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OFFICIAL REPORT

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Introductions: Lord Lilley and Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown	95
Royal Assent	95
Questions	
Anti-Semitism.....	95
Hinkley Point C	98
Airports: Border Force	100
Airbus.....	102
Defence: UK Military Status	
<i>Private Notice Question</i>	105
NATO Summit 2018	108
NATO Summit 2018 (International Relations Committee Report).....	158
<i>Motions to Take Note</i>	
Youth Services	
<i>Question for Short Debate</i>	158

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Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

No party affiliation is given for Members serving the House in a formal capacity, the Lords spiritual, Members on leave of absence or Members who are otherwise disqualified from sitting in the House.

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House of Lords

Tuesday 26 June 2018

2.30 pm

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Peterborough.

Introduction: Lord Lilley

2.38 pm

The right honourable Peter Bruce Lilley, having been created Baron Lilley, of Offa in the County of Hertfordshire, was introduced and took the oath, supported by Lord Baker of Dorking and Lord Lamont of Lerwick, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Introduction: Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

2.43 pm

Dr Robert Thomas William McCrea, Esquire, having been created Baron McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown, of Magherafelt in the County of Londonderry and Cookstown in the County of Tyrone, was introduced and took the oath, supported by Lord Morrow and Lord Browne of Belmont, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Royal Assent

2.48 pm

The following Acts were given Royal Assent:

Nuclear Safeguards Act,
European Union (Withdrawal) Act.

Death of a Former Member: Lord Wade of Chorlton Announcement

2.48 pm

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, I regret to inform the House of the death of the noble Lord, Lord Wade of Chorlton, on 7 June. On behalf of the House, I extend our condolences to the noble Lord's family and his friends.

Anti-Semitism Question

2.48 pm

Asked by Lord Leigh of Hurley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote the use of the definition of anti-Semitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, together with its guidance notes.

Lord Leigh of Hurley (Con): I beg leave to ask the Question standing in my name on the Order Paper. In doing so, I draw to your Lordships' attention my non-financial interests in the register.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth) (Con): My Lords, the Prime Minister announced the Government's adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of anti-Semitism in December 2016. Since then, we have encouraged local authorities to adopt the definition. To date, 135 local authorities across the United Kingdom have done so, as have a number of universities, the National Union of Students and the Union of Jewish Students. In addition, a number of political parties have adopted the definition and the police and CPS already use it as a guide. It is good to see in his place my noble friend Lord Pickles, who has done so much great work in this area.

Lord Leigh of Hurley: I thank the Minister and agree that all institutions and political parties should adopt this definition of anti-Semitism, which includes, of course, disproportionate attacks on Israel. Does the Minister share my concern that in this parliamentary Session there have been, according to the House of Lords Library, more than 250 Questions on Israel which, to put it in context, compares with 50 on Iran and five on anti-Semitism?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: As a Minister, I know quite a bit about answering the same question time and again, as noble Lords will be aware. Ultimately, this is a matter for individual noble Lords; it is not a matter for the Government. Obviously, noble Lords will need to declare interests, but if they do so, that is a matter for them.

Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (LD): My Lords, the IHRA definition clarifies that, when it comes to anti-Semitism by way of criticism of Israel, cases should be judged taking into account the overall context and may—rather than must—be anti-Semitic; and that, “criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic”.

Does the Minister believe that this is sufficient to ensure freedom of speech?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Lords, the noble Lord is right that there is obviously an important balance to be struck between freedom of speech and the definition of anti-Semitism. It is important that people bear in mind the definition of anti-Semitism, but ultimately all freedom of speech is constrained in some way. Nobody can go into a theatre and yell “Fire!”—unless there is a fire, of course—so noble Lords would be well advised when exercising the right of free speech to be aware of the parameters within which it is exercised.

Baroness Tonge (Non-Afl): Does the Minister realise that one of the problems is that Government of Israel now calls itself “the Jewish State of Israel”? Could he advise us whether we are being anti-Semitic when we criticise the actions of the Government of the Jewish State of Israel?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Lords, I do not want to be drawn too much into semantics on this. I think noble Lords will in general realise what is legitimate criticism of the policy of a particular state—that is legitimate—but they will be aware of the definition of anti-Semitism which the Government, the Conservative Party and many local authorities have adopted. That is a good thing and is recognised as such internationally.

Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Lab Co-op): My Lords, does the Minister agree that anti-Semitism is a truly despicable form of abuse and that it has absolutely no place in Britain? Will he join me in congratulating the Community Security Trust for what it has done in highlighting this abuse and racism? Will he ask his ministerial colleagues in the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice to ensure that everything is in place to support the police and the CPS to bring prosecutions against the perpetrators of these evil crimes?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Lords, the noble Lord's record is impeccable in this regard and I join him in paying tribute to the CST. He will be aware that at the top reaches of his party in the other place, there is still an issue to address, but I certainly exempt noble Lords in this House from that charge. However, there is much work to be done on anti-Semitism in the upper reaches of the Labour Party.

Baroness Deech (CB): My Lords, does the Minister share my feeling that it is shameful and a stain on our reputation that we even have to discuss this and that we find that anti-Semitism is mainstreaming, especially in our universities? I cannot imagine—and I am sure the Minister cannot imagine—anyone attempting to narrow the definition of, for example, Islamophobia. There is a singling out of Jews and Israel under the guise of anti-Israelism.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Lords, in her last phrase I think the noble Baroness is referring to university campuses. There are issues there that remain a concern, but in all fairness considerable progress has been made. The present NUS president, Shakira Martin, deserves praise. She has been working with the Union of Jewish Students, for example. There is still work to be done, but considerable work has been done in that regard. I agree with the noble Baroness about tackling Islamophobia. That too is a challenge that we have to meet in all political parties.

Baroness Eaton (Con): Will the Minister explain what Her Majesty's Government are doing to deal with anti-Semitism in social media?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Lords, my noble friend will be aware that hate crime in general on social media is something we are seeking to address; we have invested money in that fairly recently. My noble friend is correct to say that it is a very important concern, but it also has an international dimension and is very difficult to deal with. For all that, it is important that we do deal with it, and we are seeking to do so.

Baroness Hussein-Ece (LD): My Lords, anti-Semitism is absolutely reprehensible and abhorrent. It is a stain on our society, and I welcome any moves to stamp it out, but may I ask the Minister to help me? He mentioned Islamophobia as well. Some of us in this Chamber who come from a particular background are subjected to the most appalling comments by an individual in this Chamber about our faith and about people from the same faith—mainly Muslims—with very little intervention. Can he say whether the same will apply in this Chamber: that we lead by example and we stamp out such questions and comments, which make some of us feel very uncomfortable, and beyond, about coming from a Muslim background?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Lords, I am unaware of the specifics that the noble Baroness mentions, but based on what she has just said: absolutely. It is abominable that anybody should be singled out on the basis of race or religion. All discrimination is wrong, and I wholeheartedly endorse what she has said.

Lord Clarke of Hampstead (Lab): My Lords, does the Minister agree with me in welcoming the visit made yesterday by Prince William to Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem? Does he further agree that Prince William's desire to go to the other side and talk to Palestinian people to try to get some understanding can only be a good thing for the future of both states?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Entirely, my Lords; I wholeheartedly agree.

Hinkley Point C Question

2.56 pm

Asked by **Baroness Featherstone**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on 17 July 2013 (HC Deb, col 106WS), how the package of benefits for communities in the areas around Hinkley Point C has been implemented so far; and how much the benefits provided to date have been worth.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Lord Henley) (Con): My Lords, as stated in 2013, community benefit would not begin paying out until the plant is operational, which for Hinkley Point C is anticipated to be in 2025. However, communities are already seeing significant local economic benefits from the project, through investment in wider infrastructure, new employment opportunities and benefits for the local supply chain.

Baroness Featherstone (LD): I thank the noble Lord for that Answer, but I think the local community were expecting something a little sooner, from business rates, which would have come in the local government finance Bill, but that was not in the Queen's Speech. I take into account what the Minister said, but, given that Hinkley is already under construction, the local council there does not feel that the community is

feeling the benefit. It was promised £128 million. What alternative arrangements are the Government making to deliver that? The community needs clarity.

Lord Henley: My Lords, there is absolute clarity, and there was absolute clarity in the original Written Ministerial Statement made by my honourable friend—I shall just double-check which one it was—my honourable friend Mr Fallon, back in July 2013. That is all of five years ago, and he made it absolutely clear that these particular benefits would not come into play until Hinkley Point was operating. That will, as I said, be in 2025. So there is clarity there. Other benefits are obviously coming through the work of construction, and improvements to local infrastructure are already happening; I think that EDF has already spent £45 million to date on assisting the local community with accommodation, economic development, education and skills, transport, environment and more. Obviously there is a certain amount of disruption; that is a matter for the original planning consent. Economic benefits are on their way and are coming—but what the noble Baroness asked about will not come into play until 2025.

Lord Grantchester (Lab): I support the Question asked by the noble Baroness. I thought that there were to be two phases to the benefits. There was to be an initial first phase, to which I think the noble Baroness was referring, which will be company supported. My question is about the fact that, when we consider the technicalities of these community arrangements, it looks as if the taxpayer is funding more of the benefits than the company. My interpretation of the Written Ministerial Statement made all those years ago was that there would be a two-year gap between the end of phase 1 benefits and the start of phase 2 benefits, so can the Government look at whether the company can bridge that gap and make further contributions during this period?

Lord Henley: My Lords, again, there is no lack of clarity on this. The Statement made five years ago—“all those years ago”, as the noble Lord put it—made it absolutely clear that the approximately £128 million which was likely to come through business rate retention would come after the plant became operational. Meanwhile, there will be the benefits that I enunciated, which will come through the company building this project. On top of what I already mentioned, there is the spend it is making down the supply chain in the west of England—£450 million so far. So considerable benefits are already on their way, but business rate retention does not come into play until later.

Lord King of Bridgwater (Con): My noble friend will be aware that this is taking place in my former constituency. It is one of the largest construction projects in Europe. People there are already facing fantastic lorry traffic: a figure I saw recently was 750 lorries a day going along not entirely ideal road routes. The local community is already making a substantial contribution by tolerating this terrific volume of construction traffic and all the work involved in it. My concern—the noble Baroness, Lady Featherstone, made this point—is that I understand that the real

community benefit does not kick in until 2025. Actually, the community is making its contribution now. A lot of people do not have jobs there and will not be working there—some will, but only a relatively small number. We ought to find some way to ensure that the community benefit takes place at the time when the community is really suffering as a result of the present commotion and activity.

Lord Henley: My noble friend, with his local knowledge as the former Member for that area, knows exactly what his former constituents are going through, and he is right to address those points. All sites of this sort go through a rigorous planning process. In that process, it is possible for the planning authorities to grant planning permission through a Section 106 agreement, looking to get benefits from the developers in that area. That has been dealt with by the local authority in that process.

On top of that, as I made clear in earlier answers, there are also the advantages to the area through spend in the area—I mentioned the spend directly on the site, on the roads and on other things, the contribution that EDF is making, as well as the spend on the supply chain in the entire south-west region.

Lord Teverson (LD): My Lords, we are often told that one Parliament cannot bind the actions of the next, and we are in another Parliament now. Clearly, as the noble Lord, Lord King, said, the disruption to the local community is now. So why do the Government not think that it would be better to bring these payments forward? The district authority, Sedgemoor, has proposed that ridding the district of fuel poverty would be an excellent way to use some of the money—appropriate and something that could start now. Surely the Government could do that.

Lord Henley: My Lords, we have a process, we announced what that process was and that process is to bring in benefit to the area when the plant becomes operational. Meanwhile, there are other ways in which EDF can help, which I have gone through—the Section 106 agreement and other things, and the spend it is making in the area which, again, is of benefit to the area. I could go on listing—

Noble Lords: No.

Lord Henley: Obviously the House does not want me to, but I was going to quote from EDF's paper, *Realising the Socio-economic Benefits*, which sets out just what it is doing on jobs, apprentices, local roads, communities and education. I shall leave it there.

Airports: Border Force Question

3.04 pm

Asked by **Lord Blunkett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to (1) improve the performance of the Border Force at United Kingdom airports, and (2) reduce delays in clearing EEA and non-EEA passengers through immigration.

Lord Blunkett (Lab): I beg leave to ask the Question standing in my name on the Order Paper. In doing so, I draw attention to my declaration of interests.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford) (Con): My Lords, visitor numbers to the UK are increasing and we expect record levels this year. Despite the increase, the latest data shows that we are meeting published service standards while maintaining the security of the UK border. We are continually seeking to improve our performance. The Border Force is taking steps to ensure that passengers are dealt with as quickly as possible by investing in technology and increasing the availability of staff at the busiest times of the day.

Lord Blunkett: My Lords, so far this year, non-EEA passengers at Heathrow border control have waited up to two hours 45 minutes, and EEA nationals up to 55 minutes. Yesterday, targets were missed for almost eight hours between 1 pm and 8.45 pm. For those who believe, as I think we all do, that we will have to be even more of a global trading nation, and for those who want to welcome both tourists and visitors, this is surely a disaster. Does the Minister agree with me that, tragically, this is a stark example of a hostile environment?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, last year, 97.5% of passengers were cleared within the service level agreement, which is 25 minutes for EEA passengers and 45 minutes for non-EEA passengers. Far from being a hostile environment, the border should be a compliant environment, and everyone passing through it should comply with immigration standards. However, we anticipate increases in travel and are making preparations for that.

The Duke of Somerset (CB): My Lords, many of the e-gates, which are meant to make things quicker and stop these delays, are often out of action at London airports. Why is that, and when will they all be back in action?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There are 254 e-gates operating across the country, including the juxtaposed controls. E-gates respond to the patterns of people-flow across the border. Although some of the e-gates are sometimes closed, one finds that when demand increases, they re-open. That is a wise way of managing traffic across the border.

Lord Paddick (LD): My Lords, further to what the Minister has just said, is it not true that there needs to be a certain number of immigration officers per e-gate and that, in fact, the e-gates are not all open when they should be because of a lack of staff? What discussions have the Government had with Heathrow Airport Ltd about increasing the number of Border Force staff at the airport, bearing in mind that the Border Force is struggling with two runways, let alone three?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord is absolutely right that there are immigration officers at e-gates and that e-gates are sometimes closed but, as I explained, this is in relation to the projected flow of passengers across the border, and sometimes if a plane

has been delayed, it can create congestion at the border. We have 250 e-gates, but we are investing in staff at the border in the coming year.

Lord Campbell-Savours (Lab): The Minister said, “We are making preparations for that”. Is that what she meant by her last statement, or is there more to report to the House?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, I anticipated that Brexit might come into this, as it has into every debate we have had for the last few months, so I said that in anticipation of projected increases in demand across the border, and to announce that we will be having a nationwide recruitment campaign of up to 1,000 further officers.

Baroness Benjamin (LD): My Lords, it has been drawn to my attention that diplomats from the Caribbean, such as governors-general, are not allowed to pass through the diplomatic channels at airports. Can the Minister explain why that is, and what directive needs to be given to immigration staff at airports to change this unwelcome behaviour?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I can certainly take that back, because I do not know the direct answer. That comment was made to me some weeks ago, but I shall take it back to the department and get a suitable reply for the noble Baroness.

Lord Rosser (Lab): My Lords, the lengthening and continuing delays at Heathrow for arriving passengers to clear immigration and passport control are at the very least causing reputational damage to the airport and the airlines affected. This has financial consequences for them as well as for our economy. Since the Government have not—and are apparently still not—meeting all their service level targets on waiting times for passengers arriving at Heathrow, what level of compensation will be provided by the Government to the operator of Heathrow and the airlines involved? If no compensation is going to be provided by the Government, why not, bearing in mind that in other areas of activity, firms providing services for the Government would be liable to penalties for failing to deliver on their service level targets?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, I am not sure. I do not know the answer to whether there are actual financial penalties in terms of compensation from the Government for failing to meet service level standards. What I can say is that over 95% of passengers arriving at Heathrow are, in fact, dealt with through those service level agreements.

Airbus *Question*

3.10 pm

Asked by Lord Haskell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk assessment published by Airbus of the impact on its business of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union without a proper agreement and adequate transition time.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Lord Henley) (Con): My Lords, Airbus is important to the United Kingdom and we want continued investment in the UK industry from Airbus in the long term. The analysis that Airbus has published is based on a no-deal scenario, which we neither want nor expect. The Government remain committed to a trading environment with the EU that is as free and as frictionless as possible. We are confident that a Brexit agreement will be reached to our mutual benefit.

Lord Haskel (Lab): My Lords, the Minister's reply does not actually get us any further. Indeed, Airbus is not alone. Is he not aware that it is these pious hopes and lack of clarity that force all responsible businesses to make contingency plans, to plan for the extra cost of disruption to the flow of goods and people, to plan for the absence of agreed standards on safety, certification and dispute resolution, and even to plan for possible tariffs? Will he take these concerns more seriously and respond in much clearer terms?

Lord Henley: My Lords, I and other Ministers take these concerns seriously. That is why my right honourable friend the Secretary of State responded to this point yesterday in another place and made it quite clear that he was listening to the concerns of Airbus, just as I made it clear that we were. The important point to remember is that the analysis put forward by Airbus was based on a no-deal scenario. As the noble Lord is aware, we will continue to negotiate, and we hope that those negotiations will achieve a result that will be good for British business.

Lord Fox (LD): My Lords, the Minister is right to say that, in future, we need the investment of Airbus and companies like it with or without Brexit. However, the tone of the rebuke that came from his government colleagues over the weekend was inappropriate. The Foreign Secretary and the Health Secretary took a tone with Airbus that was absolutely counterproductive to future investment in this country. Will he join his Secretary of State, Greg Clark, in rebuking his colleagues and admit that it was not appropriate language?

Lord Henley: My Lords, I do not think that it is for me to rebuke my colleagues somewhat higher up in the pecking order than I am. I am glad, however, that the noble Lord noted the tone used by my right honourable friend in response to a Question in another place yesterday on this subject. He made it absolutely clear that he and other Ministers in the department for business are prepared to listen to the concerns of business; we will continue to make sure that those concerns are taken into account in our negotiations.

Lord Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab): My Lords, can the Minister go a little further and confirm to the House and more generally that there is not a two-stage policy here? Can he confirm that there is no sense in which the Government are supporting those companies that do not rock the boat over Brexit, as it were, and that they are not disparaging those British companies—

responsible for many British jobs and for support of the British economy—that point out the inconsistencies and confusion at the heart of the Government's negotiating position?

Lord Henley: My Lords, I reject the last part of the noble Lord's statement. I make it absolutely clear that we support all business, and we want a prosperous Britain, as my right honourable friend made clear when launching the industrial strategy and on other occasions. We will go on listening to the concerns of business that it brings to us, and make sure that they are taken into account in negotiations.

Lord Dykes (CB): My Lords, should not the Minister worry about the pecking order? Leaving the EU is actually getting harder and harder to achieve on any sensible and non-hysterical basis and, indeed, is probably becoming impossible the way things are going, although the Government will not admit it. Bearing that in mind, is it not preposterous for Ministers and senior spokesmen for the Government to rubbish legitimate complaints by businesses? There will be more in future, and they should pay heed to them, bearing in mind that there will be a heavy consequence for the fate of this country.

Lord Henley: My Lords, as the noble Lord would expect, I reject virtually all of what he had to say. I agree that it is important that we make it clear to business that we listen to its voices and concerns.

Lord Skelmersdale (Con): My Lords, noble Lords and business are demanding clarity, as my noble friend well knows. Will he accept that there will be no clarity until there is a positive interaction with the European Council and other European authorities?

Lord Henley: My Lords, my noble friend is right to point out that we are in the middle of negotiations with the Commission, and it is important that we get those right. Obviously, there will not be clarity until negotiations are completed.

Lord Jones (Lab): My Lords, will the Minister accept that the north-east Wales Airbus factory—6,000 strong—makes a magnificent contribution to Britain's skills? It does training, high-tech and apprenticeships, directly in the line of Mr Chamberlain's pre-war factory programme, which was Vickers, Hawker, BAE and now Airbus, which as a factory keeps the global fleet of Airbus aloft. If Britain is to retain her greatness, must not blue-chip companies such as Airbus be assured that their supply chains will be secure after Brexit? I declare my interest in the register.

Lord Henley: My Lords, I am very grateful to the noble Lord for emphasising just what skills and talents we have in north Wales; for that matter, we have them in other parts of the country. He was right to bring that to the attention of the House. As I said in earlier answers, we want to make sure that we continue to benefit from those skills, and I think Europe and the rest of the world will want to. That is why we will continue to negotiate as we are.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (LD): Is the Minister aware that Brexit could destroy the future of many young people? Four thousand youngsters have gone through the training programme in Airbus. At the moment, 400 apprentices are employed and trained at Broughton, and another 130 will join them. Brexit would destroy the future of these people. Is not it time that the Government really thought again about this insane proposal that they are supporting?

Lord Henley: My Lords, the noble Lord will not be surprised that I do not agree with him, and he is wrong to pose such threats to the young people who are working for Airbus, for example, and being trained and making progress. We have skills and talents and want to make sure that they can continue to be used in the world that we are moving into post Brexit.

Lord Lea of Crodall (Lab): My Lords—

Lord Taylor of Holbeach (Con): My Lords, we have reached the end of the programme of Question Time. We now have a Private Notice Question, which I believe the noble Lord, Lord West, wishes to ask.

Defence: UK Military Status *Private Notice Question*

3.19 pm

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to ensure the United Kingdom remains a "tier one" military power.

Lord West of Spithead (Lab): My Lords, I beg leave to ask a Question of which I have given private notice.

