

Green parliamentarians write to Defence Secretary over defence spending principles

- Green MPs and peers call for defence spending decisions to be based on “core principles”
- Ellie Chowns MP calls foreign aid cut announcement “cruel and unnecessary”
- Green letter highlights growing security threats relating to climate breakdown, food security and cyber security

The six Green Party parliamentarians have written to the Defence Secretary John Healey setting out a series of “core principles” they say any decisions about defence spending should be based on [1].

The letter comes as Keir Starmer announced that a rise in the defence budget will be funded by cuts to foreign aid.

In the letter, the MPs and peers call on Healey to ensure that all decisions on defence spending “tackle the biggest threats to long term human security, including climate chaos, food insecurity, and cyber-attacks on democracy”.

They also urge an increase in spending on diplomacy, peace-building and overseas aid in order to improve our security.

Responding to Starmer’s announcement today, Ellie Chowns MP said:

“It’s horrifying to see Keir Starmer follow Trump’s lead, gutting our international aid budget to increase defence spending. This is naive populism playing with life-and-death decisions.

“How many people will fall ill or die because they cannot access health services; how many more will go hungry? And how many children will be denied an education as a result of this decision? Cutting aid risks making the world more volatile and more dangerous, not safer. Real security means tackling hunger, poverty, and climate chaos.

“Taking money from the poorest in the name of defence is both cruel and unnecessary – we could and should instead be taxing the wealthiest who can afford to contribute more.

“The idea that the only way to strengthen our defences is by taking from those with the least is immoral. It’s a choice and it’s the wrong one.”

Notes:

1. The full text of the letter reads:

Dear John,

We are writing to set out the importance of any decisions about future defence spending being underpinned by core principles. In an ever more insecure world, made more unstable by the comments and actions of the US President, and with the ongoing need to stand up to Putin, it is vital that genuine long-term stability, safety and security is a priority. Alongside addressing the threats posed by the international political situation, the government must also address the significant and growing security threats relating to climate breakdown, food security and cyber security.

As such, we call on you to uphold the following principles:

- Tackle the biggest threats to long term human security, including climate chaos, food insecurity, and cyber-attacks on democracy
- Increase spending on diplomacy, peace-building and overseas aid, as key to security and defence policy
- Don't cut spending from other departmental budgets to increase defence spending
- Strengthen our ties with Europe
- Uphold international law, the rule of law and the right to self-determination
- Recognise that a global prohibition on nuclear weapons will make everyone safer
- Address the underlying causes of conflict and insecurity such as poverty, human rights abuses and resource scarcity
- Restore UK sovereignty by decoupling from reliance on the US
- Use economic levers such as sanctions on companies still operating in the UK and complicit in Russian fossil fuel exports

We look forward to your response and to working constructively with the government towards enduring safety and security.

Yours sincerely, all Green parliamentarians

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