.

Increasingly unacceptable waits for an appointment risk illnesses not being spotted quickly enough and chances to prevent them being missed, said Dr Maureen Baker.

The chair of the Royal College of GPs spoke out as NHS figures showed that one in six patients have to wait at least a week before they see a GP or practice nurse.

A total of 58.9 million patients in England are set to have waited for a consultation for a week or more by the end of 2014,

up almost 50% from the 40m who waited that long during 2012, according to a new RCGP analysis of data from NHS England's six-monthly GP patient survey. "These devastating statistics show that waiting times are now a national disgrace and that the situation is set to get even worse over the year ahead," Baker said.

"Even more worrying is that we have no way of finding out how many patients decide not to seek treatment because

59m
Number of patients
in England expected
to have waited for
a consultation for a
week or more by the
end of 2014 - a 50%
increase from 2012

they cannot get an appointment, which means we might be missing opportunities of detecting illnesses at an early stage or preventing them happening."

The 58.9m minimum week-long waiters revealed in the most recent GP patient survey, which encompasses the views of about one million patients, was also a sharp rise on the 47m such waits in 2013.

Patients are bearing the brunt because there are too few GPs to meet the rising demand for their services and those in post are overworked and overstretched as a result, Baker said.

"Expecting patients to wait a week before they can be seen by their GP is unacceptable. We cannot gamble with people's health in this way. Unless we invest substantially in expanding the

GP workforce, general practice is at risk of going into meltdown, with the profession's ability to deliver decent patient care increasingly compromised," he said.

The proportion of patients waiting at least a week has been creeping up. In mid-2011 it was 13%, though rose to 14% by the end of 2013, then reached 15% in mid-2013 and then 16% in July, according to the GP patient surveys.

A new ComRes opinion poll commissioned by the RCGP found that half of the 1,001 adults surveyed agreed that waiting times were "a national disgrace". Three in 10 (29%) said that the last time they tried to book a GP appointment they could not get one within a week. And just