Baroness Goldie (Con): My Lords, the Government's modernising defence programme aims to strengthen defence and our Armed Forces, ensuring that we have the right capabilities to meet an intensifying and more complex global security situation.

Lord West of Spithead: My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for her Answer. Once again, it seems that a Scot has been thrust into the breach to answer an indefensible position. There is no doubt whatever that we have insufficient money at the moment to support the defence programme that was laid down in the strategic defence and security review of 2015. There is a hollowing out of the forces, there are real problems and concerns. Across this House noble Lords are extremely worried, as are those in the other place. I am afraid that it is no good—it does not wash—to say that we are providing the defence that is required for this country. When the national security review was looked at we discovered that things had got worse; the threat is even greater. Are the Government going to actually face the fact that defence is underfunded and, unless extra money is found, as the HCDC said, we will not be able to provide the force that we said we would and we will certainly no longer be a tier 1 nation? How extraordinary it is that our Prime Minister is the first since Walpole to have to ask whether we are such a nation.

Baroness Goldie: I do not think anyone is being thrust into the breach here, Scot or otherwise. I find it a matter of great privilege and pride to be at the Dispatch Box, speaking on behalf of the Government in relation to defence, in respect of which the Government have a very proud reputation. I am sorry to see that there is a glaring omission from the speakers' list for what I know will be a very good debate this afternoon. I am truly sorry that the noble Lord, Lord West, is not going to be able to participate in that debate, when we could deal with this issue at slightly greater length. I remind him that the United Kingdom is one of the few NATO allies to spend 2% of GDP on defence, and we have pledged to do so for the duration of this Parliament. In addition, he will be aware that we are the second biggest budget contributor to NATO and the fifth largest defence spender in the world. That does not seem to me to be calling poor mouth—it seems to be clout and capability.

Lord Tunnicliffe (Lab): My Lords, I will reflect briefly on the fact that we have had a Question from my noble friend Lord West that did not ask for more ships. At the recent RUSI conference, my honourable friend, Nia Griffith, said:

"Look at what Labour has committed to, and what you would consider a tier-one power to require. An independent nuclear deterrent? Yes. Good conventional capabilities? Yes. And in the changing threat climate, taking steps forward when it comes to cyber and technology—yes. So yes, it is absolutely a category that we want to be in".

Can the Minister give an equally straightforward assurance?

Baroness Goldie: There should almost be a pause for acclamation. I am inclined to respond by asking: where has the Labour Party been? Certainly not at the defence races. While welcome, this belated conversion would be much more convincing if the Labour Party were led by someone who actually believes in all of that. I am afraid to say that the current leader of Labour, Mr Jeremy Corbyn, most assuredly does not. For the avoidance of doubt, the Government are categorically committed to retaining the UK's position as a tier 1 defence nation.

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, like the Minister, I am mildly puzzled about why we are discussing this issue now, when we are going to spend the whole afternoon discussing exactly the same one in relation to our NATO contribution. That said, does she agree that the Prime Minister is totally right to question what our top-level and best defence and security package for this nation will fully cost? Is the cost best pushed out in relation to ever more expensive military weapons, or are there more advanced technologies and wider issues which should also attract expenditure in order to keep this nation safe?

Baroness Goldie: My noble friend is absolutely correct to refer to the different challenges and the new age in which we live. Of course we must be realistic about what we think is appropriate as our defence capability. As I said earlier, the Government have a record of which to be very proud, but of course we have to look

at what we are spending and what we are getting for the spend. In the new age that confronts us the real test is: what can we do and how and where can we do it?

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (LD): My Lords, I am certainly looking forward to debating these issues with my fellow Scot in a few moments. If the United Kingdom is to be a first tier nation, that requires a full spectrum of military capability. That extends from one end of United Nations peacekeeping to the other—nuclear deterrence. How is it possible to maintain that spectrum on a defence expenditure of 2% of GDP?

Baroness Goldie: These are all issues which are constantly under discussion and consideration—not just by the other place and by this House, but also by the Government. Indeed two very good reports have been produced, not just for the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, but also by my noble friend's International Relations Committee in this House. These two reports pose challenging questions—questions which cannot be dodged. They will have to be reflected upon. I think the noble Lord would agree that, as my noble friend Lord Howell indicated, there is more to this than just numbers and looking at bits of equipment and specific aspects of the defence capability. There has to be, in aggregate, a coherent and workable response to the new challenges confronting the United Kingdom and our global allies, not least in NATO.

Lord Boyce (CB): My Lords, we seem to be skating around the definition of what tier one Armed Forces are supposed to be. Does the Minister agree that the outline of what Force 2025 should be, set out in SDSR 2015, is tier one—and if we fall away from that, we are no longer tier one?

Baroness Goldie: As the noble and gallant Lord is possibly aware, tier one does not have any legal definition. It is shorthand, used to identify the very few states whose militaries are the world's elite. Fortunately the UK is one of these. It comprises states which have objectives of an effective operational defence capability, constructed and configured in conjunction with our allies—as I say, not least in NATO—to meet the challenges now confronting the world of a very different nature to the challenges which we were familiar with 30 years ago. It is important that we get less caught up in etymology and semantics and more focused on what the actual objectives are that the UK wants to adhere to—I have outlined what the Government consider these to be—and how we then derive a strategy for delivering on these objectives.

Lord Robathan (Con): My Lords, may I say how delighted I am to see the noble Baroness in her place, contrary to what the noble Lord, Lord West, said? Does she agree that the British public and particularly a very large number of Conservative supporters will be puzzled that we are even questioning whether the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will remain a tier one nation? It would be helpful if the Government could reassure the British public and those Conservative supporters.

Baroness Goldie: As I indicated in my earlier response and in my very recent response to the noble and gallant Lord on the Cross Benches, the Government are absolutely clear what their defence objectives are. They are categorically committed to retaining the UK's position as a tier one which, while not definable in specific terms, is shorthand for a state at the forefront of having a military which is among the world's elite. That is what the United Kingdom possesses.

Lord Sterling of Plaistow (Con): My Lords, since her famous Lancaster House speech, the Prime Minister has said many times that we are going to go global—that we will re-emerge and re-engage, taking our proper place in the years to come. In the last year a great deal of work has been done and we know what the answers are. The savings that have been made are causing cuts which are completely undermining the integrity of our armed services. Does the Minister agree that at this moment the one thing we know is that our American friends, who will be our key allies in the future, do not believe that we will have the capability to run alongside them as their key ally in dealing with difficult world circumstances in the future?

Baroness Goldie: I do not completely agree with my noble friend. I think that the United Kingdom Government's record is sound and there is evidence to support that assessment. That is not to say that there will not be challenges in the future—we know that there will be. However, we are also very aware that the United States has been, and is, a significant contributor to NATO and it has specifically confirmed adherence to Article 5 of NATO. Therefore, the United States is an important presence in all of this. I reiterate to my noble friend that I do not desire to suggest—nor do I think that anyone else, including my noble friend, would desire to suggest—that the UK is becoming weak-kneed in defence. Nothing could be further from the truth. We want to have influence, capability and clout, and we have no intention of renouncing any of those things.

NATO Summit 2018

Motion to Take Note

3.30 pm

Moved by Baroness Goldie

That this House takes note of the forthcoming NATO Summit.

Baroness Goldie (Con): My Lords, I think I need a handmaiden. Perhaps the noble Lord, Lord West, could oblige.

I welcome this opportunity to speak about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, not least, to consider the report to which I referred in my answers on the Private Notice Question—that is, the report of the committee of this House under the chairmanship of my noble friend Lord Howell of Guildford. It is timely and very thought-provoking.

[BARONESS GOLDIE]

My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Defence spoke on this subject in the other place last week but it is right that this House should also consider NATO at this important time—a time when the Euro-Atlantic region faces many challenges and just ahead of the NATO summit in July. I am sure that today's debate will address many of the questions that the committee raised.

Sixty-nine years since its founding, NATO remains the world's greatest defensive alliance, the bedrock of our defence and a potent deterrent to those who wish us harm. This Government remain immensely proud of both the leading role that our nation played in the alliance's creation and the leading role that we continue to have today in supporting the organisation through the most challenging period of modern history.

It is worth reflecting on what NATO has achieved. It has consolidated the post-World War II transatlantic bond, prevented the re-emergence of conflicts that dogged Europe for centuries and led operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Just think what might have happened had the alliance not held firm during the bitter chill of the Cold War. I suggest that the Berlin Wall would not have fallen, the values of the West would not have triumphed and millions in eastern Europe would still be living less free, less secure and less prosperous lives.

As we head towards the summit and prepare to mark the organisation's 70th anniversary next year, NATO is more important than ever because the challenges are growing in scale and complexity. Our world is becoming more interconnected, with new opportunities but also new dangers emerging from almost every direction. Not only are we confronting new threats, from extremism to cyberwarfare, that are global in nature and require an international response, and not only are we witnessing the rise of rogue states, with some rattling a nuclear sabre and others conducting proxy wars, but old threats—the ones we hoped had disappeared—are returning to disrupt the rules-based international order.

Russia is a case in point. We are seeing significantly higher levels of Russian military activity. Russia has turned a blind eye to chemical carnage in Syria and has used cyberattacks to disrupt Governments and undermine democracy. Russia—by that I mean the Russian Government in Moscow—cynically pumps out propaganda and misinformation, often contradicting itself, to foment division, distort its actions and hide its motives. This House does not need reminding of the shocking scenes in Salisbury, where we witnessed the first chemical attack on European streets since the Second World War.

In response, NATO must adapt to be more than an organisation that can muster strength in numbers, backed up by a nuclear umbrella. It must have the agility to face concurrent and diverse threats, such as those from the grey zone of hybrid and cyber war, from anywhere around its borders. Some initially doubted that NATO could be fleet of foot in adapting, but since the UK led the charge at the Wales summit in 2014 and at the Warsaw summit in 2016, NATO's transformation has been significant. It has upped its

game, strengthened its deterrence and defence posture and is now projecting stability in its neighbourhood. Thanks to the defence investment pledge—to spend 2% of GDP on defence and 20% of that on investment in new capabilities—we are reversing the long-term decline in defence spending, with three consecutive years of increases across Europe and Canada. Importantly, the United Kingdom continues to be at the forefront of these changes. The 2015 strategic defence and security review made clear that NATO is at the heart of the UK's defence and security. We are not just spending or investing but acting and backing up our words with deeds.

First and foremost, our independent nuclear deterrent has been assigned to the defence of NATO since 1962. Our service personnel and defence civilians are on the ground in eastern Europe providing vital reassurance against Russian aggression. In Estonia they are leading a multinational battle group and in Poland they have provided the US force with the reconnaissance capability it needs. Both are important elements of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence initiative. At the same time, our sailors are commanding half of NATO's standing naval forces; our pilots, ground crew and aircraft have returned to the Black Sea region, based out of Romania, to police the skies of our south-eastern European allies; and we have reactivated our air defence radar station at Saxa Vord in Shetland to provide early warning of Russian military activity on NATO's northern flank.

And there is so much more. Across the spectrum of alliance missions, operations and activities, NATO relies on more than 900 UK personnel in its command structure, and we are leading the debate within NATO HQ on the alliance's future. We lead NATO's Allied Maritime Command at Northwood, backed up by hugely capable military and civilian personnel, and we host the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre at RAF Molesworth. A year ago we became the first ally to publicly declare our offensive cybercapabilities in support of NATO operations, and last year we led the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, contributing some 3,000 personnel and operating with 14 allied nations. We also host the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps at Innsworth, held at high readiness to support both collective defence alliance-wide and crisis response operations wherever they might occur.

The next chairman of the NATO military committee is our former Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, who takes office on 28 June. I have no doubt that one thing he will stress is that, since the summit of 2014, the strategic context and the nature of warfare itself have continued to change. Given how swiftly things are developing, we must keep up the momentum and press NATO to move even faster to stay ahead of the curve.

NATO's future will, of course, be shaped by next month's summit. Our ambition is to ensure that NATO delivers on its commitments. In our opinion, that has three key elements: burden sharing, modernisation and redoubling our resolve. In burden sharing, we need to maintain the momentum on increased allied defence spending. The US still accounts for approximately 50% of the allies' combined GDP and more than 70% of their combined defence expenditure.

I pay tribute to the United States' enduring commitment to Europe. Out of 29 NATO members, only a small number are meeting the 2% target. I am proud that the United Kingdom remains one of these nations and proud, too, that we have never dropped below 2% at any time since we have been a NATO member. Yet we need to make sure the burden is spread more evenly. We cannot expect US taxpayers to keep picking up the tab for European defence year after year, so I call on our European allies to meet the commitments they have made and do more in NATO to enhance the security of the Euro-Atlantic area.

The second element the United Kingdom is interested in is modernisation. We must agree a comprehensive modernisation package to give us the means to combat the unpredictable. We must continue to strengthen the alliance's deterrence and defence posture and make sure that all the initiatives we have agreed since Wales and Warsaw are coherent and mutually reinforcing.

That requires military modernisation and NATO is working towards four objectives. The first is agreement that all allies need to improve the readiness and combat capability of their armed forces; the second is a stronger maritime NATO, including a renewed focus on the North Atlantic; the third is understanding the alliance's role in deterring hybrid threats and emerging threats in space, cyber and modern technologies; and the fourth is excelling at building partner countries' defence forces.

However, we must also have political modernisation. It is no good having the capability if we cannot agree quickly on the measures we must take or how to use the power we possess. The alliance must have faster crisis decision-making abilities, less red tape, fewer bureaucratic hurdles and better interaction with the EU. We do not want to see existing military functions duplicated. We need to see the EU's political and economic strength complementing NATO's military might.

The third United Kingdom ambition is to redouble our collective resolve. Increasingly in recent times, Russia's actions have tried to divide us, to undermine our values, to spread lies and misinformation and to reverse the peace, stability and freedom that all of Europe won at the end of the Cold War. That is why the alliance must not be a soft touch and why we must continue standing together, speaking with one voice.

We must not just condemn aggression but be prepared to use those capabilities to back up our words and defend the rules-based international order. Our message for belligerents such as Russia is straightforward: "We see what you're doing; we have responded and we are ready to do more unless you stop. But disagreement is not inevitable. Choose another path and you can expect a better relationship".

If NATO is to remain a powerful collective force, every member must do what it needs to give its people the modern equipment, skills and support to cope with the challenges that lie ahead. We are only as strong as our weakest link. The UK is doing its part as one of the strongest and our modernising defence programme will ensure that we have a future force able to respond rapidly and globally.

When it comes to NATO, the UK is determined not only to lead by example but to lead from the front. This House and the whole of the United Kingdom should be proud that we have been active members from the start of NATO. We are proud that at the Wales summit the UK initiated this new phase of NATO's evolution and that we have been stepping up our involvement. As we head towards the Brussels summit next month, and NATO's seventh decade, we are more determined than ever to keep pressing for our alliance, the cornerstone of our security, to be fitter, faster and more flexible to face the challenges of today and shape a safer tomorrow. We remain committed to making sure that, in the next 70 years, NATO will continue, in the words of its original charter,

"to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law".

It has been a pleasure to open this debate and I look forward to a constructive and well-informed discussion. I beg to move.

3.44 pm

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, I am very grateful to the Government for initiating this debate and to the Minister for stepping forward and addressing the key issues of foreign and defence and security policy with such clarity. I thank her very much for that. At the NATO summit in a few days' time some vital issues will surface, both for NATO as a whole and for Britain. Your Lordships have been presented with a short report from the International Relations Committee on some of these issues. I am very grateful to my colleagues on the committee and to our excellent clerks and advisers for assisting with our contribution.

First, there is the fundamental issue of American engagement and whether it has changed in any way. Secondly, there is the key issue of burden sharing, as the Minister has reminded us, as well as the nature of the burdens in the new threat environment. These are the sorts of questions of new types of warfare that General Carleton-Smith, the new head of the Army, raised the other day. Thirdly, there is the interesting matter of our own British contribution to NATO as a key player, as the Minister reminded us. Can we still be a top-level military power? Does Brexit affect our role in NATO? The noble Lord, Lord West, had a go at these things before the debate. I am sorry that he has not been able to stay with us and pursue those matters. Fourthly, there are issues of NATO management. I know that my noble friend Lord Jopling will raise these in our debate. We covered other matters in our report, including the very important consideration of the direction of Turkey in the new milieu. Which way will Turkey turn now, with President Erdoğan re-elected? It sometimes seems that it wants to play both sides at once, but this is a vital issue for the future of NATO, of which Turkey has been a key member.

The first issue—the Trump factor—is critical. Will President Trump disrupt the NATO meeting as he did the G7 meeting in Quebec the other day? Disturbingly, when members of the Lords International Relations Committee visited Washington a week ago we found

[LORD HOWELL OF GUILDFORD]

almost no one, even at the higher levels of the Administration, prepared to predict what Donald Trump would say or do when he arrives. Views were deeply divided, not just on this but on a whole range of policy issues, from the Iran nuclear deal and the President's scattershot trade war, which is aimed at China but hitting all his allies, to whether it was a smart idea to insult Prime Minister Trudeau and rubbish the G7 communiqué, or to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Paris climate accord and much else. Washington is truly an utterly divided city.

On the second issue—burden sharing and the 2%—President Trump has of course spoken out about that loudly. Here in London, as the Minister confirmed, we tend to agree with him, being good two-percenters. I hope that the Secretary-General, Mr Jens Stoltenberg, is right when he says that European countries are now reversing their defence spending cuts. All one can say is that it is about time.

Of course, there are much deeper issues behind the target figure, quite aside from what it is meant to be composed of. Security and defence—the central task of keeping our citizens safe on the streets and in their homes—nowadays goes far deeper than troop numbers, tanks and missiles or other military equipment. It is not just that we are up against a newly aggressive Russia that uses new—or, some would say, very old—forms of hybrid and undercover maskirovka warfare, as well as disruptive cyberweapons. That is not the limit of the new challenge. Nowadays, in the digital age, the battle is no longer necessarily won at all on the battlefield. Intelligence; very advanced weapons research; internal police and security operations, open and undercover, against terrorism, homegrown and imported; our own Foreign and Commonwealth Office-based overseas conflict resolution work, and even our large aid programme; our border policing at airports and ports—all these form part of the modern security and defence package. This is the new military paradox: countries that are clever enough to focus on smart, subtle and co-ordinated use of softer means of persuasion, influence and internal security, whether to maintain trade access, help build stability, uphold human rights or stamp out vicious violence and terrorism, might be more successful in their aim of protecting their interests than the purely massive military spenders.

Then there is the issue of cyber and electronic warfare. What kind of cyberattack constitutes an Article 5 “attack on one is an attack on all”? Hacking can be just a nuisance, but massive disruption of vital utilities can cost lives—a lot of lives. Where is the response threshold, and how can responsibility be attributed for an attack in the first place? This is not at all easy to determine, and is getting more difficult all the time.

The third issue for us is our own UK contribution. We are the second biggest in NATO, as we have been reminded. The media are running these stories about our tier 1 role and whether we can still field a world-class force, but I believe—as one had the opportunity to say a moment ago—that the Prime Minister is entirely right to ask what this really takes nowadays, and whether an ultra-modern Army, Navy and Air Force is

just a question of new, and ever newer and ever more costly, weaponry, or whether it requires a broader approach.

I hope that we now have a defence strategic equipment planning team at the Ministry of Defence that takes a rather new approach itself. If we have the same old team as the one that gave us the two budget-draining carrier behemoths without aircraft I would, frankly, be a bit hesitant about giving it a few more millions.

Effective protection of our nation may well require a far wider commitment of unconventional kinds and a far bigger national resource commitment than just the bare figure of 2%. Perhaps we should be thinking of total security budgets which add up to 3%, which is where we were 10 years ago, or 4% or even 5%. There is also the issue of whether Brexit impacts upon our security or could do so. Could we lose out on vital intelligence co-operation with neighbours after Brexit, or was Sir Richard Dearlove right when he said that the Brussels-based security agencies are “of little consequence”? And does our pledge to maintain a security partnership with the EU of “unprecedented depth and breadth”, as the Prime Minister has set out, in any way get in the way of our NATO role, or can it indeed be, as the Minister has suggested, entirely complementary?

A still deeper question is whether NATO, which has been our bedrock of defence for 70 years, adequately serves all our national security needs when the threat now is clearly global, not just regional. NATO, of course, operates out of the European theatre—in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example—but it is very good that the UK is also a strong part of the south-east Asia Five Power Defence Agreement with Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US, the so-called Five Eyes agreement. I am also glad that we are getting into much closer defence co-operation with Japan, and have signed a new declaration to that effect. It was signed by the Prime Minister when she visited Japan the other day. Closer defence and security co-operation with India is also a priority—that is, if our good relations with India and our excellent work during UK-India Week are not undermined or wrecked by the Home Office.

Finally, there is China, the new world power with its increasing outward policy of involvement right across central Asia with the belt and road initiative, up into the Arctic, in the South Seas, and in every continent on a growing and intrusive scale. Our ally Australia is increasingly concerned about Chinese penetration into every walk of life—business, property, universities—as well as heavy project investment in Pacific islands such as Vanuatu and the Solomons. On a brief visit to Beijing in the Whitsun Recess, I found the Chinese security experts putting a major emphasis on what they call “non-traditional security issues” and talking about,

“a new period of interaction between the great powers in facing common threats”—

although I am not quite sure how those words fitted in with their dotting the South China Sea with artificial islands loaded with missiles and combat aircraft. When I put that question to them, they became rather vague.

This may take us well beyond NATO, I know, but that is where we have to be alert and focus if we want to stay safe and protect our nation and our people.

