

The future of NATO

Mr Trump has always been sceptical of multi national bodies. His disagreement with Nato has been primarily the feeling that the USA makes a disproportionate financial and military contribution. He points out correctly that most of the European members fail to meet even the minimum 2% of GDP spend on their armed forces that NATO asks members to make. The UK does meet the obligation and agrees with the USA on this matter

There is also a disagreement with Turkey that is getting bigger. Turkey has bought a Russian anti missile system, which has led the USA to deny it US planes given the way Turkey is likely to release security information to Russia. Turkey wishes all of NATO to join its battle against Kurds, when NATO has been in alliance with Kurdish forces in Syria.

The UK as host to this week's 70th anniversary meeting had important work to do. NATO is central to the defence of the West and to our own security. The UK needs to help secure proper financing of the defence capabilities we need from all our allies, and to work to get our allies in more agreement about the importance and aims of NATO. For the last 70 years acceptance of NATO as a central pillar of our defence has been common ground between the main political parties.

Today Labour is unreliable on defence and hostile to the USA which continues to provide the bulk of the military capability of this alliance. Mr Corbyn has in the past been sceptical of NATO, often expressing more support for groups and countries which oppose us. Above all now we need to form a common position on China, on the threats from Iran, and how to respond to the cyber attacks which are now a regular feature of our lives.