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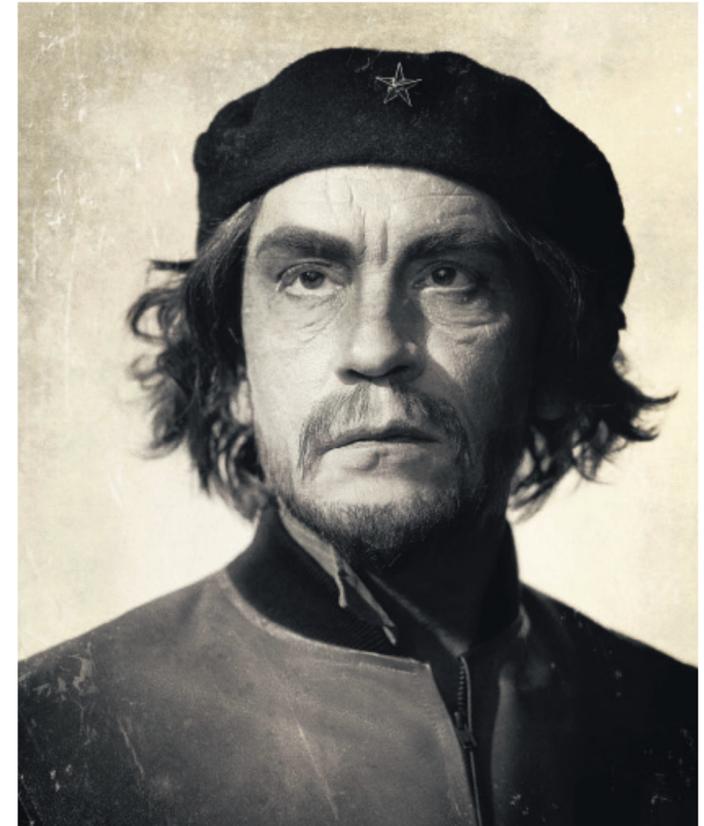
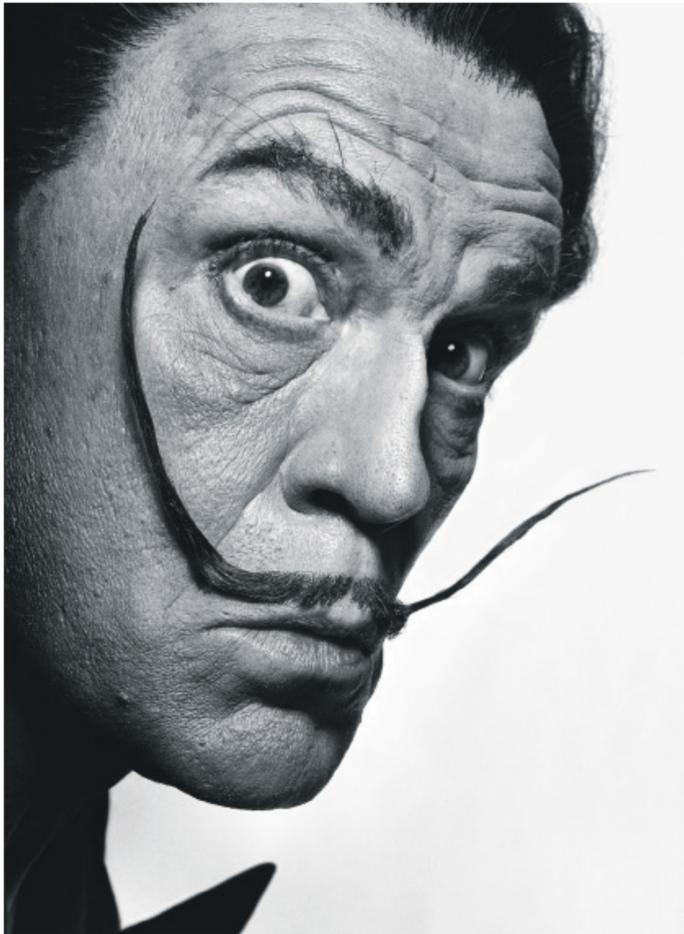
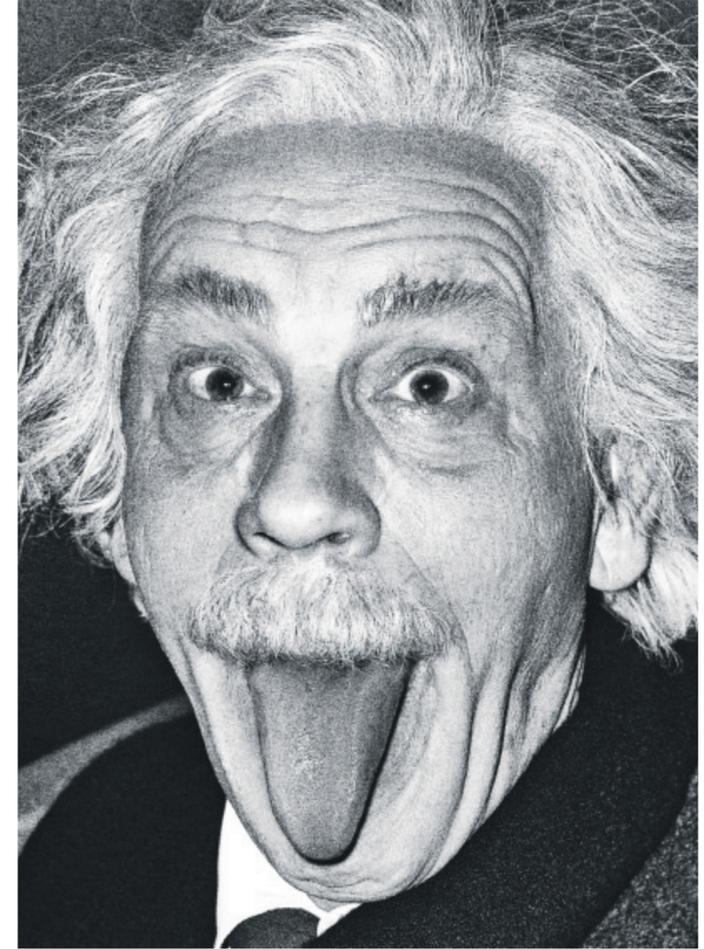
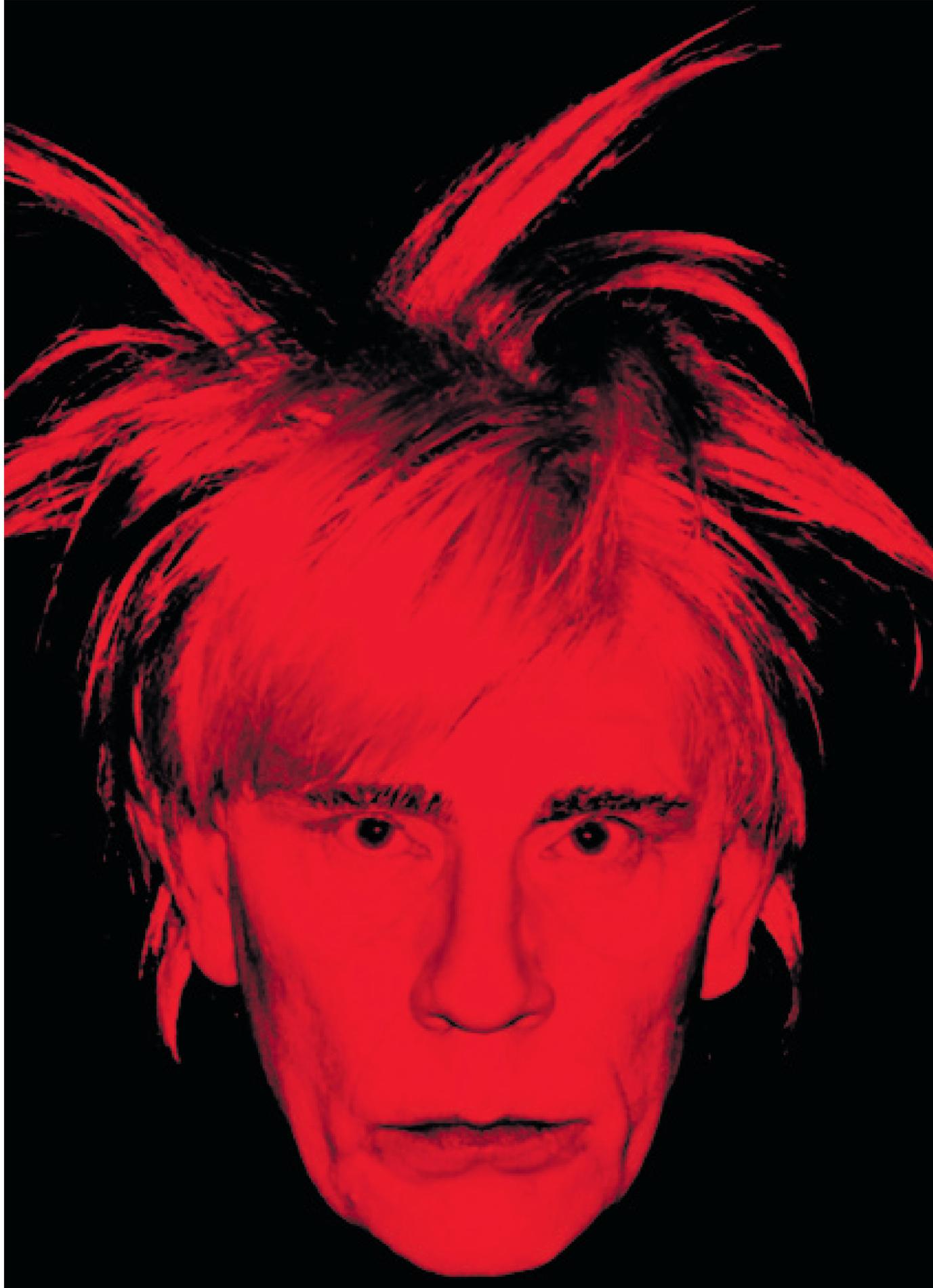
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More Malkovich by Sandro Miller
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Being anyone but John Malkovich
Photographer Sandro Miller has collaborated with the John Malkovich to recreate celebrated photographs of, among others, Andy Warhol, Albert Einstein, Che Guevara, Marilyn Monroe and Salvador Dali. Miller and Malkovich met in the late 1990s, and the photographer's admiration is beyond doubt: "John is the most brilliant, prolific person I know. His genius is unparalleled," he says in a note to the exhibition. The 35 images can be seen from November 7 2014 to January 31 2015 at the Catherine Edelman gallery, in Chicago.