Victories are secured nowadays not just by force deployment but by winning the narrative, by using so-called soft as well as hard-power methods to safeguard and gain grass-roots support for our values and to reject and defeat nihilism and anarchy. For deploying Britain's undeniably immense, but still underused, soft-power assets, my own view is that the Commonwealth network, with its ready-made trust system, is the ideal forum and platform. Even though it has some backsliders, it could bring us great benefits.

To see things through this lens demands a changed mindset among policymakers and those in all branches of government, civil and military, who are charged with safeguarding Britain's security, its global business, its brand and its reputation. I hope that this will be fully understood by those involved in the new review of national security capabilities, which was being led until today by the excellent Sir Mark Sedwill and will now be taken over by John Manzoni.

I am told that deep down in the various ministries, in the MoD, in DfID, in the FCO, in the Cabinet Office and in the other departments of state, younger officials are striving to bring this entirely new pattern together, to break out of the old siloes and to combine military skills, development skills, diplomatic skills, intelligence and technological innovation as never before in our governmental system. If so, it is time that this new tapestry of co-operation was brought out into the daylight and shared with our NATO allies as well. That is what we should do at this forthcoming summit.

3.56 pm

Lord Judd (Lab): My Lords, I must put on record my appreciation of the two opening speeches. They were very helpful for the debate and gave much ground for consideration on our side of the House as well as on theirs. The committee is extremely fortunate to have at its helm someone with all the commitment and experience of the noble Lord, Lord Howell.

In 1947, I was 12. My parents were at a conference in Prague. I shall never forget their coming home full of grim foreboding about what might be about to happen. My father knew Jan Masaryk and was a great admirer of him. When subsequently he was found dead at the foot of the building, it did not to them matter whether it was suicide or a deliberate act by those who opposed him. What it marked was a serious, inescapable and grave challenge to us all about the threat from Russia and totalitarian communism. I will never forget the funereal atmosphere in my family home when that death occurred.

We also had at a more personal level for me at that age a social democratic family in Czechoslovakia with whom we were great friends. We have to this day remained as a family full of consternation, because we simply lost contact with them and what happened to them in the years that followed the communist takeover.

The point that I want to make is that what happened in the formation of NATO and of the United Nations was that we were living in an age where there was real conviction about the imperative of collective security

and the importance of co-operation as the means of serving the well-being of people across the world, not least our own people. There was, therefore, a very strong underlying philosophy.

I am very glad that, in the debate in the other place on 23 June, the Secretary of State Gavin Williamson paid fulsome tribute to Ernie Bevin and the crucial part he played in getting NATO off the ground and persuading our American friends to become involved. He also put on record his appreciation and admiration of the Attlee Government and all they did to make NATO a possibility. We face a major challenge, because I do not think we can run away from the difficulties and complexities caused for us all by the unpredictability and crude chauvinism of American leadership at the moment. It is not about NATO; it runs totally counter to NATO's purpose of defending freedom, liberty, democracy and the rule of law.

Some 20 years ago—I am sorry if I reminisce, but we are coming up to the 70th anniversary and it is perhaps quite useful to draw on experiences—I spent a week at a country house hotel in Limerick in the west of Ireland, at a cross-Atlantic seminar at which there were players from the United States and the United Kingdom. One of the players at this seminar was somebody called John Bolton. I simply could not believe that John Bolton spent the best part of that week lecturing us on how the United States had brought about the defeat of Russia, how NATO was irrelevant and how the only thing that could possibly matter to a self-respecting American was the supremacy in all things of America and what American citizenship meant. There could be no truck with this interdependent, international nonsense. I do not mind saying that a good deal of the week was spent in quite active conversation between John Bolton and myself.

More recently, of course, the Warsaw summit issued its communiqué. In a very telling and strong speech in the other place, Nia Griffith drew attention to the communiqué's insistence that,

“deterrence has to be complemented by meaningful dialogue and engagement with Russia, to seek reciprocal transparency and risk reduction”.

Of course, Salisbury has made that infinitely more difficult, but it is an objective to which we must remain committed.

There has been lots of talk and debate about the percentage of gross national product being spent by members of NATO on NATO and defence matters. Of course this matters, but what is even more important is that we have a shared vision of the threat: what is it that we are preparing to defend ourselves against? What are the new challenges? Of course, they have become infinitely more complex—we have heard about cyber, space and electronic warfare. But I believe—this is a point I would like to emphasise—that in the end the defence of our society depends on the strength of society itself and the social fabric of that society. There is a very great conundrum for the Government in deciding what we want to spend on defence, but we must not do that at the expense of social infrastructure. The security services, the police and community policing are all crucial in defence, but so too are health, education, housing and employment. These matter as social priorities

[LORD JUDD]

but they are part of our defence, because we have to have a confident attitude that we are defending a society worth having.

I will make one other point before I conclude. I have never been a unilateralist. I have followed the arguments for Trident and the rest. But, given the very high, perhaps disturbing, proportion of the defence budget that goes on Trident and through-deck cruisers, we have to be vigilant that this does not make us muscle-bound. If it is at the expense of having the highly flexible, dynamic forces we need to meet the real and immediate threats that arise in our society, it would be a tragedy. We have to make sure that we examine those things—which I suppose, if one wants to be a bit intellectually aggressive on the issue, one might call defence totem-poles—against the realities of overstretched personnel, overstretched equipment and the rest.

There are huge challenges ahead and I thank the two noble Lords opposite who introduced the debate. But let them understand that there are considerable numbers of us on this side of the House who, although we are, I hope, constructively critical in the best sense, remain determined to work with them to ensure the future strength and well-being of NATO as a vital contribution to the well-being of our people.

4.07 pm

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (LD): My Lords, I must begin by declaring my interest as a vice-president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, in which I have the good fortune to serve with the noble Lord, Lord Jopling, who will speak next in the debate. It is a particular pleasure to follow all three who have opened the debate because, in their own ways, they each produced a cogent and well-argued introduction. I think I heard the noble Lord, Lord Howell, say that defence expenditure might have to rise to something between 4% and 5%. That would make him very popular on Capitol Hill, because the Americans spend 3.7% of GDP, although they might feel a little aggrieved if they were outfoxed to that extent. As for the noble Lord, Lord Judd, who told us about John Bolton, I offer him this advice: he should be careful of the company he keeps in Ireland.

I would like to make reference to two passages in the report of the International Relations Committee because I believe that they sum up the dilemma and the issues which will be raised in Brussels. I intend to concentrate rather more on the summit itself than others have done so far. At paragraph 18 the witness is recorded as saying that,

“the challenge of managing relations with Russia was that NATO wanted ‘transparency and predictability in military activities ... [but] Russia has embraced unpredictability, ambiguity, deception and pre-emption—what it calls strategic surprise’”.

Then in its conclusions at paragraph 53, the report says:

“The degree and credibility of the US commitment to the principle of collective defence that underpins NATO remains uncertain”.

There is a sense in which I would almost take these passages as text, although I promise to do my best to avoid a sermon.

Before turning to the NATO summit, I shall make some observations which I hope will not be thought to be out of order, if not in the strict sense, in the sense of the atmosphere in which this debate is being conducted. The United Kingdom’s contribution to NATO depends upon credibility. For the Defence Secretary to be reported as having said “I made her and I can break her”, in relation to the Prime Minister, does nothing for the strength of her ability in negotiation and seriously undermines her authority. If these had been the days of Prime Minister Thatcher, Chief Whip Jopling or anyone who said anything to that effect would have found themselves in the room behind the Speaker’s Chair with a letter already written out which they would be called upon to sign without delay.

Further on the question of credibility, as a result of what many people have sought—the increased expenditure proposed in relation to the National Health Service—the Chancellor of the Exchequer is now, it is said, telling his Cabinet colleagues that there is no more money. It is hardly the way in which to go into a summit of this importance—a summit where there will potentially be a poisonous atmosphere, already referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Howell, after the G7, which has inevitably had damaging consequences for the transatlantic relationship.

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington in April 1949. In truth, it has by and large kept peace in Europe—not always, because we had the problem of the Balkans and the difficulties that had to be overcome before it could be resolved. At the time its purpose was to keep the Americans in, the Russians out and the Germans down. It is rather interesting that the first two of those things may still be motivations for what is to happen in Brussels in a few weeks’ time.

NATO has always been more than a military alliance. It is a political alliance as well. How else can you describe Article 5, which contains a political undertaking that has military consequences? It is true that there have been bumps along the way, but there has never been so much uncertainty as there is now. The truth is that we should look at treaties not as transactions but as binding agreements, an understanding which it seems President Trump does not share. The treaty of 1949 was not about winning or losing but was to create mutual responsibility and in return mutual reward. That is why the centrepiece Article 5 is of such importance. Against the background of President Trump’s ambiguity, it is worth pointing out that the only occasion on which Article 5 has been invoked was after the attack on the twin towers and the Pentagon, at a time when, if my memory serves me right, the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, was Secretary-General of NATO. Article 5 is an illustration of pooled sovereignty. Of course, we are already engaged in an argument in another context about the issue of sovereignty and the extent to which we are willing, or perhaps in that case unwilling, to agree to it.

Who stands to gain from uncertainty in NATO? I fear I have said this before in the House, but I believe it to be even more strongly understood now. It is President Putin. He has twin objectives: the first is to undermine NATO and the other is to destabilise the European Union. I would argue that we are helping to bring the

latter of those about ourselves and that President Trump has so far done a great deal in respect of the first. Why? It is because NATO and the EU are both voluntary associations of sovereign states based on the principles of democracy, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and the rule of law. They are a constant reproach to Mr Putin. That is why he finds them so offensive. It is interesting to note that he has recently resurrected the Gorbachev vision of a new security structure for Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Gorbachev's vision was benevolent, but it relied on the dissolution of NATO following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Putin's version would also involve the dissolution of NATO, but it arises out of his ambition to be the dominant nation on the European continent.

What could better reward that ambition than the suggestion out of Washington that there may be a head-to-head meeting between President Trump and Mr Putin, either on Trump's way to Brussels or on his way back? It is pretty extraordinary to consider the sort of issues that will necessarily arise at the coming summit and then to go immediately to talk to Mr Putin—and perhaps to issue the kind of complimentary descriptions of him that Mr Trump has given on previous occasions.

Remember what this Russia is. It is a Russia that has put NATO on its mettle. It is a Russia that deploys nuclear-capable missiles to Kaliningrad, and which continually tests the resolve of NATO's air policing efforts over the Baltic states—efforts based on the activities of the air forces of NATO countries, including our own. Add to that President Trump's ambiguity, and no wonder the Baltic states cling to the blanket of NATO membership.

One of the main themes identified for the summit is deterrence. To maintain deterrence it is necessary to provide well-armed and well-trained forces, and indeed—to pick up the point made by the noble Lord, Lord Howell, to have a defence against those alternative methods of warfare in which Russia seems to be remarkably competent. That is where the 2% comes in. It will be—if your Lordships will forgive the expression—the President's trump card in Brussels, because there is truth in what he has to say.

The United Kingdom meets that target, although I am bound to say that there is some creative accounting—and as the committee of which the noble Lord, Lord Howell, is chairman pointed out in its report, there is too much ambiguity about which expenditure counts towards that 2%. A handful of European allies also meet the 2%, and others have programmes in order to do so. It simply should not be like this, because the 2% was agreed, not imposed, at the NATO summit at Celtic Manor in Wales in 2014. Nor is it only a question of how much is spent: how it is spent is equally important. In Wales the undertaking was that 20% of defence budgets should be spent on major equipment or research and development.

Belatedly, Europe seems to be waking up to some of its responsibilities. That rather ugly expression PESCO—permanent structured co-operation on defence—is an indication of greater co-operation among the European Union countries. A letter of intent was signed yesterday

by the United Kingdom and eight other European Union states about creating a rapid deployment force, in response to an initiative of Mr Macron.

The test of all these initiatives has to be: will they bring added value? There is always a risk, in these circumstances, of duplication or detachment. We should therefore be very stringent in determining the extent to which such initiatives are successful.

What would make this NATO summit successful? As I said, President Trump is quite entitled to ask European members whether they are serious about 2% expenditure as a minimum. On the other hand, European NATO members are entitled to ask President Trump if he is properly committed to collective defence. Upon the answers to those questions will the success of this summit be determined.

4.20 pm

Lord Jopling (Con): My Lords, I strongly welcome this debate. It could not come at a more timely moment, and I am grateful to the Government for finding the time. I begin by declaring an interest, first, as a member of the International Relations Select Committee, over which my noble friend Lord Howell presides. I have also for many years been a representative of the UK at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

I shall talk at length about Russia this afternoon. In Warsaw a few weeks ago, I presented the first draft of a report on Russia's hybrid war activities, but today I shall talk principally about the back-up NATO provides from its back office in Brussels, about which I have serious misgivings. Before I do, I want to say that I believe that the active operations of the four battle groups in the Baltics and Poland are the best thing that NATO has done for years. I was with my noble friend Lord Howell in Washington two weeks ago and, like him, I returned to marvel at how one man can create such confusion and uncertainty. However, I strongly support President Trump's attacks on those NATO members who glibly signed up to move towards spending 2% of GDP on defence at the Wales summit four years ago. At the NATO assembly, it is considered impolite and bad form to name and shame those countries, such as Belgium on 0.8%, which, as I said, glibly signed up but do not seem to do much about it. A number of us have not hesitated to name and shame in that context.

I turn to my serious concern at what I believe are the clear shortcomings of NATO headquarters in Brussels in supporting the military assets engaged in active operations. I suggest to the House three examples of why I am so concerned about it. Going to NATO meetings regularly, as I do, I am continually told about the problems that arise moving military assets around the NATO member countries, whether due to roads, bridges or tunnels, as well as the complications of paperwork and customs at various frontiers. With 60 or 70 years' experience, I cannot understand why these matters are still causing difficulties. What on earth have they been doing for 60 or 70 years still to be anxious about the logistics of moving military kit around the area?

I was at a NATO exercise about 10 years ago in Croatia, a civilian support exercise which NATO was involved in. There, again, I came across many countries

[LORD JOPLING]

that had brought emergency equipment from all parts of Europe to Croatia and were complaining about all the difficulties they had had getting through countries between home and where the exercise was. I find that totally inexplicable and I wonder what they have been doing.

Secondly, I refer to the saga of gross incompetence and dithering over the new NATO headquarters in Brussels. I merely report and point out to your Lordships this terrible saga. The decision was taken to have a new headquarters in 1999; the plans were not approved until four years later, in 2003; it was intended, if you please, that NATO would not start moving in until 2015—12 years later—and, in point of fact, staff have only started dribbling in this year, within the last few months. What does this say about an organisation that is supposed to be alert, ready and on its toes? There are a lot of questions to be answered.

Thirdly—I come to perhaps the most worrying situation—I go back a few years to a time when that admirable man, Sir Hugh Bayley, MP for City of York, was President of the Parliamentary Assembly. He pointed out then that a fundamental duty of parliamentarians is to keep a check on the accounts. It had never been done before over all the years since the NATO Parliamentary Assembly had been set up. As a result, now the NATO assembly gets reports from the International Board of Auditors for NATO. I have its report in my hand. It is headed “NATO Unclassified”, so there is nothing private about it. It refers to the auditors’ reservations and concerns. I shall read them out. If anyone wants to refer to them, they appear in paragraph 11 of the Select Committee’s report, but I want to put them on the record.

There are just four. First, it states that there is, “no common internal control and network”.

Secondly, there are,

“recurrent and persistent weaknesses of the current internal control systems in most entities”.

Thirdly, there are,

“difficulties in accepting/developing the identification and accounting of tangible property, plants and equipment and intangible assets”,

and fourthly—perhaps more seriously—there is a,

“lack of support and even opposition, both internally and externally, to the study of the financial consolidation and the creation of a chief financial officer”.

I have tried to draw these comments from the auditors to the attention of NATO headquarters. In Warsaw in May, I asked the Secretary-General to comment on those four reservations of the auditors. He totally ignored what I had asked and made no reference whatever to the auditors’ report in his response. Last week at Lancaster House, I again asked the Secretary-General the same questions. He made no reference whatever in his response to the auditors’ report, except to say that the British Government have access to all the figures. Well, thank you very much.

As the Select Committee report shows, when the Deputy Assistant Secretary-General was a witness in April, I asked him to comment on the auditors’ reservations. He told us that it was not his area, but said he would inquire. In spite of a number of requests by the committee secretariat, we still have had no

response, and this appears in the report. I am more and more concerned about this; I have to ask myself questions. Why is NATO so unresponsive? What is it unwilling to reveal? Is it trying to cover up some unattractive failures? We really need answers to auditors’ reservations of this nature. I must ask the Minister to look into this, if she will be kind enough, and to give the International Relations Committee the reply that NATO seems unprepared to release. These are important matters, and they have only recently come to the attention of parliamentary scrutiny—it is long past time. I hope the Government will consider raising these reservations at the summit. The Secretary-General needs to be confronted with them and forced to give some response, or even to acknowledge that these reservations exist.

4.30 pm

Lord Dannatt (CB): My Lords, as other noble Lords have already said, this debate is most timely in the context not only of the International Relations Committee’s excellent report ahead of the NATO Summit next month, but of the report of the House of Commons Defence Committee, *Beyond 2 per cent*. While this debate properly focuses on NATO in the light of the forthcoming summit, it is the United Kingdom’s role within NATO, our relationship with our allies and the messages that we send to our potential foes that most urgently command our attention. Inevitably, the discussion quickly turns to money. Sadly, some of the core elements of that discussion have become embroiled in domestic politics and personal relationships within Government—as the noble Lord, Lord Campbell, just alluded to—but those things should not obscure the core strategic and policy issues.

These tensions between strategy and money are not new. A previous inquiry into the future shape and size of Britain’s Armed Forces set out the two different approaches that it could have taken. The report concluded:

“The first consists of calculating the shape and size of the Armed Forces needed adequately to support and implement a given policy and strategy, and converting this into terms of money. The second consists of calculating, in relation to the various risks, the shape and size of the force which can be provided for a given sum of money and converting it, so far as it will go, into terms of policy and strategy”.

It continued:

“We have adopted the second approach because the fixed quantity in our terms of reference is money”.

That was in February 1949.

That binary choice between a defence policy determined by strategic ambition or by financial constraints has resonated down the decades to the present day. That choice is confronting the present Government most starkly today at a critical moment in our history. I suggest that our allies and our potential foes will be watching the summit very attentively on 11 and 12 July in Brussels to determine what message the United Kingdom is sending out about our future.

That message has several components to it. Are we going to remain—as we discussed earlier on this afternoon—a so-called tier 1 military power? Are we going to remain in, or perhaps work to regain, our position as the ally of choice of the United States? Are we going to aspire to be the leading European military

member within NATO? Are we going to take our responsibilities seriously as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and are we going to substantiate “global Britain” as something more than a catchy bumper sticker? By implication, my answer to all these questions is a fairly obvious yes; but then we hit the hard reality of money, and the developing debate about whether we should spend 2% of GDP on defence or whether that should rise to 2.25% or 2.5% or even as much as 3%. These small percentage adjustments, however, should also be kept firmly in perspective.

Historically, our national spend on defence has never been as small as 2%. At the time of the Sandys defence review in 1957, we were spending 8.8% on defence, 10 years after the NHS was started. For the majority of the Cold War, we were spending 5% and that spiked upwards to 5.5% under Margaret Thatcher. In the decade after the Cold War ended, we were still spending just under 4%. At the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014, we regarded David Cameron’s commitment to 2% of GDP as something of a triumph but, in reality, it was nothing more than a commitment to fund defence at the lowest level since records began, and a commitment to provide the smallest Army, the least number of fast jets and the smallest number of ocean-going ships, again, since modern records were kept. Then came the strategic defence and security review of 2015, brimming with confidence and aspiration but totally unaffordable.

What does this all look like from the perspective of our potential foes, Vladimir Putin in particular? He would like to see nothing better than an erosion or an evaporation of NATO. Stripped to his core, Vladimir Putin is an unreformed KGB colonel whose beloved Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact were undone in the late 1980s by the combined solidarity of NATO and the West, with the United States providing the backbone. He would love nothing better than for President Trump to become frustrated at the Europeans’ unwillingness to fund their own defence properly and translating “America First” into a more isolationist and protectionist position. He would love nothing better than a divided Britain eroding the solidarity of Europe and squabbling internally about whether £37 billion spent on defence was sufficient in comparison with £127 billion spent on our health service. It is no wonder that Mr Putin has chipped away at eastern Ukraine, exploited the West’s weakness over Syria, mounted cyberattacks on Estonia and threatened other Baltic states. He is challenging the core of NATO and Article 5. Would the US go to war over Lithuania, and would the UK go to war over Poland? We did in 1939, but we could not even contemplate that now. Two per cent spent on defence is a derisory amount; we know it, and Mr Putin knows it, but do we care?

It is not just a resurgent Russia that should focus our minds and shape our thinking on defence. We chose to stand back from direct involvement in the Syrian civil war and the fight against the so-called Islamic State, other than from the air, but the inevitable spill-over of Islamist fundamentalism is driving a range of other threats that affect our security at home and abroad. Fear, hunger and poverty are driving thousands from their homes in Africa and elsewhere, with the resultant migration challenge into southern Europe,

and the knock-on consequences more widely. A recent in-depth report by the BBC illustrated the magnitude of the security challenge in the Sahel region of Africa spiralling out from Mali. Like Syria after 2011, we could say that this is not our problem, but is it reasonable to leave the situation to the Americans, the French and the United Nations? Obviously not, as we are about to send three Chinook helicopters to the region. But is the deployment of just three helicopters a proportionate and reasonable response from the country that wishes to portray itself as “global Britain”? Uncontained, how long will it be before militant Islamism touches countries like Sierra Leone and Kenya, with which the UK has strong historical ties?

