26 June 2019

Dear Boris,

The Defence Committee has asked me to write to both candidates in the Leadership election on the question of future UK Defence expenditure. As you will know, this used to be between 4.5% and 5% of GDP in the Cold War years of the 1980s and remained at 3% or above until the mid-1990s.

The Committee has long campaigned for a short- to medium-term increase in Defence spending to 3% of GDP. We were, therefore, encouraged by your opponent’s pledge to increase the Defence budget by a quarter over the next five years, following the earlier suggestion in his Mansion House speech last month of even larger increases over the next decade.

We should be grateful if you would let us know your views on what the proper level of Defence spending should be; what your target date is for reaching that level; and what your initial priorities are in applying such extra resources effectively.

Naturally, we are making this correspondence available to the press and other media, and we look forward to a prompt response.

Yours ever,
Julian