All this comes back to the perennial tussle between strategic ambition and money. Through Brexit, we are signalling a strong independent instinct, albeit within our traditional relationship with the United States, our membership of NATO and our permanent membership of the UN Security Council. But at just 2% of GDP, we are not putting our money where our mouth is; we are taking an inordinate amount of risk in our lack of relevant military capabilities—a level of risk that history shows will come back, sooner rather than later, to bite us hard. The Government of the day will then have much explaining to do to the British people. In the late 1930s we woke up just in time to avoid complete disaster in 1940. Yes, the threats are different today, but the consequences of underfunding defence could be equally threatening to our national way of life.

4.38 pm

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Con): My Lords, I thank my noble friend the Minister for introducing this debate, and I thank my noble friend Lord Howell, the chair of the committee, and the other Members, who produced a timely short report in advance of next month’s summit. I joined the committee after the production of this report, but I support its observations and conclusions entirely. It is a privilege to be a member of the committee, and I look forward to contributing to its future reports.

I grew up in the post-Second World War era. The Cold War was a reality for my generation of schoolchildren. I remember well the sirens sounding in the 1950s for practice in case of a nuclear attack. I understood the importance of NATO in securing peace, democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, but NATO’s past success does not mask the fact that it needs to adapt to changing times, and we need to find new ways of explaining the importance of NATO to younger generations.

Noble Lords have justifiably focused today on the issues that have attracted so much attention in recent months. I will focus my remarks and questions on the danger that is presented by transnational terrorist groups; NATO’s response to them; and the importance of strengthening policies on women, peace and security. Paragraph 56 of the committee’s report poses the question:

“As a military alliance, what should NATO’s defence and deterrence role be in an era of ... increasingly active transnational terrorist groups?”.

[BARONESS ANELAY OF ST JOHNS]

Global terrorism is a transnational threat that requires a transnational approach. It is vital to strengthen NATO's counterterrorism efforts to prevent the resurgence of Daesh where, as in Iraq, it has been mostly—but not entirely—subdued by military defeat, and to remove its threat in areas such as Syria.

There have been reports that NATO is planning a new training mission to Iraq. Will the Minister clarify what is planned? For example, would NATO provide mobile training teams that can travel to Iraqi bases to train the Iraqi military in non-combat areas—counter-IED efforts, help with military medicine training, and bomb disposal? There is so much reconstruction work to achieve in Iraq. Would NATO consider a new EU-NATO training course for Iraqi paramilitary forces, to protect Iraqi rebuilding efforts and prevent Daesh re-establishing itself in recently liberated areas? In asking questions about NATO and Iraq, I refer the House to my entry in the register of interests. In April, I spent a week in Baghdad as a guest of the Government of Iraq, along with other Members of this House and another place.

More generally, a critical part of counterterrorism work must be to strengthen the UK and NATO's work on women, peace and security policies. Earlier this month I met Clare Hutchinson, the NATO Secretary-General's special representative for women, peace and security. When she was appointed, the Secretary-General said:

“Empowering women is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do: it makes countries safer and more stable. NATO is determined to make a difference including through our training and operations”.

NATO has stated:

“The complementary skills of both male and female personnel are essential for the effectiveness of NATO operations”.

What discussions have the UK Government had with NATO partners on these matters?

The UK has been a leading light in developing women, peace and security policy. General Sir Gordon Messenger, Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, is the gender equality champion at the MoD. He launched the WPS Chiefs of Defence Staff Network last year to promote the integration of gender perspectives into armed forces and to achieve women and peacekeeping commitments. He is a remarkable leader; it was a privilege to work alongside him when I was a Minister at the Foreign Office. How many members of NATO are members of that network now? What progress has been made? Have UK Ministers met Clare Hutchinson since her appointment? If not, will the Minister give an assurance that such a meeting will take place?

I met the Secretary-General's special representative in Vilnius at the Women Political Leaders summit last month, and I am grateful to the Lord Speaker for making it possible for me to represent the House at that meeting. She described the way in which terrorist groups are using gender dynamics to get women involved directly in violent action, and argued that it is the terrorists who are now more persuasive than those such as NATO which are battling extremism. I never thought I would say this, but I am grateful to the *Guardian* journalist Jane Dudman for putting details

of Clare Hutchinson's speech online. I met Jane when I was in Vilnius; she is a very impressive person. The special representative said:

“We have to dismantle the assumption that women are always good and never bad”.

Well, it is a hard thing for me to say, too. Many of today's terrorist groups are building direct connections with women who are often drawn into groups because they are in dire need. The special representative stated:

“When there is no other support left for basics like food or water, and women can get that support only from a terrorist group, they take it and get drawn in”.

She added that counterterrorism projects were in danger of failing to see this, and that women's involvement in terror was not always political:

“Sometimes it's the simple fact that they need to feed their children”.

However, we have to acknowledge that some young women in radicalised networks are no longer simply passengers or victims but determined perpetrators of violence in their own right—which is deeply worrying. We have even seen evidence of that recently in the UK in cases before our courts, where convictions have been achieved. That is why it is so important for NATO and its member Governments to take women, peace and security work seriously.

What discussions have UK Ministers had with NATO partners on these matters? Above all, NATO is a stabilising influence in a changing world—a strong support for the values of democracy and freedom. It is alongside that support that our strongest work on women, peace and security can be achieved.

The background to our debate today is the charter that founded NATO itself. I was pleased to hear the noble Lord, Lord Judd, refer to the praise given to Mr Bevin when NATO was founded. Last week's debate in the Commons was genuinely cross-party in its support. The charter commits,

“to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law”.

The summit next month gives us the opportunity in this country—at government, parliament and people level—to show our support for those principles. I wish our Government every success in pursuing these ideals and in making sure that they are a reality. The peace of the world depends on it.

4.46 pm

Lord Davies of Stamford (Lab): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness in a debate of this kind. She is a very distinguished personage in this House. She was a very well appreciated Minister, whose departure was much regretted, and she joins the committee with every possible qualification. I say that as someone who has aspired to get on this committee ever since the committee was set up, or ever since I lobbied for its creation with many other noble colleagues on both sides of the House. It is good to see someone who is so obviously suitable nominated for it.

NATO is the bedrock, and has been for the last 70 years, of our security and therefore of our freedom and our prosperity. Unfortunately that has become a cliché, but it represents the reality, which should never

be forgotten. It is sometimes said that the European Union has that role. I think it is very important to distinguish between the two.

The European Union has been immensely helpful in that regard—possibly decisively helpful—in at least three ways. The first is that the European Union has provided an element of dynamism in the economies of western Europe and, after transition, eastern Europe. Without viable economies, any form of any aspiration to security is hopeless by definition, before you start. That has been very important.

Secondly, by bringing together countries into joint organisations and institutions, and through joint decision-making processes, the European Union has defused the traditional nationalistic, often territorial disputes that have bedevilled our continent for centuries: Alsace-Lorraine, Schleswig, Alto Adige/Südtirol—we can all name quite a few of them. Indeed, after transition at the end of communism in eastern Europe, there were a whole lot of these disputes which surfaced that could have caused violence but did not, largely because of the existence of the European Union, which those countries were joining or were about to join. One thinks of Transylvania, Vojvodina, Macedonia—there was very good news the other day on Macedonia. Certainly all these things could have caused violence very easily at the time of transition and did not do so. In fact, it was almost a controlled experiment. It was precisely in those areas that were not part of the European Union and were not at that time candidates to be part of the European Union—Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo—where the violence did indeed occur, as has already been referred to. That has been an enormously useful role for the European Union in this respect.

The third point is that the EU forms a bridge, bringing the four neutral countries in Europe—the Republic of Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Austria—into close organic collaboration with NATO members in the same area, and that is terribly important. One example which covers those two latter points is the Republic of Ireland and ourselves. I remember having a very long lunch with that wonderful man Dr Garret FitzGerald, whom many in the House will have known. He was a very great Taoiseach who signed the Anglo-Irish agreement with Margaret Thatcher. He was a man of great wisdom and learning and of great humanity and great civilisation. I remember him telling me that he thought it inconceivable that we could have achieved such a good relationship between Ireland and this country, as we have done over the last 20 or 30 years, if it were not for the fact that we were both members of the European Union and equal in that respect, and that we needed to do business together on a daily basis in that context. That was true of many of the relationships in Europe—they were transformed by the existence of the European Union. So let nobody ever say that the European Union has been irrelevant to security in Europe. It has not; it has been vital.

Nevertheless, the Atlantic alliance is an extraordinary and unprecedented structure. It is completely unique and central in bringing with it the American nuclear deterrent in the defence of Europe, and for that we must remain enormously grateful. As long as that freedom and stability remain, we must be grateful for

the American initiative in setting it up. Every man and woman in Europe should feel a sense of reverence and gratitude, and they should bring up their children also to feel a sense of reverence and gratitude, to the statesmen who brought about NATO. In our case, it was Attlee and Bevin. The statesmen on the continent who did the same included Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer, although the Germans were not among the first members. There was also Alcide De Gasperi in Italy. Those are all great names, and we should all feel strongly about them, but we should all be grateful to President Truman and his close collaborators, Dean Acheson and George Marshall. Without them, it would never have happened.

It was, of course, a bipartisan decision, so we should not leave out another name which is often not mentioned. Senator Vandenberg, the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time, provided vital support to Truman and enabled him to get through the three essential legislative programmes of the Truman doctrine and the Marshall aid that went with it, the creation of NATO, and the signing and ratification of the Washington treaty. That has transformed the history of this part of the world over the last 70 years and we must be ever conscious of it.

A successful alliance like that can work only—this is common sense; it is the lesson of all human history—on the basis of certain shared values, an agreed agenda, good will between the various parties, and a desire not to shock or isolate anybody or to destabilise the organisation which everybody depends upon. Therefore, there is a need for lots of good will, and we have had that over the last 70 years. Of course there have been moments when there have been disagreements and problems have had to be ironed out. One thinks of the offset payments dispute in the 1960s, which happily was eventually resolved, and the great doctrinal controversy between the adherents to massive retaliation doctrine and the supporters of a flexible response. However, we have got through those problems.

We have faced some major challenges. One thinks of Berlin in 1961 and Cuba in 1962. I am old enough to remember that. I was at school at the time and remember it all too well. I remember the tension and the enormous sense of relief, wonder and excitement when it appeared that the Soviet ships were turning back from Cuba. It was a transformation and a wonderful moment for us all. That was due to John F Kennedy and the wonderful people around him. I remember buying as soon as they came out the books by Sorensen and Schlesinger which described the whole crisis. They brought out the great qualities of those involved. Another book by David Halberstam described them as the brightest and the best. We owe them an enormous debt to this day.

We also owe an enormous debt to Reagan. Again, it is a pleasure to mention a Republican. This has been a bipartisan policy on the part of the United States. Reagan was the man who finally won the Cold War—and what a wonderful job he did for humanity in doing that. Now at risk are those qualities on which any successful alliance, such as the Atlantic alliance, depends. For the first time we have a President of the United

[LORD DAVIES OF STAMFORD]

States who does not appear to want to maintain stability within a friendship with his allies and who does not appear to believe in consultation—within Washington, let alone with his other allies—before he suddenly announces new policies, or reversals of policies. The other day he tore up a very important agreement: the agreement with Iran. It had been jointly negotiated with the European allies, so we had a right to know that the United States was going to turn its back on that agreement, but we did not know. It came as a surprise as much to us as to anybody else. So it was a double shock, if you like, and a double challenge to the civility of the world, America rejecting and tearing up a solemnly negotiated and sincerely signed treaty at the time, and with a complete lack of consultation. Trump has made statements throwing doubt even on Article 5 and suggesting that it is actually a contingent obligation, not an absolute one. That is very frightening and very disturbing to us, but no doubt very encouraging and exciting to Mr Putin, a man whose name has been mentioned, quite rightly, many times in the debate this afternoon.

What are we to do in these circumstances? What is the solution? I did not always agree with Margaret Thatcher, but one thing she said that I admired was never to bring her a problem without a solution. So what are we going to do about all this? There are several things that we should do. First, we should not leave the European Union. This is not the moment to leave the European Union; it is a moment of considerable uncertainty and danger. We should be at the heart of both the EU and NATO. We should be the nexus that joins them together. We should be exerting the greatest possible influence on everybody concerned in those two institutions in trying to hold them all together. We will not be able to do that if we walk out the door. That is a great mistake.

Secondly, as many have said on both sides of the House, we must, of course, respect the 2% spending limit—it would be fatal if we did not—and I hope that we can go well beyond that. There, again, is an issue about the EU, because leaving the EU will cost us a lot of money. The Government have been mendaciously talking about Brexit dividends. In fact, the Office for Budget Responsibility, no less, on which the Government depend for their own statistics, has come back and said clearly that there is not going to be a dividend; there is going to be a penalty, because the loss of potential tax revenues as a result of our leaving the EU is going to be much greater than the net contribution that we currently make. We will find ourselves under greater financial pressure with, of course, the National Health Service, social care and so forth all making their claims—and quite rightly so. So it was completely foolish to do that.

The third thing we need to do is to make it absolutely clear that, if Mr Trump wants to proceed on the basis of bullying, we will not be bullied. It would be a great mistake for the United States to try to bully allies and, for example, as is happening at the present time, demanding all sorts of trade changes by these bullying methods. We must not accept that. If Mr Trump wants a trade war, I am afraid we are going to have to respond in kind. It is a great mistake to give in to

bullies because you will encourage them. Instead of having a structure bringing together friends and allies, we will have a structure that contains a bully and the victims of bullying. That is not a nice prospect for the next 70 years.

4.58 pm

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): My Lords, I remember many years ago reading in the business pages of some newspaper that when a company or an organisation begins to build a grand, new headquarters, it is time to sell your shares. The noble Lord, Lord Jopling, is suggesting that, although I have to say to him that the record of the British Parliament in taking clear decisions on the renovation of the Palace of Westminster does not suggest that our political system is in terribly good form by comparison.

We still need NATO, in very different circumstances and indeed in rapidly changing circumstances now, as new threats of one sort or another emerge. As we see at this NATO summit, we face threats both from Putin's Russian and, to our surprise and horror, from Trump's Administration. We are not quite sure what will happen, and probably neither is he, but it may well be that there is a Trump-Putin meeting and we will have to deal with that. For the United Kingdom, for which NATO has been a core element of its place in the world since 1947-48, and for which it has operated as the cornerstone of our claim to a special position as superior to those continental countries, France and Germany, because we have this relationship across the Atlantic with the United States, NATO matters a great deal. If we come out of the NATO summit with a weaker relationship with the United States we will have to consider how we strengthen our security and political relationship with our European partners. That then feeds back into some pretty fundamental issues about Britain's place in the world and our relationship with our European partners as we move towards leaving the European Union.

Our relationship with Russia is even more complicated because we are the European country which has the largest Russian footprint—in our boarding schools, in the owning of football clubs and British companies, in donating large sums to our universities and in Russians having second homes—often because their owners do not feel secure in Moscow—in London. We could make more of that and the Government should think about it. We are trying to maintain a dialogue with the Russian elite and the next generation, and perhaps some of them are here.

The downside is that Russian money of all kinds flows into different aspects of British life. I read the Foreign Secretary's astonishing remarks that the CBI is EU-funded and, therefore, because it receives 1% of its funding from the EU, it is structurally biased in favour of the European Union. If you applied that test to a number of other British bodies it would raise awkward questions. I have read of occasions when Russians resident in Britain turn up at Conservative Party fundraisers and pay large prices to play tennis with David Cameron, or whatever it may be. That may not account for 1% of Conservative funding but it raises interesting questions. I will not mention what might have been contributed towards Vote Leave.

I shall follow the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt, and talk about one of the other threats we have to face, which is called in the preparations for the NATO summit the insecurity in the south. We neglect that at our peril. The debate about migration in this country has been overwhelmingly about migration from Europe, where the population is going down, and not sufficiently about migration from the south, where the population continues to rise rapidly. In every year over the past 20 years, immigration into Britain from the south has been greater than immigration from the rest of the European continent.

I looked up the figures for the Nigerian population yesterday. Nigeria had a population of 100 million 20 years ago; it is approaching 200 million today; and it is estimated it will be approaching 300 million in 20 years' time. We have to ask: where are those people going to go? There is not the water in northern Nigeria for them, nor the infrastructure. We all know that when a population rises rapidly you have frustrated young men, particularly half-educated young men, who are easily radicalised. They move into the cities and often foment revolution, fanatical radical movements and whatever.

These are huge problems which threaten our security. We will have to face them together with our European partners because these people will all want to come across the Mediterranean to Europe. As the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt, suggested, three helicopters are peanuts for what is needed. We already have some useful co-operation with the French across the Sahel in west Africa but we will need a great deal more. This issue is being debated across the whole of Europe and will pose large and ethical problems with which we will have to deal.

The British response is complicated by the deep confusion about what we think our role in the world is. We talk about a global Britain—the Foreign Secretary disappears off to parts of Asia almost every week—and we are left with deep confusion as to how we manage our defence and security and how closely we collaborate with others. Practically, we have co-operated more and more closely with other European forces: for 30 or 40 years with the Dutch and increasingly closely with the French since 1998. I am very happy to see the announcement that the British have now joined the French-led joint force separately from the European Union, which is intended to bring together the limited forces we have to make them more effective. That is clearly a necessary part of our way forward. I rather wish that the Ministry of Defence for many years had had France as a comparator against which we measured ourselves, rather than the United States, which meant that we wished to have quality equipment of the sort the Americans were buying: the F-35, larger aircraft carriers and so on—indeed, recreating aircraft carriers that were built so that French aircraft could not land on them. I remember Liam Fox trying to reverse that decision when the Conservatives came into power in the coalition in 2010 and discovering that the Ministry of Defence had not thought about the desirability of sharing with the French the ability to land on each other's aircraft carriers.

Lord Davies of Stamford: I am most grateful to the noble Lord. I have to correct him: the Ministry of Defence, in which I then served, did think very long about this. I was very much in favour of adopting the catapult approach to carriers so that we could be interoperable with the Americans and the French. I am sorry to say that I lost that battle, but the argument was certainly had and went on for a very long time.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I thank the noble Lord. I think that that might strengthen my point.

The Prime Minister has declared the objective of a deep and special partnership in foreign policy and security, as well as in trade, with the European Union after we leave, which is to be formalised in the treaty. I ask the noble Baroness, Lady Goldie, whether she can tell us a little more about that, since the Prime Minister has given us only the heading and not yet any of the detail of what this rather important—indeed, fundamental—aspect of British foreign and defence policy might be. The Prime Minister was undermined yet again by the Foreign Secretary when he referred to European Governments last week as the enemy, when she is, after all, talking about them as our closest partners.

The debate about whether we are in the top tier or not is, in a sense, yet again about whether we think we are superior to the French and the Germans, out there in the Pacific Ocean going back east of Suez, or whether we accept that we are, as the Duncan Sandys report suggested very nearly 60 years ago, a leading power of the second rank. When the report came out in the 1960s, the *Daily Mail* attacked all the members of the committee for suggesting that Britain was not a global power. We have not changed since then. I spent last summer looking back at some of the things that Jo Grimond—the leader of the Liberal Party when I joined—had written in the late 1950s about Britain's place in the world. He said that the whole idea that we had to stay east of Suez, that the Commonwealth was a long-term continuing asset, and that we were separate from Europe and should stay out of European integration was a mistake. That could almost be written again today, because we are still stuck in this endless argument about how special we are. Indeed, the Henry Jackson Society's briefing for today's debate suggested that being able to project power to the Indo-Pacific region was key to Britain's future. One of the reasons why the Wilson Government reluctantly decided to retreat from east of Suez was that the cost of maintaining naval forces east of Singapore, or even east of Aden, was such that it was more than we could bear. The Foreign Secretary has again boasted that we are returning east of Suez. The cost of that and the extent to which it will overstrain our limited capabilities seem enormous.

Lastly, I wish to warn everyone that if we are talking about spending more on defence we have to realise what this means for the British economy. It is now growing more slowly than it has for several years. It is likely, as we leave the European Union, to grow even more slowly, which means that tax revenue will not increase. There are those, such as Liz Truss, who said two days ago that we should not contemplate tax increases. Jacob Rees-Mogg in the *Mail* today is quoted as saying that he does not think there should be any tax increases to provide more money for health.

[LORD WALLACE OF SALTAIRE]

If we are going to give a lot more money to defence, we have to raise taxes or cut expenditure elsewhere. We have cut local authority spending by nearly 40% over the past few years. I see when I walk around Bradford how much that has damaged local communities. We have cut spending on prisons and probation by 40%. We have cut spending on the police by a third. If you are saying we should cut into some of those issues more deeply in order to be able to fund defence, then I suspect you are not going to get any more money for defence unless you are prepared to argue for a higher level of taxation. Let us therefore be realistic and recognise that we are now in a hard place as we leave the European Union, and we have to cut our coat and our global aspirations according to the limited cloth we have.

5.11 pm

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, today's debate on the NATO summit, which will take in a couple of weeks, comes at a moment of considerable risk and great uncertainty for what remains the most successful defensive alliance in modern history. Several noble Lords who have preceded me have referred to that risk and to that uncertainty. The report of your Lordships' International Relations Committee, to which I contributed, and which has been excellently introduced by our chair, the noble Lord, Lord Howell, sets the scene. The volatility of the period we are living through, however, is certainly demonstrated by the fact that even in the few weeks since our report was published there have been a number of new and disturbing developments.

The risk comes mainly from the aggressive and destabilising policies of President Putin. With the short war in Georgia, the seizure of Crimea and the destabilisation of Ukraine, he tore up the post-Cold War European charter which was signed in Paris in 1990 and which set the provisions for peace and security in Europe. Ever since tearing it up, the relationship between Russia and NATO has become, once more, an adversarial one. Are we in a new Cold War? I fear we are, even if this one is completely different from the global, ideologically driven Cold War that we had between 1947 and 1990. I believe that to argue to the contrary really is to ignore the facts—most recently, of course, demonstrated in the attempted murder in Salisbury.

The uncertainty to which I referred comes from the disruptive tactics of President Trump, which, bizarrely, he practises more on his allies than on his adversaries. Most recently he has linked the issue of contributions to the military preparedness of NATO to the trade balances between the allies. This is surely the height of irresponsibility. It is NATO's deterrent capacity that has ensured peace and security for so long. Suggesting that US backing of that alliance is based on transactional calculations about trade is disruptive and destructive of deterrence. It is destructive of the security of Europe as a whole, our own included.

What then should we hope for from the summit? First and foremost, it should be for a clear signal of solidarity, unity and unconditional backing of the Article 5 commitment. That is by far the best way of ensuring that Russia's policy does not escalate out of control.

Does that mean that the alliance cannot have any discussions with Russia? Certainly not. The Cold War did not prevent dialogue with Russia; it did not even prevent agreement on measures of arms control between the adversaries. For example, the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe is long overdue and we should make it clear that we on the NATO side still favour that. We have shared interests with the Russians in combating terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We need to listen to each other and to try to dismantle some of the wilder narratives that both sides have about the other's intentions. Again, that was the sort of thing that in track 2 contacts took place during the Cold War. It could still usefully take place now, but I do not resile from my belief that we are in a Cold War situation.

Obviously, the issue of NATO's military preparedness cannot simply be ducked, but it is essential to avoid shrill exaggeration when addressing it—and some do not avoid that. The facts are that, since the last summit in Wales, the number of allied countries hitting the 2% target has doubled—from a low figure, I admit, but it has doubled—and deployments in eastern Europe have been significantly strengthened. Our own record in all this is pretty good, and it is obviously right that we should continue to encourage others to make further progress towards the 2% target, but we need to do it in ways that do not increase tensions within the alliance or weaken its deterrent capacity, to which I have already referred.

To approach the July summit with a certain trepidation is only to be realistic—I have to say that the Minister who introduced the debate seemed to be speaking in a somewhat Panglossian tone. We are in a period of great stress in our relationships; we are also in a period of stress in our relationships with our fellow European allies, which arises from the Brexit negotiations—I promise that that is the only mention I will make of that dreaded word. It is all the more important that we stand with our European allies on these vital issues of security if we are to make a reality of that new treaty which the Prime Minister has quite rightly proposed but which will take a lot of difficult and sensitive negotiation.

5.18 pm

Lord King of Bridgwater (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Hannay. I want particularly to pick up the last point that he made so that I can get rid of it. I hope that one thing we will do at this summit is make it clear that whatever is going on with Brexit makes absolutely no difference to our commitment to European defence and our involvement in it.

This House has a tradition of fairly regular debates on defence, but today's has brought out a real sense of urgency and concern on a scale that we have not seen for some time. It has been marked by some notable contributions by people alive to the serious situation that we face.

There is no doubt that this is a much more dangerous world. As many noble Lords know, I had the privilege of being the Secretary of State for Defence when the Cold War ended. I see that the Secretary-General of the United Nations is now on record as saying that the Cold War is back with a vengeance.

I saw the humiliation of the Soviet Union—Russia was obviously at its heart at that time—and we all know that President Putin’s popularity is very much due to the fact that he is making Russia count again, and making people pay attention to Russia again, as they used to. That may explain the activities he has been involved in, to the extent that he played any part in undermining the European Union, with any encouragement of Brexit, and any involvement he may have had in the United States, making sure that Mrs Clinton was not elected. Russia obviously had some knowledge of President Trump, if not any involvement, and thought he might be a rather useful asset. We know that, having tackled those two undertakings, the next on the target sheet would appear to be NATO.

I am not quite clear—I should know this—whether President Trump will meet President Putin before or after the NATO summit. I am not sure whether that has yet been determined. When he comes to the NATO summit we know with certainty what one item on his agenda will be: he will, without question, demand a substantial contribution from Germany. Whether the United States contributes 3.75% or 4%, Germany contributes 1% of its GDP. I note that the agreement reached at the previous NATO summit in Canada was that countries would come up to 2% and they all agreed to do it by 2024. That does not strike me as the sense of urgency that President Trump might expect and seek to achieve. Against that whole background, when we look at his policy of “America first”, it is very worrying to see how that fits in with a sense of collaboration and involvement in international institutions. Some of us are worried about what his attitude may be to NAFTA, some of us are worried about the WTO and, obviously, some are now worried about NATO.

I was very interested in the remarks of those committee members who have been to Washington. One question of interest is whether they found it possible to meet anybody. My understanding is that the State Department is half empty at the moment and extremely short of people who might provide some back-up for more well thought-through and reliable activities. It is against that background that we have to look at our own situation. I make no secret of the fact that I worry about our defence expenditure and the resources we have available. I am not a great admirer of the GDP ratio analogy, which I think has been used as an excuse, to see how you can fiddle the GDP arrangement rather than asking what we really need for defence. I am also very worried about what the unbalanced nature of our expenditure, which has followed the carriers—the establishment of the carriers and then the extremely expensive aircraft that will fly from them—and the damage that has done to other areas of our defence expenditure.

In the context of the need for more expenditure, I certainly think that one area where Germany will have to contribute significantly is in its infrastructure. As we have withdrawn from Germany—and forces have been withdrawn, as we know—there is a need for transformation and rapid reinforcement. The arrangement, as I understand it, is to have a certain limited front line but then 1 million follow-on troops. We need to address the question of resources and the arrangement for

how that could be done with any speed, were there to be a serious emergency situation. We also have to look at the continuing situation, which is emerging rather more clearly now, following the Brexit developments, of our involvement with NATO and NATO’s relationship with EU defence activities and expenditure. That will be another important area.

I want to pick up a point made by the noble Lords, Lord Wallace and Lord Hannay. This is a very serious and dangerous situation, and at the moment we are rather blocked from developing any dialogue. However, we need to see whether we can get a serious dialogue going because this is in no interest of Russia’s. It may be good to re-establish its position in the world but, in the end, it does not want conflict and its people certainly do not. One of the nicer lessons that might come out of the World Cup is that we are all in this together, so there might be more friendship and amity.

It struck me that I had slight sympathy for President Putin and the Russian approach given two of the paragraphs in the speech of Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Defence, on NATO a week ago. The first referred to the extremely active and rather menacing nature of Russian warships, when he said that in 2010, we had one Russian warship approaching our territorial waters but we had 33 last year. He further drew attention to the fact that United Kingdom aircraft were scrambled 38 times last year to shadow Russian military aircraft approaching our airspace. Interestingly enough, the next paragraph went on to the splendid activities of our troops. He paid tribute to the fact that we now have troops in Estonia and Poland, which is getting close to the Russian borders. In respect of Estonia, they are certainly pretty close to St Petersburg, where we have never had troops before. He paid particular tribute to our splendid aircraft and ground troops, who are in Romania to patrol the Black Sea region. I plead guilty to not realising, until I read that, that we were patrolling the Black Sea region. This gives some understanding of why the Russians may feel that they are now slightly encircled, and why they might want to reassert themselves.

In my own experience, I was the first Defence Secretary in NATO to visit the Soviet Union. I made an official visit there and Marshal Yazov, an ex-sergeant from Stalingrad, was a very charming man. He was my host and we had a very successful and worthwhile visit. Not long after, President Yeltsin came through London on his way to visit Washington and I had the pleasure of entertaining Marshal Shaposhnikov, who I think was then the head of the military structure for the CIS—the follow-on state that was the successor when the Soviet Union collapsed. Perhaps I am a bit biased in believing that you can have sensible discussions with the Russians and that many of their interests and challenges are real. Some have been referred to, not least the threat of Islamic terrorism; they obviously have their worries about others as well.

Notwithstanding the events in Crimea, which of course started our blockade, and then events in Ukraine and, of course, Salisbury, which make things very difficult, we really need to see whether we cannot get a more sensible dialogue going. That would be in the interests of the world at this present dangerous and

[LORD KING OF BRIDGWATER]

uncertain time. It would be in all our interests, in all the countries of the world, to get dialogue allowing a better prospect than what has been described elsewhere as the downward spiral of international relations at present.

5.28 pm

Lord Soley (Lab): This is a timely debate, backed up by a helpful and thoughtful report from the International Relations Committee. It comes at a time when there is constant discussion about the need to increase defence expenditure. My view, which I have expressed a number of times in the House, is that we need to go up to a figure of around 3%. I take on board the suggestion of the noble Lord, Lord King, that a percentage of GDP may not be the best model; I also take on board the comments of the noble Lord, Lord Wallace, that we could not do that along with the health increases without increased taxation. I can say only, yes, I think that will be necessary. If that is done by the Conservative Party, it will be done partly by smoke and mirrors and, if it is done by a Labour Government, it will be done by them trying to encourage people to be enthusiastic about paying more taxes—an enthusiasm which, in my political experience, diminishes with every step towards the ballot box.

The key to this is to win an argument not just with the British people but with people in continental Europe, most notably the Germans, that a credible defence policy can stop wars and prevent wars. In my history in politics, arguments about increasing defence expenditure nearly always focused on a fairly simple argument about protecting our boys—that was the phrase, but it is now our women as well—and making sure our people are well equipped. If you are to win the argument, particularly with the younger generation, and particularly in Germany, for historic reasons, we have to convince people that a credible defence policy prevents war and that if you do not have a credible defence policy—and at the moment I am not sure that it is credible—there is an increased danger of war and that danger is greatly increased if there is instability in the world. We have been lucky; the last 70 years have been pretty stable, and many of us know the reasons why—stable superpower positions and so on. That is going, and Trump is an example of the breakdown of the United States as a key leader, dominant above all the others. It takes place at a time when nationalism is rising everywhere, whether the milder form—if it is that mild—of the SNP in Scotland or the Donald Trumps of this world or the more extreme versions of Mr Putin.

Going back to the 1990s, I remember hosting for about three days a group of very senior Chinese government leaders who came to see us in the UK when I was chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party. At the end of that visit, when we had established quite good relations, their leader asked me, “How do you think we’re getting on in China?” I said I thought that economically they were doing astoundingly well and I was getting encouraged by the rule of law—at that time we were sending judges there, as though we had more spare judges here than anywhere else in the world—but I was concerned about their ability to change leaders without a crisis. To my surprise and, I

have to say, pleasure, he leaned forwards and said, “You might be worried, Mr Soley, but not as worried as we are”. The same applies to Mr Putin. These semi-autocratic, not-quite dictatorships, not-quite democracies—I suspect we can see the same happening with Mr Erdoğan in Turkey at the moment—do fine when they are being nationalistic, but when things go wrong or when the leader just dies, there is suddenly acute instability, and in an unstable world that is a threat to peace.

The other week I found myself arguing with people I did not expect to have this argument with that Mr Putin was responsible for the poisoning in Salisbury of the Skripals. The arguments being put to me varied from, “You don’t know it couldn’t have been done by MI6”, to, “We’ve got no proof that it was Putin”, and so on. I found myself saying, “Join the dots together. There was Litvinenko poisoned with polonium 210 and a trail of polonium 210 from the restaurant in London on to the BA seat and back to Moscow. Then there was the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner with a Buk missile, and Australia and the Netherlands, which had most of the passengers on board, pointed the finger at Putin, and then there was Crimea. People underestimate the impact of that because the deal on Crimea between Russia, the US, Britain and France was that Ukraine would give up all the nuclear weapons it had following the end of the Cold War in exchange for a commitment not to change the borders of Ukraine by force. That went out of the window. Finally, there were the Skripals, and there will be other examples”. It takes quite a while to convince people and I think the reason for that is that they want to believe that it is going to continue to be a peaceful world and that Russia will be okay. I am increasingly alarmed by Mr Putin and Russia, not because he wants a war—I am sure he does not—but because he thinks he can hold the situation with a combination of nationalism and the new attempt at cyberwarfare and so on. If that goes wrong, we end up in a much hotter situation than we are in at the moment. That is what troubles me.

There was a reference to one encouraging thing in paragraph 57 of the report by the committee chaired by the noble Lord, Lord Howell, which is about the importance of engaging with Russia. It is difficult, and yes, we do have to take tough action because of what happened to the Skripals, but at the same time we want to engage with the Russian people. There is no doubt that they feel better now than they did before Putin arrived. Why? Because Putin is an effective nationalist, and he makes a great appeal to nationalism.

Of course, Russia has a great history—in the arts, in science, in literature and militarily. The Russians are not going to allow themselves to be put down easily, yet at the same time—this is a point that the International Relations Committee report makes well—we have to balance the combination of deterrence and trying to engage with the Russian people. Although all the internet options for engaging with people are much greater than they were, we do not have to look very far to find countries like Russia and China making it much more difficult to use them. This is a complex argument.

I have another point about something to which I think we are still paying too little attention. I voted remain in the referendum on coming out of the European Union. I had thought that there would be a slight majority to stay in, but I was not surprised by the outcome. My belief, which I have expressed before in this House, is that we have to make a success of it—and we can, although it will be difficult. One of the things that we all underestimate is that, despite all the economic difficulties, the real impact will be a loss of political influence because the United Kingdom will no longer be a member of the European Union. That is profoundly important in both the short and the longer term. For example, will we still have a seat on the United Nations Security Council in 30, 40 or 50 years' time? These things are incredibly important, and my worry is that we also underestimate the effect, as we leave the European Union, on the countries in continental Europe that believe, and always have believed—to their credit—that the EU is a political entity, moving slowly and steadily towards ever-closer union. At the end of that road, whether people like it or not, a nation state in some form emerges. Personally, I think that is good. But Britain will not be part of it.

It has been apparent for some years now that a number of European leaders are saying that without Britain they can now move towards having common foreign and defence policies. That is growing. When people say to me that the European Union will never have a defence policy, I say, "I think it will"—and actually, I think that is a good thing. We carry on about the United States being necessary in Europe, but it would not be necessary if the EU had a credible defence policy. Russia would not dare touch a European Union with a common defence policy, because the EU is much richer and more powerful, and it has more skilled people, a larger population and, above all, a population that is not declining in terms of age and ability as the Russian population is. There are a lot of these rather worrying developments around, and we face them in the context of a NATO summit that may be in danger of looking backwards, not forwards.

My final point is about the cyber area, which is referred to in several reports that I have read recently. I simply say that soft power and cyber power will have a growing effect. I have talked on occasion to the noble Baroness, Lady Lane-Fox, about how we are struggling to co-ordinate our thinking and our politics with the emerging technologies. It is incredibly difficult, because to some extent we are constantly overtaken by the science. I do not have any simple answers to that; I wish I did. All I can say is that we are in a very complex area, with growing instability in the world and the rise of nationalism, and we need to have, as we do not have now, a credible defence policy.

5.40 pm

The Earl of Sandwich (CB): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the reflective contribution of the noble Lord, Lord Soley, and I thank the noble Baroness and the noble Lord, Lord Howell, for jointly introducing the debate. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Howell, for giving me the cue that I needed on Turkey, which is in our minds today.

Nearly 45 years ago, in October 1973, I was a junior press officer to the NATO assembly, and I was present at the opening of the new Bosphorus bridge in Istanbul uniting Europe and Asia. This was a remarkable occasion on which Danny Kaye set off air balloons for the children while Sir Fitzroy Maclean, that great champion of NATO, strode confidently across the bridge with a posse of Kurdish warriors festooned with cartridge belts. That would not happen today.

In fact, relations between NATO and Turkey are very different now. They are rocky, to say the least, and the election results do not make things easier. I recently returned to Istanbul and saw the second new Bosphorus bridge and a much enlarged city. I also saw water cannons outside the two great mosques. This was before Ramadan, just after President Trump decided to move his embassy to Jerusalem and when Israel was firing on demonstrating crowds in Gaza. The whole country was on edge because of that and the forthcoming elections.

We now know that democracy is under threat and that there is no change in leadership. Considering President Erdoğan's manipulation of the media and imprisonment of thousands of opponents, the opposition did reasonably well and the pro-Kurdish HDP got 67 seats in Parliament. However, the President's personal and constitutional position is considerably strengthened, which will be of concern to NATO, not least because of the recent incursion into Syria. There was an embarrassing incident last November when Turkey withdrew 40 of its soldiers from NATO's Joint Warfare Centre in Norway. The Secretary-General had to apologise to Erdoğan that he and Atatürk had both apparently been depicted as enemies during the NATO exercise. Erdoğan then criticised NATO and was even quoted as saying:

"There can be no such unity, no such alliance",

in an address to his ruling party.

I doubt whether Turkey under Erdoğan would ever give up the Atlantic alliance. For one thing, it receives powerful weapons and defence systems against hostile neighbours, although two of those neighbours are supposedly his new friend, Iran and Russia. Turkey, although no longer a serious EU candidate, benefits financially and in other ways from that important agreement with Europe over Syrian refugees. There is no doubt that Turkey is an uneasy member of the alliance and that the relationship may be stormy—to the delight, of course, of the Russians—but NATO also needs Turkey as a bridgehead to the East, as demonstrated in 1973.

The AWACS at Konya is one example of that vital partnership, which enables NATO to monitor not only Isis in Syria but the activity of several players in the region, including Russia. I expect the Minister to confirm that, although we have serious concerns about human rights, fundamentally, Turkey is a key member of NATO and is likely to remain so. We must ensure that it does.

Russia has a lot to complain about in NATO, as we have heard from many speakers, especially the participation of countries it still regards as its client states, such as

[THE EARL OF SANDWICH]

Georgia and Montenegro and, soon, North Macedonia, which could easily become another pawn to be bargained over.

We can see why Russia plays dirty tricks in the western Balkans, in countries such as Kosovo and Bosnia. I am sure we will hear from the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, about that. It is consistent with the atrocity in Salisbury, and with cyberattacks and other interventions nearer home. Russia's violation of airspace and our own waters, as well as its militarisation of the Arctic, already have to be regularly and firmly resisted.

As the noble Lord, Lord King, reminded us, Russia bitterly resents both the EU and NATO entering its back yard, and there is some justification for that, as the EU Committee pointed out in its report on Ukraine three years ago. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Davies, about the EU's contribution to security, but did the EU tread a little too far into Ukraine? In practice, I have to agree with the FCO evidence in the committee's report that Russia is not a real enemy and should not be regarded as such. The Russians know full well that we are not going to fight a conventional war. The noble Lord, Lord Soley, said something similar.

However, of course we must be on the alert. Russia has taken over Crimea and is still fighting aggressively in eastern Ukraine, and NATO has to step up its capability in response. The Baltic states will always require some form of military presence. The UK may not be spending enough, and may not be able to afford it, but it can be proud that it is in the 2% plus league, leading one of the Enhanced Forward Presence battalions in Estonia. We are also deploying Typhoons, patrolling airspace from bases in the Baltic states and Romania, and we support the battalion in Poland.

I read Mr Appathurai's comments in the report about the problems of dialogue with Russia, which must certainly be a part of NATO's stance. He said that, while NATO sought transparency, as the noble Lord, Lord Campbell, mentioned, Russia,

"embraced unpredictability, ambiguity, deception and pre-emption", and that was its way of getting round NATO's conventional advantage. However the committee rightly says that NATO,

"ought to be able to work with Russia",
on areas of common concern.

What are the challenges from the south that are mentioned? Maybe the Minister will enlighten us. The noble Lord, Lord Wallace, certainly did, by talking about co-operation with the French in Africa and so on. Mr Appathurai said little about NATO's ambitions beyond Europe, apart from a mission in Iraq and an increased presence in Afghanistan. What about the south? Mr Lapsley said there was to be a Mediterranean dimension. I can only assume that this will mean Libya, but perhaps the Minister could comment on that.

MARCOM in Northwood is a real success story, having been the base for many an activity in the Mediterranean and the Horn of Africa. But the EU's Operation Sophia, discussed recently in the House, was ostensibly to deter migrants, and shows that there are limits as well as advantages to working with Libyan

coastguards, and they can do nothing onshore. There are also many caveats about the EU's Khartoum process in North Africa, so we shall see whether NATO can do any better within its defined area of operation. These are rather misty ideas which need a lot of definition.

Finally, there is President Trump's unpredictability. Maybe we should view him as a sort of PE instructor, exhorting people to be on their toes. Again, we have evidence in the report, if we needed reminding, that without the US there would be no NATO and that Trump must be right to ask for increased European spending. However, he needs to match this argument with his own clear commitment. There are as many trade wars as trade winds. If there is to be any harmony across the pond, NATO must surely be its firm foundation.

To build on the Minister's alliteration—she said "fitter, faster and more flexible"—I should add, remembering what the noble Lord, Lord Jopling, said, financially foolproof.

5.50 pm

Baroness Helic (Con): My Lords, I welcome this debate and declare an interest as per my entry in the *Register of Lords' Interests*. I grew up in the former Yugoslavia, a country positioned between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Any time I was fussy about food, my parents reminded me of the economic blockade imposed on them by the Soviet Union in 1948 and the plane sent by President Truman that saved the country from starvation and complete economic collapse. My family also experienced the extreme insecurity of war in the 1990s, since the country did not benefit from membership of NATO and its Article 5 provisions, and then a successful NATO intervention after the killing and displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. So, while I am not a child of World War II, I am deeply conscious of the importance of NATO as a military and political alliance to its member states, to its partner nations and to international peace and security. From my experience, those who question NATO's relevance have either never experienced insecurity or take their security for granted. NATO is not yesterday's alliance: it remains the cornerstone of our security and that of the 28 other countries, including the United States.

While preparing for this debate, I read an article in *Time* magazine that referred to the President of the United States wishing to "dismantle" all post-World War II institutions, including NATO. Whether or not this was an exaggeration, it is disturbing that we have got to the point where an American magazine can reach this conclusion about its own President. As we know—and some noble Lords have already mentioned it—the only time that Article 5 has been invoked in the history of the alliance was to come to the defence of the United States. It was NATO that made it possible for that same country—the United States—to pursue its goals in Afghanistan not as an isolated superpower acting alone but as the leader of the free and democratic world.

In an interconnected world—if I may borrow a phrase from my noble friend Lord Howell—our security is inseparable from that of our allies. Any country that thinks that it could cut itself off and be safer, or that there is a better alternative available to the alliance,

would be embarking on an experiment that was bound to fail. So I hope that the Government and our like-minded allies will calmly and confidently make a strong case for the alliance, do everything possible to more effectively communicate its relevance to the public and not overreact to any rhetoric that might emanate periodically from Washington. A successful NATO summit would be one in which the alliance faces up to contemporary threats and challenges, is not afraid of differences and debate and projects unity and strength overall. I know that it is not in the gift of the UK Ministers alone, but I hope that the Government will confidently ensure that Britain plays its part in four areas in particular.

The first area is defence spending. There is much on which I disagree with President Trump, but I agree with the principle that all member states must meet their spending obligations and be providers, not only consumers, of the security that NATO provides. How can it be that Georgia, which is not a NATO member state, provides 800 soldiers to Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan, while 15 NATO member states provide only 100 soldiers or fewer? How can it be that three large NATO member states—Germany, Spain and Italy—commit only 1.5% of GDP to their defence? To strengthen the alliance, member states must be willing to increase their defence spending and not rely on others such as the United Kingdom that do meet their spending commitments.

Secondly, I welcome Monday's announcement of deeper EU-NATO co-operation. However, I hope it will result in a stronger contribution to NATO's overall capability by EU member states, not parallel political structures or caucusing within NATO. The three Ds that Secretary Albright identified in 1999 in relation to European defence—no discrimination against non-EU NATO member states, no duplication of existing NATO capabilities and no decoupling of the US and Canada from the security of Europe—still strongly apply, and I urge the Government to make that case.

Thirdly, on NATO enlargement, I welcome Montenegro's admission to the alliance. I was encouraged to hear that the NATO Secretary-General anticipates that Macedonia will now be invited to join. I also look to NATO not to close the door on the most vulnerable country in the Balkans, Bosnia-Herzegovina. I fully appreciate that the alliance must not import instability to its ranks, but I also hope that we can muster the vision and strength to prevent Russia from ever having a veto over who can and cannot aspire to be a NATO member state. There are few more blatant or damaging examples of Russian interference in the internal matters of a sovereign country than its use of the smaller Bosnian entity Republika Srpska as a Trojan horse for its goal of blocking any further expansion of NATO in the Balkans. As a general rule in that part of the world, if not in life in general, if Russia wants a political project to fail, it is generally strongly in our interests that it succeeds. That is surely the case for both NATO and EU enlargement, which we know to be the best guarantor of stability of the European continent.

Fourthly, in making the case to the British public about the importance of the alliance, it is vital that we show how it defends our values. In this regard, I commend the Government, the Ministry of Defence and the UK permanent mission to NATO on

championing the need to increase the alliance's contribution to the protection of women and women's rights in conflict situations, as well as their greater representation within NATO as an organisation. I urge them to go further in addressing this vital and historically neglected set of issues.

It remains the case that, in order to enjoy peace, we have to have a strong defence. We must approach the future of the alliance today with the same seriousness of purpose as those who created NATO against the backdrop of World War II and the Cold War. To do anything else would play into the hands of our adversaries and result in far greater instability internationally. This means not allowing anyone to drive a wedge between the allies and not falling victim to doubt and loss of confidence ourselves.

5.57 pm

Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield (CB): My Lords, I declare my interests as listed in the register.

Seventy years ago next month, in the stifling heat of a Washington summer, a group of seven western nations set about crafting a treaty which, nine months later, in April 1949, created what is possibly the most successful politico-military alliance in history, NATO, with 12 original members.

The compelling motive power was provided by a shared perception of an existing conventional threat from the Soviet Union and the certainty that, before long, Stalin would create an atomic capability, which he duly did—18 months sooner than western intelligence had anticipated—in August 1949.

As Professor Joe Nye of Harvard University once put it, the Cold War was the first great power confrontation ever in which everyone knew what the final outcome would be if it went all the way—atomic and, from the mid-1950s, thermonuclear destruction, on an unimaginable scale.

The Russians actually knew of the shaping of the Atlantic agreement from the outset. When the ambassadors of the United Kingdom and Canada drove in great secrecy into the underground car park of the State Department in March 1948 to begin exploratory talks, the British team included Donald Maclean, who worked during the day in the embassy for King George VI and moonlighted for Stalin by night. No doubt the early intelligence provided by Maclean fed Russia's perpetual fear of encirclement, but it probably exerted something of a deterrent effect as well.

I hope that, during what might be the more fractious moments of the coming NATO summit in Brussels, respectful thought could be given to the founding fathers, who were, in Dean Acheson's words, "present at the creation". Thank heavens that it was Harry Truman in the Oval Office and Clem Attlee in No. 10, both veterans of the Great War and measured, realistic, careful men, as the Berlin crisis and the near-miraculous airlift unfolded from June 1948, when the Russians cut off the land and water links from the western zones of occupied Germany through the corridors across the Russian zone to Berlin. It is hard to imagine Truman, Attlee or Ernest Bevin resorting to twitter diplomacy, even if the technology had been available to them. I

[LORD HENNESSY OF NYMPFIELD]
 imagine that the tweets of Clem Attlee would have been the slimmest of slim volumes. As his one-time economic assistant at No. 10, Douglas Jay, put it, Clem Attlee,

“would never use one syllable where none would do”.

The most remarkable strand of DNA in NATO from April 1949 to this very day is, as all noble Lords appreciate, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. It is the greatest amount of sovereignty that we have ever given away to anybody—far more than we have ever given to the EU. However, as another noble Lord said, this is not a day for Brexit mania, so I shall say no more about that. Let us savour the crucial words of Article 5, so well known but always worth underscoring, that an,

“attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all”,

and that assistance will be given to those attacked,

“individually and in concert ... including the use of armed force”.

We forget now that NATO was originally established to last for just 10 years, until 1959. In fact it has endured to this day, now with 28 members, and, crucially, with Article 5 intact, although it is surrounded by an element of worry, as noble Lords have alluded to this afternoon.

It is useful to contrast and compare some of the threats in the context of which Article 5 currently operates—the second Cold War through which we are living and which started with the annexation of Crimea in 2014—with the perils of the first Cold War. Certain elements of the first Cold War never went away. The Russian intelligence attack on the West was sustained, and even enhanced, by new technical means, cyber especially, while their belief in human intelligence remained as strong as it ever was. Russian nuclear weapons capacity remained the backbone of the state and the guarantor, as they saw it, of their national survival. The modernisation of their triad of nuclear forces continues apace. The deep cold war abated in the early 1990s north of the Greenland-Iceland-UK gap, although it never went away. There has been a tenfold surge of Russian naval activity since 2010, leading NATO to designate once more the north Atlantic as an operational area and the US Administration to revive the Second Fleet in north Atlantic waters. The latest Russian submarines, both attack and ballistic, have reduced very substantially the technical edge once possessed by the US Navy and the Royal Navy.

Naturally, there are significant differences in the nature of today’s threats compared to the great, 40-year-plus East-West confrontation of the Soviet era. For example, President Putin’s motive power is ideology-light and nationalism-heavy, compared to his communist predecessors. As other noble Lords have noted, it is fuelled by his desire to ease the hurt of the sudden and dramatic loss of Russian superpowerdom in 1989-91 and a desire to restore a measure of equality with the United States in the floating exchange rate of today’s great power calculations.

Those tasked by NATO and their own Governments to run what are now called crisis management exercises—some noble Lords who have worked in Whitehall may remember them as the Wintexes, biennial exercises

which NATO conducted with the British always alongside it—are faced by a different set of possible contingencies. The old Wintexes gamed their way through a period of worsening international tension, through a precautionary stage and right on to nuclear release: R-hour. The now declassified Wintex files in the National Archives make for the most extraordinarily chilling reading.

Today, the planners are faced more with what one of them has called a “pop-up” cold war which is less predictable and harder to read and which can take a multiplicity of forms, many of which are deniable by the instigators. Hybridity is the threat of our times in a way that was not imaginable even in 1989-91. Unintended escalations that run out of control are the shared fears of Cold War I and Cold War II. Those of us who recall the Cuban missile crisis will never forget what it felt like. We now know that the world was even closer to the brink than we appreciated in October 1962. Today’s “spikes of escalation”, as a Whitehall friend describes them, are mercifully unlikely to be as menacing and perilous as Cuba, but this Cold War II will probably be a long haul, requiring organising minds in the West of the quality of the great American diplomat, George Kennan, who developed the “containment” model for coping with Soviet power in 1946-47. We need, as well, philosophers of the open society of the quality of the incomparable Sir Karl Popper to remind us of the crucial ingredients of open societies which enable them in the end to prevail against closed or authoritarian ones.

Next month, today’s NATO leaders must rise to the level of events as their forbears did in 1948-1949. It is a time for cool heads, careful assessments and a sustained investment in our collective needs of defence. The founders of the late 1940s did successive generations proud with their insights and their foresight. I hope, admittedly against all expectations, that the same will come to be said of the men and women who gathered in Brussels in July 2018.

6.05 pm

Baroness Northover (LD): My Lords, I too would like to thank the Minister for introducing this debate—even if in apparently Panglossian terms. I also pay tribute to the noble Lord, Lord Howell, and his committee for their examination of the upcoming NATO summit and for their individual contributions to this debate. There has been total agreement on all sides of the Chamber in terms of support for NATO and the value of the alliance to all of us. We have just heard a wide-ranging vision based on history from the noble Lord, Lord Hennessy. Yet we could not be participating in a NATO summit at a more important time for the United Kingdom.

NATO has been the bedrock of our security since the Second World War, as noble Lords have spelled out. The noble Lord, Lord Judd, put this in strongly personal terms, in relation to his family’s view of the risks of the late 1940s. Of course, he was right that NATO was born when there was a commitment to collective security. As the Minister, the noble Lord, Lord Judd, and the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, pointed out, the NATO charter commitment,

“to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation”,

of NATO countries was,

“founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law”,

and could not be more relevant today. Although one might wish to stress a greater diversity of heritage today, nevertheless the principles are clear.

Yet the International Relations Committee report concludes:

“The NATO Summit takes place at a time of unparalleled international volatility and instability”.

We see that Edward Lucas, a security policy expert, is quoted in the *Times* as saying that,

“from a military point of view NATO has rarely looked in better shape”.

But he then goes on to say:

“Politically, it is in tatters”.

Crucially, as my noble friend Lord Campbell emphasised, NATO is a political alliance, not just a military one. America was and is central to what was devised after the Second World War to protect Europe, as the noble Lord, Lord Davies, and others emphasised. Yet it is the American President who is most likely to cause challenges at the forthcoming summit, as the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, and other Lords pointed out.

The head of the Atlantic Council says that NATO is facing a,

“potential transatlantic train wreck of American making”.

He is commenting on what the noble Lord, Lord King, described as the downward spiral in international relations now. If there is any consistency about Trump, it appears to be that anything Obama supported, Trump on principle opposes. Hence Justin Trudeau, NATO, the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris climate change treaty, and multilateral trade agreements. If he can think he has solved North Korea’s nuclearisation simply by meeting its leader and then tweeting that it is all done and he can move on to other things, and if he can show his impatience with the G7 and randomly suggest that Russia should rejoin and that its actions over Crimea, for example, are simply in the past, who knows what position he will take at the NATO summit? I wish the noble Lord, Lord Judd, had been more persuasive in his conversations with John Bolton.

At the same time we have a dictatorial Russian leader who sees aggression as a way of cementing his people’s support behind him and who clearly has no compunction in seeking to take out opponents on his own or others’ soil, while seeking to destabilise the US or the EU or to play a leading role in the Syrian conflict. Nationalist and populist Governments are emerging in various parts of the world, including within NATO’s own ranks. So we face many challenges.

In the context of all that, where is the UK? As others have implied but not necessarily spelled out, Brexit is of course relevant. We seem unsure of what we want our relationship with our European neighbours to be in terms of defence, having for so long hidden the way in which we formed a complementary approach to defence—for example, with the French—as my noble friend Lord Wallace made clear. All that has been blown open as we apparently seek to go it alone. So we are at risk of having to duplicate what we did before, when we could have had strengths in certain

areas and the French in others, and not both have to do the same things. But it was never politic with the right-wing press ever to say so. So we are hoist with our own petard and are now looking to do all things across the spectrum of defence in order to retain the tier 1 position that other noble Lords have referred to.

At the same time, the cost of defence procurement has gone up simply because of the fall in the value of the pound. I note that in the debate on NATO in the Commons on 20 June, Dr Julian Lewis stated in this context that there is,

“doubt that the pound will hold its value against another currency”.—*[Official Report, Commons, 20/6/18; col. 404.]*

Quite so—yet the answer cannot be that we simply procure in the UK, given that we must seek value for money and the most suitable equipment. So perhaps we need some honesty about how we work with, and need to work with, our European partners.

The Government claim that they wish to promote “global Britain” without, as the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in the other place pointed out, defining what that actually means. Perhaps it is merely a bumper sticker, as indicated by the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt. I note that the Henry Jackson Society—not a left-wing organisation—states:

“A ‘Global Britain’ not only requires a stable and liberal Europe; a stable and liberal Europe also requires continued UK involvement in European affairs”.

I could not agree more. We had a pre-eminent position in Europe, along with Germany and France. Together with France, the UK is a member of the Security Council, and the UK added to its bow that it apparently had a special relationship with the United States. What a privileged position to be in.

The Henry Jackson Society suggests a reinvention of the wheel. It says:

“A new European Defence Initiative ... should be established to bind together European nations committed to the liberal democratic international order. Affiliated to NATO, it would bring together military, intelligence and diplomatic capabilities to strengthen Europe in the face of Russian threats. The EDI would only be open to stable, liberal and democratic European countries, and would require a minimum 2% of GDP spend on defence”.

That is exactly what the right-wing press said we should not do when we were in the heart of Europe.

The noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, recommends that we explain the importance of NATO to the younger generation, and she is surely right. The risk of not explaining the EU to the British people is evident to see. The Henry Jackson Society goes on to say:

“The UK’s ability to support its European neighbours, provide leadership in NATO, realise post-Brexit opportunities, and meet its national defence and security needs are, of course, constrained by funding pressures”—

which of course we have discussed. It recommends that the Government need to increase defence spending to 3% of GDP by 2023,

“in order that Britain remains Europe’s leading military power, ahead of France, Germany and Russia”.

As my noble friend Lord Wallace emphasised, we undermined our economy and place in the world by leaving the EU, so how, then, do we balance competing domestic and international demands simply to maintain our current position?

[BARONESS NORTHOVER]

So the UK is in a weaker position than it have might been as we head into the NATO summit. What in the long term does the Minister think will happen to the UK-held position of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe if we leave the EU? I am sure that the noble Baroness will reassure us, but the Government did not anticipate our losing our place on the International Criminal Court.

We have been a leading member of NATO. We already more or less meet the target of 2% of GDP on defence and, rightly, we urge fairer burden sharing, as the noble Lord, Lord Jopling, in particular emphasised, although the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, pointed to progress. So what leading role might we play? We have shown that we have little influence on the US President—although, clearly, few do. The noble Baroness, Lady Helic, is right to say that whatever President Trump does, the rest of NATO must calmly make the case for working together. But NATO has major challenges to face, and we have heard those outlined in the debate today. Noble Lords, including my noble friend Lord Campbell, have very effectively outlined the risks from Russia. What I heard from the noble Lord, Lord Soley, in relation to Salisbury, reminded me of when I was in Leningrad in that rather totemic year of 1984 and Mrs Gandhi was assassinated. Our Soviet minder told us that the CIA had done it and was most resentful when we jumped to the conclusion that was actually right in this case.

Clearly there also needs to be engagement with Russia and an understanding of how, facing NATO, Russians, too, may feel threatened. We need to work together in the Middle East. I note with interest what my noble friend Lord Wallace said about the number of influential Russians in the UK today, and the emphasis of the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, on the need to—I think I quote him—“dismantle the wilder narratives” that both sides have used about each other.

At this summit, NATO will need to address Europe’s southern flank—again, noble Lords spoke about this. The instability and terrorism there is incredibly important in terms of European stability. NATO is seeking to support countries in the MENA region, including Jordan, which is hosting a huge proportion of refugees from Syria, and we should not take our eyes off that. Migration from Africa, for all the reasons that the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt, and my noble friend Lord Wallace emphasised, will become a growing problem.

Others mentioned the danger of pulling away from the Iran nuclear deal. As the noble Lord, Lord Howell, and the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, emphasised, NATO will also be concerned about Turkey’s future role, with its re-elected President, but it is surely vital to keep Turkey on board. The noble Baronesses, Lady Anelay and Lady Helic, are right to emphasise that NATO must promote women, peace and security, but I have heard nothing in any of the briefings about whether NATO will address this. Noble Lords mentioned cyber and hybrid warfare, and how NATO might further develop its role here. Some noble Lords, especially the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, addressed the positive case for enlargement.

Will President Trump stay through all of these issues? Might he choose to wander around Brussels? It is rather unlikely but, if he does, he might see the terrible effects and devastation of war. We all hope that the institution of NATO is strong enough to weather the pressures upon it. As we have done today, we need to restate and reinforce how important it is for liberal democracies to work together and share sovereignty, as the noble Lord, Lord Hennessy, mentioned, because it is only through that that so much more can be achieved than by single nations seeking to go it alone.

6.17 pm

Lord Tunnicliffe (Lab): My Lords, I thank the Minister for introducing this debate and the noble Lord, Lord Howell, for introducing his report. The noble Lord, Lord King, made an interesting point when he said that this debate had an urgency and concern unusual in our defence debates.

The Labour Party is very proud of the fact that it was the Labour Government of the 1940s who were at the birth of NATO. Indeed, in many ways Ernest Bevin was its architect. In a speech in the House of Commons in May 1949, he made the point that the role of NATO was always for defence, not for aggression, and NATO has enjoyed bipartisan support in Britain ever since that time. It is a fascinating organisation. In general, organisations are best judged by fairly singular and sharp tests. At the end of the day, the key performance indicator for NATO is: did it stop Russia and the Soviets invading Europe? On that basis, it has more or less a 100% success record. But it is useful for the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, to bring out what it is like and feels like when you are not on the edge of the area of risk but are actually right in the centre.

Let me start by setting out the Labour Party’s position on NATO. In government, Labour would engage with NATO to look at the next steps for the alliance and how it can maximise security within the alliance area. It would use membership as a way to promote democracy and human rights, as well as what NATO can do to support global security outside the alliance area. Labour would also want to examine how NATO and the United Nations can interact and operate together more effectively in conflict prevention and peace operations. It will continue to work with NATO allies and will meet the commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence, as it has consistently done when in government. Finally, as Nia Griffith, the shadow Secretary of State said in the House of Commons recently:

“We support the nuclear deterrent and we support NATO. That is our party policy”.—[*Official Report*, Commons, 20/6/18; col. 401.]

In looking at NATO one gets a slightly gloomy view. I therefore sought to try and better understand the present state of NATO and found a useful speech by the Secretary-General, Mr Stoltenberg, at Lancaster House on 21 June. I shall quote from it because it gives a different picture.

“The third reason why we can maintain the transatlantic bond is that we are doing it right now. In NATO. There are many different ties that bind Europe and North America together. We may have seen the weakening of some of them lately. But our ties on defence have grown stronger. After the Cold War, the US and Canada gradually reduced their military present in Europe. And

European Allies cut defence spending. But now the United States and Canada are stepping up their commitments to European security. Since coming to office, the Trump Administration has increased funding for the US presence in Europe by 40%. The last US Main Battle Tank left Europe in 2013. But now they're back. With a whole new armoured brigade. And for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Canadian troops are back in Europe. Leading a NATO battlegroup in Latvia. At the same time, Europeans are stepping up too. Spending billions more on defence. Taking greater responsibility for Euro-Atlantic security alongside their North American allies. All Allies have stopped the cuts to defence. All Allies are increasing their defence spending in real terms. European Allies and Canada have added an extra 87 billion dollars since 2014. And more Allies are investing 2% of GDP on defence. When we made the pledge back in 2014 in Wales, it was only three Allies that spent 2% GDP on defence. Now we expect 8 Allies to spend 2% of GDP on defence. This has underpinned the biggest increase in our collective defence since the Cold War".

From the perspective of the Secretary-General, NATO is in a better place than one might have expected.

However, there is Trump—and he is the enigma. Today the House of Commons Defence Committee published its eighth report of the Session, *Indispensable Allies: US, NATO and UK Defence Relations*. One of the witnesses to that committee put the whole thing rather carefully. He said that Trump did not regard achieving consensus and coming to an agreed strategy as part of his role as commander-in-chief. Another witness went on to say that for the UK to contribute to the US foreign policy debate was now very difficult.

What are Trump's commitments to NATO? At the same event at Lancaster House, the Secretary-General said in answer to a question:

"I expect the President to be very strong on defence spending. I met him in May, in the White House. President Trump was very clear that he is committed to NATO, to Article 5, and I actually thanked him for his leadership on defence spending, because it has had an impact. But I think it absolutely possible to ask the Europeans to do more, but at the same time recognise the progress. And I have also heard President Trump welcoming the fact that European Allies are spending more. He actually recently spoke about the monies pouring in. So, it is possible to say, we have done a lot but a lot remains ... he speaks in a kind of direct language, and I expect that to be the case also when he comes to Europe".

The House of Commons committee looked at the dilemma of how to influence Trump. It recommended that the way forward was to relate more directly to the US Congress through normal political and diplomatic means, but also more engagement at member level through delegations. In many ways, the Trump presidency is restricted by attitudes within the United States much more than attitudes without.

The second area of dilemma is very much Russia. Russia is more aggressive than it has been for many years. It has a wider suite of weapons that are short of lethal force. They nibble away at the Article 5 commitment. We must respond as NATO and as the UK with more investment in cyber and the whole hybrid armoury. However, the International Affairs Committee's recommendation 57 said:

"We endorse the view that NATO needs to match a firm deterrent stance with a willingness to engage in dialogue and show greater understanding of Russia's concerns. We believe NATO ought to be able to work with Russia on areas of common concern, including strengthened measures of arms control and counter terrorism".

I strongly believe this. It is difficult to envisage an in-depth dialogue with Russia. We have had a number of events, most recently Salisbury, but it is good that experienced Members of this House, including the noble Lord, Lord King, and the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, have the view that dialogue has to be the long-term objective. It is the only long-term answer. I welcome the fact that the NATO-Russia Council recently met, but I hope that the UK will put maximum effort into restarting dialogue. Western culture and values will defeat Russian aggression, not western bullets. NATO is essential for defence and deterrence. Diplomacy is essential for long-term harmonious relations.

Finally, I will say a couple of words about our own backyard. I find this gloomy. Today's report from the House of Commons has 24 recommendations, including one that says that expenditure should rise to 3%. Twelve of those 24 recommendations suggest more resources. Clearly, 2% to 3% is not going to happen, but there is widespread consensus that there is a £2 billion-a-year gap between the ambitions of the SDSR 2015 and the funding provided for it—a point brought out by a number of contributors, including the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt. I have said this before, but is worth repeating. There are three solutions to this gap: more money, fewer commitments, or muddling through. Unfortunately, muddling through is all too attractive in defence—you cut the training and the flying, you do not fill the posts and you leave the ships parked on the quayside. This reduction and muddling means that our excellent equipment and our excellent people are unavailable or incapable. We are promised that the modernising defence programme will solve all our problems. Can the Minister repeat the assurance of the noble Earl, Lord Howe, that it will be published before the NATO summit—that is, in the next 14 days?

6.30 pm

Baroness Goldie: My Lords, I am very sorry that my noble friend Lord Howe is not here to perform this task but, having listened to this instructive, constructive and wide-ranging debate, it has been a privilege to listen to the contributions and I feel very fortunate that I am here. As to whether, when I am finished, the rest of you think you are very fortunate in having listened to me, that may be another matter.

I am grateful to your Lordships for an ongoing, active and well-informed engagement with these important issues. Again, I thank the International Relations Committee for its report on the NATO summit, particularly as it is so imminent, next month in Brussels. Anyone interested in the security of the United Kingdom will naturally have a close interest in these proceedings. As numerous contributors have noted, the alliance has helped keep our nation safe for the past 69 years. I am sure the House will join me in paying tribute to all those who have served NATO with distinction, not just today but over the intervening years since the inception of the alliance, because they have been the bedrock of defence.

A number of important points have been raised today, and I shall try to deal with them, so let me see what I can do. If I run out of time or fail to address one adequately, I will undertake to write. I start with

[BARONESS GOLDIE]

my noble friend Lord Howell of Guildford, who spoke with great authority about the committee's report. I was very struck by what he said about the potential of the Commonwealth to support defence issues and meet the challenges we face. That was something I think the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt, also spoke about powerfully—how and where we need to seek help in confronting ISIS.

My noble friend Lord Howell also spoke about strategic defence equipment planning. I think we need better scrutiny and improvements in procedures in this area. I shall endeavour to obtain more specific information, and I undertake to write to him if I am successful.

My noble friend Lord Howell also raised the issue of cyber and hybrid threats and asked whether these are covered by Article 5. Article 5 does not specify any particular threat, nor does it stipulate the nature of armed attack. It states that the armed attack, however defined, must occur in Europe or North America—that is, it is where the attack takes place that matters, rather than its origin or nature. This means that Article 5 could be invoked in response to a cyberattack. The invocation of Article 5 does not necessarily mean a military response because, again, the article states that the alliance will take,

“such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force”,

and the response depends on what is appropriate, given the circumstances.

The use of armed force is but one option. In the event of a cyberattack, an Article 5 response could, I suppose, take many different forms with a view to restoring and maintaining security. What it does not do is set a threshold. Its wording instead allows allies the flexibility to make a judgment based on specific circumstances. I hope that assists my noble friend

Many contributors referred to the general relationship between the United States and NATO, and particularly to how that relationship is perceived currently. I was struck by the number of contributors—including my noble friends Lord Howell, Lord King of Bridgwater and Lady Helic, the noble Lords, Lord Judd, Lord Campbell of Pittenweem, Lord Davies of Stamford, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, Lord Hannay and Lord Tunnicliffe, the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, and the noble Baroness, Lady Northover—who raised this issue. That is indicative of just how important that relationship is perceived to be.

To reiterate, the United States is Britain's closest partner. A strong NATO is important for Europe but also for the UK and US alike. In response to the question posed by a number of contributors, as to whether President Trump is sceptical of NATO, I might suggest that we should judge the US by its actions. For example, through its announcement of a further \$1.4 billion in defence investment to 2020 and through leading one of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence battalions, President Trump has made a clear public commitment not just to NATO but to Article 5. However, we have to acknowledge, as I did when responding to the Question earlier, that President Trump is right that many allies need to invest more in their defence. We have continued to reiterate this alongside

our US partners. The UK continues to meet its 2% of GDP NATO spending target and will do so for the rest of this Parliament, but we have great sympathy with the view from the United States that the allied partners need to do more.

The noble Lord, Lord Judd—he is not technically my noble friend, but in a colloquial sense he is—made an interesting introduction, which quite struck me. He said that in 1947 he was 12. All I can say is that he is wearing well. I do not know what kind of life he leads, how he leads it or what he uses in the form of nutrition to assist him, but it seems to be having a very beneficial effect. He spoke of the real conviction about the imperative of collective security decision-making and emphasised the practical focus of that through NATO achievements, with which I agree. His was very much a speech of encouragement.

Many contributors—the noble Lords, Lord Judd, Lord Campbell of Pittenweem, Lord Dannatt, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, Lord Hannay, Lord Soley and Lord Tunnicliffe, the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, and my noble friend Lady Helic—raised the NATO reaction to the Russian challenge. Russian provocative behaviour—I emphasise that, by that, I mean the provocative behaviour of the Russian Government—affects the whole Euro-Atlantic area. Two percipient contributions came from the noble Lords, Lord Campbell of Pittenweem and Lord Dannatt, who were very analytical in their construction of President Putin's attitude. I say in response that NATO has agreed a robust medium-term approach to Russia based on three Ds: credible deterrence and defence combined with dialogue. We should not underestimate the significance of the role that dialogue can play.

My noble friend Lord Jopling predictably raised some important and, for me, testing questions. Let me see whether I can respond adequately to his points of concern. He spoke of the logistics of moving military kit around the arena. Military mobility is likely to be a key deliverable for the summit. The UK supports these measures, as we recognise the need to resolve common impediments to our ability to deploy forces rapidly. I thank my noble friend for identifying that. We fully expect it to be the subject of discussion at the summit.

My noble friend raised a number of other significant issues. He referred to the NATO headquarters and to what I can perhaps charitably describe as the ponderous progress that has accompanied the journey from planning back in, I believe, 1999 to the current day. It is not the most impressive exemplar of athletic, swift progress, but at least something is happening and we hope it reaches a significant and sensible conclusion.

He also raised a series of very serious financial issues. The financial management of NATO is an issue identified by the International Relations Committee, in the four deficiencies brought forward in the report. I share my noble friend's concern and sympathise with his frustration. The NATO resource committee regularly monitors and tracks progress against IBAN recommendations and the UK expects to see clear progress when IBAN completes its annual audits of the 2017 financial statements in areas of internal control and accounting for assets. For example, most

NATO bodies now have an internal control framework in place. The UK continues to exert pressure on those yet to do so through the committees.

NATO committees have tightened control of their commitments practice to ensure better financial efficiency and planning. Let me be clear that the UK and NATO recognise that there is still more to do to put in place the practices and culture to improve financial planning and budget discipline, but NATO is moving in the right direction and resources do play a part in this. I make it clear that the UK has made it clear that we expect the recent review of manning in the NATO command structure and the functional review of the NATO headquarters to take this into consideration. The Government will keep this under review and I can assure my noble friend that his message will be heard loud and clear.

My noble friend Lady Anelay raised another series of important issues. She sought clarification of the NATO training and capacity-building mission in Iraq. NATO has already been providing support to Iraqi security forces through its training and capacity-building efforts in areas including counter-IED, military medicine, security sector reform and vehicle maintenance. At the summit in July NATO will launch a new training mission in Iraq which will build on those efforts. It will be a non-combat training mission and will support the Government of Iraq to strengthen their security institutions and help to promote security and stability in the long term. The mission will establish specialised military academies and schools to help train Iraqi instructors and further enhance the professionalism of Iraq's security forces.

My noble friend also raised an issue I know is very dear to her heart, and one which I view as very important, which is women, peace, and security. The NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, has decided to make 2018 his "Year of UNSCR 1325". He has appointed a new NATO special representative, Clare Hutchinson. Ambassadors have formed a Friends of 1325 WPS group and are meeting regularly with Ms Hutchinson to support the developing agenda. NATO is revising its policy and action plan on women, peace and security, and this will be agreed with NATO partners. The plan is aimed at increasing the meaningful participation of women in NATO headquarters and operations, and ensuring that their policies, training and doctrines fully address all elements of Security Council Resolution 1325 and associated resolutions. The action plan aims to address a range of NATO work, including counterterrorism.

My noble friend specifically asked about UK engagement. While Ministers have not yet met Ms Hutchinson, my noble friend Lord Ahmad is keen to visit NATO and to learn about her work, and we hope that this visit will happen in the autumn. My noble friend also raised questions about the Chiefs of Defence Staff Network in relation to women, peace and security. I understand that General Messenger will host the first meeting of the ChoDS Network in 2018 and that this will provide a platform for all ChoDS to update each other on their efforts to integrate a gender perspective into operational staff work and military activity. A video invitation has been well received and a webpage for WPS ChoDS members is

being developed. Meetings have been held with the Canadian WPS ChoDS secretary, as Canada will take over the presidency of the network in 2019. I am very pleased to share with your Lordships that members of the ChoDS Network will be invited to send officers to receive training at the first UK military gender and protection advisers course this November at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham. The defence engagement team is also scoping how it can provide other training opportunities for international women officers on UK training courses. I think my noble friend also sought clarification about NATO members of the ChoDS Network. I understand that 10 NATO members, including the UK, are members of that network. I hope that that throws some light on the issues which she raised.

The noble Lord, Lord Davies of Stamford, made a very important contribution. He described NATO as a unique and unparalleled structure, with which I totally agree. He also said that we should feel a sense of gratitude to it and its founders. I absolutely agree with that, and I shall come to that point a little later on.

The noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, asked about the deep and special relationship post Brexit. His question was echoed by the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, and referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Soley. The final agreement, which we are optimistic about negotiating, will obviously reflect and be more specific about that deep and special relationship. What is clear is that by geography, we remain a European country. The extent of our mutual interests with the EU over a wide range of issues, not least defence, underpins the benefit of a deep and special relationship. I very much hope that there will be a mutual understanding of the benefit of that to both the EU and the UK.

The noble Lord, Lord Hannay, expressed his hope for the summit: that there would be solidarity, unity and unconditional backing for Article 5. He considered all of these to form the best response to Russia. He also wisely referred to the place of the deterrent effect of dialogue. My noble friend Lord King pertinently and shrewdly emphasised the importance of dialogue, borne out of his own personal experience. NATO's approach to Russia is based on what was agreed at Warsaw: a strengthened deterrent and defence, backed up by hard-headed dialogue. We very much hope to see that endorsed and underpinned by the decisions which NATO makes.

The noble Lord, Lord Soley, said that a credible defence policy prevents war. I agree with that. Where we differ is that I would argue that the UK has a credible defence policy, but I respect his right to hold a different view. At the same time, although I accept that our defence policy is not devoid of challenge, I think that a defence strategy with partnership activities such as those facilitated by NATO is deliverable. That is where the whole framework of NATO is so vital as we look ahead. If I may say so, he also adduced a forensically compelling argument about where the blame for Salisbury truly lies.

The noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, raised the issue of Turkey in NATO. Let me reassure him that Turkey is a valued ally. It is important that we work together on key issues between now and the summit. We want the summit to be a strong, public demonstration of alliance

[BARONESS GOLDIE]

unity. The noble Earl, the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt, and the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, also raised a lot of questions about challenges from the south. With their agreement, I would like to write to them because there is quite a detailed text to provide about that and I can deal with it by letter.

On the general point of EU-NATO co-operation, successive British Governments have been clear that NATO is and will remain the bedrock of European defence and security. In particular, it is responsible for collective defence. However, successive Governments have also recognised that the EU has an important role to play both in its own right and in partnership with NATO and others. We very much hope to see that reflected in the current discussions.

The noble Lord, Lord Tunnicliffe, raised the modernising defence programme. We will share headline conclusions from that MDP by the NATO summit in July. They will set out what the UK considers to be priority areas for attention to secure our strategic advantage, not least in ensuring the ongoing strength of NATO. These headlines will not include detailed conclusions on what capabilities the joint force should include or in what numbers. There will be discussion as to how to deal with the release of that information. I am not privy to anything more specific at this time and I ask the noble Lord to exercise patience.

If my arithmetic is correct, of the 16 contributors to this debate, excluding myself, about three-quarters referred to budget. They referred to budget either directly in relation to the UK's budget for defence or on the wider issue of what our allies in NATO are doing about coming up to meet their share of 2% of GDP. These were important and thought-provoking contributions and a very powerful message in relation to that issue has been sent from this House.

I conclude by restating the UK's uncompromising commitment to NATO and the defence and security of our Euro-Atlantic region. At a time when others are seeking to impose their own norms of intolerance and authoritarianism, the alliance's role as defender of the rules-based international order has rarely been clearer or more necessary, and it goes without saying that the UK's commitment to NATO and the defence and security of our Euro-Atlantic region remains unwavering. That is why the UK is meeting NATO's 2% of GDP defence spending target, with more than 20% of that going on researching, developing and procuring new equipment. We are also leading from the front with more than 4,000 of our Armed Forces personnel currently involved in NATO missions across the world, from the Baltic to the Horn of Africa, on land, at sea and in the air.

Next month's summit is also our opportunity to press others to follow our lead. At a time when Europe faces escalating threats, it is ever more important for each and every ally to step up and share the burden of security. In the modern 21st century, when we face not just old state dangers but new, less familiar threats from hybrid and cyber, the alliance cannot stand still. It has to adapt and transform into a modern organisation with the agility to react to an unprecedented range of

risks and to deal with acts of aggression that fall below previous accepted thresholds for the use of force.

I thought that the noble Lord, Lord Hennessy, said something very pertinent when he referred to the responsibility that will rest on NATO's leaders next month. He said that it is a time for cool heads, careful assessments and sustained investment in our collective means of defence. I think that encapsulates it very succinctly. We must continue to press all NATO members to step up and do their fair share. That will be the goal of the upcoming summit in Brussels, and if we can emerge from that summit with not just a stronger and sharper focus and a commitment to better equipment, bigger budgets and less red tape but with even greater collective resolve in the face of those who seek to divide us, so that we can ensure in these darker and more dangerous times that NATO will not just have a proud past to look back on but a glorious future to look forward to, that will be a future in which the alliance remains what it has always been—a beacon of hope to all.

Motion agreed.

NATO Summit 2018 (International Relations Committee Report)

Motion to Take Note

6.53 pm

Moved by Lord Howell of Guildford

That this House takes note of the Report from the International Relations Committee, *The NATO Summit 2018* (3rd Report, HL Paper 143).

Motion agreed.

Youth Services

Question for Short Debate

6.53 pm

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to ensure the provision of high quality youth services for young people in England.

Lord Storey (LD): My Lords, I am delighted to open this debate on youth services in England and I start by thanking noble Lords who are taking part. I appreciate that we were given very little notice when this debate was slotted in, but we have quality over quantity. I also thank those organisations which have sent me and, no doubt, other noble Lords information and briefings on this subject.

Let us get this out of the way straightaway: of course we have seen massive cuts in youth service funding. With the reduction of finance to local authorities, it was a relatively easy target and 90% of English councils have cut funding for teenagers. It is worth remembering that in 2010 we spent £1.2 billion, whereas last year we spent £358 million, which amounts to a 68% cash-terms cut. Perhaps most concerning of all is that at local authority level, the most deprived areas

have seen the greatest cuts. At the same time we have seen a rise in alcohol and substance abuse, crime and anti-social behaviour, and mental health issues. I wonder whether there is any link.

The voluntary sector makes a fantastic contribution to our youth provision, from the big national organisations to local uniform and sporting clubs, church and cultural organisations. Next week, for example, both the National Youth Agency and UK Youth are bringing young people to Parliament to meet parliamentarians and talk about their personal worries and concerns. The week before last, OnSide had a reception to celebrate its youth zones, with the slogan, “Somewhere to go, something to do and somebody to talk to”. If anyone has not seen a youth zone in operation, please do so. They are state-of-the-art facilities for young people, funded by a combination of private and public support, as well as charitable trusts and grants.

In preparing for this debate I was particularly taken by the Local Government Association’s *Bright Futures: Our Vision for Youth Services*. Here I ought perhaps to declare an interest, as I am a vice-president of the LGA. Its vision for an effective youth service has six guiding principles. First, it must be youth led: young people’s voices are central to the provision offered to them. The second principle demands inclusivity, equality and diversity: young people should feel included in the local area and be able to access the support they need as they progress towards adulthood. Then there is respect: young people are a valued and respected part of the community. The fourth principle is quality, safety and well-being: good-quality services are provided by staff with appropriate training, linked to a wider network of support. The fifth principle is empowerment: services empower young people to progress and engage in employment, education and training. Finally, there is positivity: services are based on strengths and focus on developing the skills and attributes of young people.

I suppose the question has to be asked: do we really want a youth service, and if so what would it look like? Do we need a youth service? Well, look at the headlines in Monday’s *Times*. On the front page it says that 30,000 young people are being drawn into criminal gangs. Never mind Fagin in Victorian London; these are criminal gangs involving young children in 21st-century Britain. Anne Longfield, the Children’s Commissioner, said that an analysis by her office showed that 80,000 youths aged up to 25 were feared to be part of a gang network and a gang culture.

Do we need a youth service? Knife crime and carrying offensive weapons are almost out of control in London and our major cities. The number of children treated for stab wounds in England has increased by 69% since 2013. Do we need a youth service? A survey carried out by UK Youth of its members found that 77% of them face at least one personal barrier, the most common of which are: coming from a low income family; not being in education, employment or training; having special educational needs; being a carer; and having a mental health challenge. With social mobility on the decline and intergenerational injustice on the increase, we can see why youth services are so needed.

The most worrying aspect is that the lack of provision has a particular effect on young people from poorer backgrounds. The evidence shows that cuts to provision

have hit those who often need youth services the most. I just do not understand—perhaps somebody could simply explain it to me—how when a young person enters the criminal justice system it costs us, the taxpayers, over £200,000 per person, yet if support is given to stay out of trouble it will cost a fraction of that sum.

I would like to talk a little about what we had, and more about what we have, but mainly about what we need. As your Lordships know, I cut my professional teeth in schools in Liverpool, but was acutely aware of the value of youth services to young people. My first political job was chair of Liverpool’s youth committee. The young people at my schools were sent to secondary schools and then to work. A few of them went to FE, only a handful to university, but many of them went on at 15 to work in local industries—BICC, Pilkington’s, et cetera.

In the 1970s, there were youth clubs, youth workers and voluntary sector activities including the Scouts, the Guides, cadets of various sorts and a whole range of sports clubs. The golden age of youth work, if ever there was one, has gone. Although local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure the provision of a service in the area, how much they spend on the service is a matter for local decision. Inevitably, how much each local authority spends on the youth service depends on what it thinks the needs are and how much it can afford. After almost a decade of austerity, spending on the youth service has shrunk after successive salami-slicing budgets. Traditional provision is now left more and more to the voluntary sector.

Defining what we need is a real philosophical challenge, to say nothing of a financial one. There is no government strategy for young people, and there needs to be one. Perhaps the new civil society strategy, due to be published before the Summer Recess, is an opportunity to embed youth services. Perhaps the Minister will confirm that we are still due to get the strategy before the recess. There is supposed to be a statutory youth service. Currently, quality and provision varies from local council to local council. As I said, it depends on how much resource is left. Effective youth services require an infrastructure to deliver, and local authorities and the VCSs are best placed, with their capacity and skilled work force, to deliver. There needs to be a clear commitment and demonstration to youth services, rather than being overly focused on youth social action. How does the NCS fit in with this—perhaps as a catalyst in support of wider youth services?

I said at the beginning how much I like the Local Government Association’s *Bright Futures* programme. The Minister will also be aware of the National Youth Agency’s proposed new covenant. Rather than create new duties or burdens, the covenant provides a shared language and understanding of the opportunities and challenges for young people to guide policymakers and align services to secure positive outcomes for young people. The unique selling point of all youth work in future—universal or targeted—is increasing face-to-face interaction between children and young people, facilitated by the provision of interaction brokers and places where all young people have the opportunity to interact.

I remember the futurologist Alvin Toffler, author of *Future Shock* and *The Third Wave*, talking about people living in electronic cottages. Reality always

[LORD STOREY]

overtakes the fantastical, as is the case here. Many teenagers, particularly those who do not relate to their peers, could in their own terms live some sort of life without ever leaving their online room. Social media can provide a full social life, with online friends and experiences available 24/7.

I end on a positive note, however difficult that might be in the age of austerity—although we are told that austerity is over. I suggest that we establish with young people what type of offer to them would be most helpful and useful and how it should be delivered. As well as tracking cuts to youth services, the Government need to identify and quantify trends in the number of youth workers over the past 10 to 20 years. Can this be charted against the change in youth crime, et cetera, over the same period?

We have dedicated people working in the youth service, and they need to be thanked and recognised for the contribution they make. In my view, we should make it an all-qualified profession. There are numerous dedicated volunteers helping in all sorts of ways, from Brown Owl to mums and dads running sports teams. Have we put too many hurdles in the way? Should we not at least pay for their safeguarding requirements as a thanks for their voluntary work and make the process quick and simple?

Bringing back Friday-night youth clubs with table tennis and snooker and ending with a disco will not cut any ice with the current generation of children and young people. Doing nothing and leaving them to their own devices—nothing to do and nowhere to go—will make it far easier for those wishing to use children and young people for their own profitable but illegal activities. That is definitely not an option.

7.05 pm

Baroness Newlove (Con): My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Storey, for this debate; it may be a small one, but the topic is certainly not. We see young lives being lost daily through knife and gun crime across our nation. A moral panic has begun, arousing social concern.

After the loss of my late husband, Garry Newlove, I was asked what I wanted to do. I had never been in the national spotlight, so to speak, so at that time I did not have an answer. However, I wanted to ensure that Garry would be known as a wonderful father and husband with a wicked sense of humour. The chair of the Warrington Wolves Foundation, Terry O'Neill and the CEO, Neil Kelly, kindly agreed for me to shadow their work on charities and, more importantly, to work with young people, albeit in sport. That being said, the sport was rugby, which runs through the veins of all Warringtonians. I did not take it up but watched from the sidelines.

Having wonderful support locally as well as nationally led to the girls and I creating Newlove Warrington, and I was honoured to have Peter Kay and Rick Astley as our entertainment when raising funds on the opening night. The three goals for the campaign were to inspire people to lead a purposeful life, to motivate people to enrich their lives, and to provide opportunities for positive interaction with our communities.

Alcohol- and drug-fuelled crime was rife in 2007, so I knew I also had to do my homework to understand why young people get into criminal behaviour and what they want to change. I travelled around the UK making documentaries about youth offenders, visiting youth offending teams and going into youth offender prisons. This led me to believe that 99% of our young people are good; it is only the 1% that are feral. By that, I mean that their personality and lack of respect for others will never change and, of course, there can be only one route to go down.

Just how do we move forward to change the lives of our young people? This is why this debate is very important. We have to encourage them to stop arming themselves with weapons of life destruction and instead to arm themselves with tools that will upskill their hidden talents to change their pathways to a brighter future. We need quality facilities that communities respect and own. No more street postcode barriers, but freedom to share with one another their skills to bring about change.

This brings me back to the next chapter of my journey before I was honoured to have a seat in your Lordships' House. In 2008, I was delighted to be given a tour of a fantastic facility in Bolton, named Bolton Lads and Girls Club. This was a state-of-the-art facility. I had the pleasure of being shown around by the young people who use the facility daily—young ladies speaking about the facility in their own words, with their faces full of pride for what the building gave to them. I decided that I wanted one for Warrington. Why should the young people and communities not have such a facility on their doorstep?

While I recognise and acknowledge the funding that the Government have invested over the years, initiatives are well placed but they come and go. Now is the time to roll our sleeves up and put our money where our mouth is. There is a statutory duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient positive activities for young people. Local authorities are best placed to secure services that meet the needs of young people within the budget that is available to them. I appreciate that all areas have unique needs and there will be councils that simply do not put youth services at the top of their agenda. However, I believe that we must invest to get the best and at times we must be flexible and risk-averse to achieve that. Research in this area of providing youth services is, I am sad to say, sparse and feels out of date. Some measures do not get captured. By that, I mean the value of youth work and linking youth services to personal health, family health and well-being.

I therefore ask my noble friend the Minister: has there been any recent rigorous research to show that youth clubs effectively reduce unemployment, crime and drug use? The time has come where I believe that there is only one youth facility. As the noble Lord, Lord Storey, mentioned, they are OnSide Youth Zones. As I have said, I recommend that noble Lords go and see these facilities, as did the noble Lord, Lord Storey. Seeing them is completely different from reading about them. In fact, they have even been endorsed by His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. He was blown away by what these facilities achieve for people who have mental health problems as well as everything else.

OnSide Youth Zones are local facilities, a national network of local, independent youth charities which provide safe, affordable, warm and inspiring leisure-time facilities. They are iconic, best-in-their-class, multipurpose buildings and facilities, demonstrating the value a community places on our young people. They are community assets for the benefit of young people, local partners and residents. Most importantly, they all work with a wide range of partners including police, health, sports and disability charities, providing a platform for all. Up to 250 young people attend each session; they are open seven nights a week and have direct access youth provision. They give our young people somewhere safe and, more importantly, somewhere fun to go when they come out of school. They deliver more than a 200% return on social investment and 400% on the investment from the public purse.

Speaking in their own words, the young people say that they get better marks on their schoolwork; 72% are staying out of trouble because of attending and 80% of members are now thinking about life after school and going to college. More importantly, on the hot topic of obesity, 70% now exercise more regularly. Surely that says everything. What I really like is that it costs only 50p a visit. They get a hot meal, which some young people do not get at home; it raises their aspirations and builds their confidence.

I am also chairperson of a collaborative learning circle with Kier Group, as set out in the register of interests. We are looking to link in with OnSide Youth Zones and communities to create a fantastic facility which will enable apprenticeship opportunities. Indeed, at yesterday's Question Time, my noble friend Lord Baker of Dorking was spot on when he raised the issue of youngsters at 16 who will not be employed as apprentices by companies because at school all they are studying is a narrow, academic curriculum and all technical subjects are being squeezed out of our curriculum. The time has come to place more emphasis on technical subjects. Yes, there is a cost in creating new ideas and being risk-averse, and austerity makes people very nervous when making decisions, certainly when having to sign that cheque. However, I believe if you put in the hard work and give young people something brand spanking new, then they will feel that you respect them and they will respect the very environment which they designed, where they can gain practical and academic skills. More importantly, they can gain confidence to go out into that big wide world.

I have had tremendous supporters back home—Nick Hopkinson MBE and John Connell, to name two—who fight for Warrington and our young people. I can say that, after 10 years of hard work, fighting with the council and having many meetings, Warrington youth zone becomes alive in 2019. It is something I am really proud of. Speaking as a former champion for active and safer communities and in my role over the last six years as Victims' Commissioner, speaking to children who are so vulnerable and feel at the bottom of nothing, surely it is only right and fitting that we now need to knuckle down and create a vision that is sustainable and creates better communities together, because young lives matter. A life is not a practice run. We must enrich our young ones into better pathways and not into the pathways of guns.

7.13 pm

Lord Judd (Lab): My Lords, I am sure we all want to thank the noble Baroness for those remarks. It was great to hear that she is not content just to talk about the issues, but gets dug in in her local community. I have to declare an interest at the outset because I was—for nine years at one time—president of the YMCA. That organisation is deeply involved in all this. It is so deeply involved that when it speaks, it speaks with the authority of engagement and therefore it is terribly important for what it says to be taken seriously.

The way the noble Lord, Lord Storey, introduced the debate was very challenging—not for the first time, coming from him. Criminal gangs are where some young people find that they make their homes, because they have no other home experience to speak of. Then there is knife crime and mental health, and there are zero-hour contracts and all the other employment pressures. I shared with the House before how a retired chief constable, who was working as a volunteer for the YMCA in a young offender institution, told me about encountering a young man who burst into tears. He said, “Why are you crying?”, and the young man said, “Because I’m about to be released, and I’m fearful of what will be waiting for me when I get out of this place”.

The YMCA has recently produced an analysis entitled *Youth & Consequences*. I hope the Government have studied it, and I would be very interested to hear their comments this evening. The YMCA underlines:

“In 2010/11, Local Authorities in England reported spending £1.18bn on youth services, with this work accounting for an estimated 13% of total local spend on all children and young people's services”.

It tells us:

“By 2016/17, spend on youth services in England had reduced by £737m, with Local Authorities spending in this area reported to be £448m last year. This reduction in Local Authority spend in England is equivalent to a 62% cut since 2010/11”.

The analysis also tells us:

“Local Authorities in the West Midlands have cut spend on youth services by 71% since 2010/11, while in the North West cuts over the same period amount to 68%. Young people living in the East of England and South West have fared best. However, even in these areas, the annual spend on youth services has more than halved since 2010/11”.

The report goes on to say that in Wales—my noble friend Lord Griffiths is responding to this debate—

“it is young people in Mid Wales who have faced the biggest cuts to their youth services. Local Authorities in Mid Wales have almost halved (48%) their spending on youth services since 2010/11. Those young people in South West Wales have been more fortunate, with cuts to youth services in this region totalling 23% since 2010/11”.

Very fairly, the analysis asks:

“Do new funding sources offer hope? While Local Authorities remain the primary source of funding for youth services, it is important to acknowledge that providers access funding from a range of sources. The most prominent new funding source that has emerged since 2010/11 is for the National Citizen Service ... Between 2010/11 and 2016/17, an estimated £630m was spent on the NCS, and as a local provider, YMCA”,

wants to put on record that it,

“recognises the positive impact that NCS can have on young people's lives”.

[LORD JUDD]

However, the services and the work of the NCS do not cover the whole of England and Wales, and we ought to remember that.

I ask the leave of the House before I finish to quote rather extensively from the conclusions of the YMCA survey. The report re-emphasises:

“In just six years, Local Authorities have cut their expenditure on youth services in England and Wales by more than £750m. As this research demonstrates, the long-term benefits of youth services are far too often overlooked by Local Authorities, as they seek to meet more immediate financial and statutory pressures, even within services for children and young people. It is as a result of these cuts, many young people are now missing out on opportunities outside the school setting to engage in positive activities that support their learning and development, opportunities previous generations took for granted.

It is difficult to imagine any other services in England and Wales that could be on the receiving end of cuts of more than three fifths of their total budget over such a short period of time, with little or no scrutiny to the long-term impact this would have on our communities and the individuals missing out. Unfortunately it is not until news of young people being isolated or incidents like the recent knife crimes in London hit the headlines, attention seems to go to the role of youth services ... To halt and redress these continued cuts which are seeing increasing numbers of young people miss out, it is critical the importance of youth services are recognised in statute”—

I emphasise “in statute”—

“nationally, and in funding locally. Linked to this, it is critical that Local Authorities are better accountable on how spending on youth services is allocated, particularly in England where existing reporting requirements are extremely limited. YMCA is calling on the Government to: protect youth services from further cuts by committing to maintain spending at current levels of expenditure; improve accountability by reclassifying youth services as a statutory service and requiring better reporting of local expenditure and delivery”.

I want to put on record that there is an immense amount of voluntary work being done by the YMCA, as we have heard from the noble Baroness, and this cannot receive enough praise. However, at a time when the young face so many challenges, hazards and difficulties, and when it becomes clear from the press every day what appalling consequences there can be—not least suicide—it is absolutely essential that this is underlined as a national priority.

7.23 pm

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, this is one of those important debates when we have to look at ourselves and see what we have inherited over recent times. The consequence of an action taken—probably understandably at the time—has come back to sink its teeth firmly into our rear ends. If we cut services for the groups that have the least support and money in the home, and the least ability to access them outside it, there will be consequences. These people will not reach their economic potential and will be a social nuisance. There is an entrepreneurial group out there that will use them as a resource, whether for knife crime or drug crime—you name it.

In terms of support, we have cut away the fat and a fair bit of the muscle and we are now in danger of going straight into the bone. We have to stop doing that and we also have to look at what is out there to rebuild. The oval ball has done terribly well—the 13-a-side game got in there first with a mention from the noble Baroness. Rugby union has done this as well.

We could go through the projects for all sports but it is a long list, so let us look at the School of Hard Knocks project in English rugby union. There are other projects out there. All sports seem to have the ability to reach those groups in ways that most other projects cannot. As my noble friend said, the youth club—with its ping-pong and high-minded things and the little disco at the end—was probably out of date even when it was created. It is just one of those things that does not really appeal. It may have come at a pertinent moment, when there was nothing else out there, but now it is dated.

Sport seems to have the ability to engage people in a way that other structures do not. Probably the most successful of all these sports in engaging people is not, I am afraid, rugby union, rugby league or any of the others, but boxing. Boxing is wonderful because the idea is that it is a tougher sport. It is, let us remember, the martial art reinvented. It is a martial art. There are rules, regulations, training and discipline. Okay, there is no Buddhist chant or somebody in pyjamas—which seems to be loved by the West and taken as read by the East. It requires a degree of discipline and focus, and it seems socially acceptable for those groups to get involved in it. However, you can overplay this. At the APPG for Boxing, we had someone saying, “Wait a minute, we can’t solve everything but we can engage”. You find what is culturally acceptable. I am sure it was the same for Warrington with its sport. Rugby league is very much based on strength and weakness. If you find what is culturally acceptable, you can get into people and engage with them. All these activities and sports seem to improve schoolwork, improve interaction and cut down on violence. Boxing cuts down on violence—now there is a thought to carry away with us.

If we can get in and get people involved, we are achieving something. This is all motherhood and apple pie so far. The question for the Government is: how are they going to make sure it is easier for these outside groups to get access to this? If local government is struggling financially, as it clearly is, how can national government come in and help, at least in structural terms? How can local government make sure that the facilities for these activities are readily available? You will not always have the right club in the right place to make the interaction. Often you will, but not always. If you want to introduce something new, remember, sports actually like going into new places. It improves their base and their interaction. They have some interest in this as well.

How can you do it? First, try to make sure that all of the school system is available to sports because it has space, time, halls and playing fields—you name it, it is there. It may not be perfect, but it is there and it is something. Making sure that we are not running our schools predominantly through local authorities—that academies and free schools take on part of the burden—really has to come from central government. I cannot see anyone else who can do it. Even if it is only encouraging the sponsors of those institutions to take sport on as a relevant social activity, it is something that should be done.

Now we can go on for far too long about the wonders of sport. I know there are projects where music and dance achieve the same things, as will

other activities. I am not sure croquet will cut it in most of these fields. As an entrance point, I am sure that string quartets will not either. Where you go after that, who knows? However, we have to make sure that these groups that have a tried-and-tested model that is achieving success are encouraged to go on. When the Minister answers, will he tell us what the Government will do to encourage this to take place? If we do not utilise this, we will be missing an opportunity—an opportunity that is provided for somebody else more or less for free. It really would be stupid not to.

7.29 pm

The Earl of Listowel (CB): My Lords, it is an honour to follow the wise words of the noble Lord, Lord Addington, and perhaps I may focus on one thing that he mentioned. He described the importance of boxing to excluded young people. A care-experienced adult approached me a while ago. He had grown up in a very abusive children's home. There are some excellent children's homes but his was very abusive. When he was in his mid-20s he was approached by a police officer and was told that all the other residents there had died or were drug addicts or in prison, and he was the only one who had made his way through. The reason was that he had got involved with his local boxing club, where there were men who set him a good example. He had difficulties. He was in prison for a while and became a bouncer for a while, but later he learned how to read and write, and eventually he wrote the story of his life. He has been a successful author and a successful personal trainer, but it was boxing that really helped to change his life. Building on what works is such an important message.

I am grateful to the Minister for giving me the opportunity to speak to him before this debate. What he said was somewhat comforting and I look forward to hearing more along the same lines today. I am also most grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Storey, for introducing this important and very timely debate.

The summary of the conclusion of the YMCA report given by the noble Lord, Lord Judd, contained a lot of what I would like to say. To my mind, it is very important thing to ensure that a strong youth work profession with great integrity is sustained over time. It is important that youth workers stay in their practice, gain experience over the years and pass on that experience to the next generation. We should have a very sound youth work culture in this country that informs policy—I see that as a very important way forward.

I would like to impress on the Minister the need to see youth work as a profession, in parallel with the teaching profession. The noble Lord, Lord Storey, would like to see an all-qualified youth work profession with a strong institutional base, and so would I. We heard about the National Youth Agency and another agency. I wonder how well they are funded and whether there needs to be an institution run by youth workers that sets guidelines for youth workers in general. How can the institutional base of youth work be strengthened, ensuring the quality of youth work? Whatever policy is developed in this area, I hope that there will be input and buy-in from all parties so that as far as possible we have a consistent policy from one Government to the next.

The current recruitment and retention crisis in the teaching profession, with no consistent policy for developing the teaching workforce, is a tragedy. It is important to develop a common policy and to stick with it. It is also important to recognise the difficulties of adolescence. Adolescence is a hugely challenging period for young people. They need guides and good exemplars to help them through that time. I urge the Minister to look at a statutory underpinning for youth services, as so many of your Lordships have said, to ensure that there is consistent funding, to get the basics right and to focus funding in particular on developing the youth workforce.

Why is there a need for youth workers? Perhaps before that, I will mention an article by the BBC questioning the value of youth work from a research base. Leon Feinstein, a well-respected academic, researched youth work a while ago and found that young people attending youth clubs were more likely to get involved in crime and other such activity than those who stayed at home—Margaret Hodge said that they would have been better staying at home—but in that particular example he said that the qualifications and the status of youth workers was unsound and doubtful. So it really hammers home that you have to have high-quality youth workers.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Lord Ashton of Hyde) (Con): My Lords, I, too, was going to mention that research. The point was that bad youth services were what did the damage, not good ones.

The Earl of Listowel: Absolutely—that is what I was trying to communicate. It was the poor youth work in those clubs that led to the poor outcomes. Several years before that research was produced, a research report on Summer Splash activity schemes found that crime rates around the local area where there were Summer Splash activities went down during the summer because those activities were going on. So it works if it is of high quality.

When I think about the need for adolescents to have this support, I think of Anna Freud's work. Some time ago, she wrote her paper on *Adolescence as a Developmental Disturbance*—the clue is in the name. She described adolescence as a period of revolt, when teenagers are trying to break out and rebel against their parents, and their peers become much more important. They undergo many sexual changes, which makes them ripe for exploitation by others but also can cause them to exploit others sexually. They are finding their identity. If you think again about the needs of these young people, many of them are growing up without a father in the home—one in five children in this country is growing up without a father in the home. Visiting young offender institutions over many years now, so often I hear from prison officers that I am the first father figure in this young person's life.

Visiting Rochester young offender institution a while ago, where there was a programme called Lions into Foxes, I found a 30 year-old BME man talking to a group of young BME lads about how to turn from lions into foxes—how to move from being impulsive

[THE EARL OF LISTOWEL]

and strong to becoming wily and thoughtful before acting. I visited a young offender institution recently where there had been a serious attack on one of the prison officers overnight. I visited one area of a prison and talked to two prison officers, who said that they had not had any serious incidents for the whole year. This was what was called a PIPE—a psychologically informed planned environment—where special attention is paid to the importance of relationships with the young people. Each young person has a key person relating to them, and with those relationships comes the ability to manage their behaviour, so that they do not act in destructive ways.

In conclusion, when we intervene late with young people, the costs can be huge. Last week I was talking to a provider of residential care for young people. A place in his children's home, if you like, costs £250,000 a year—that is on the hard end, but they have many settings across the country—so if we do not get this right, the cost is huge. There is also, of course, human misery and human loss. So we need to get this right. Again, I emphasise those key issues to the Minister. I urge him to do what is necessary to make youth work an attractive profession; to ensure that there is a strong and well-funded institutional base for youth work; to try, if possible, to get buy-in from all parties in whatever strategy the Government are producing, so that there is consistency from one Government to the next; to look at the statutory underpinning for youth services; and to recognise that adolescence is a very difficult period, which was the point that Anna Freud was trying to make.

We ask far too much of teenagers, and we ask more and more of them as they deal with various things—social media and so on. We should provide them with guides and exemplars, men who they can see as good examples. As for me, if I want to think about how to behave towards women or about how to act towards work, I think back to what my father did and that gives me the guidance that I need. These young people need that kind of guide. I look forward to the Minister's response.

7.40 pm

Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Lab): My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Storey, for introducing this debate. I wish it was more populated and with a greater expression of experience and ideas. It is clear from his remarks that we shared the same innocent and golden period for work in youth clubs. I say to the noble Lord, Lord Addington, that table tennis was always a great fascination to me and the disco at the end livened me up ready for going home, so I cannot agree with him on that one.

I declare an interest as president of the Boys' Brigade. It sounds masculine but girls are now very much a part of it. The Boys' Brigade and Girls Association must get a snappier title now that they are together. With 45,000 children and young people in tow and 8,000 volunteer leaders, it is a great privilege to serve in this way.

Like the noble Lord, Lord Storey, I will begin with the headline in yesterday's *Times*, which bears repeating. It was the main story on the front page. It said that

30,000 children in gangs were aged between 10 and 15. As he mentioned, Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner, said that,

“criminals are preying on young people by taking the place of society”.

We must weigh those words. This is becoming an alternative, a parallel way of living their lives on the streets. The social structures within which too many of our children are growing up are provided by drug dealers and gangsters, who are operating in what the Children's Commissioner described, chillingly, as,

“a systematic and well-rehearsed business model”.

What an awful thing that is to contemplate. She compared what is happening in the field she has been looking at to the Rotherham sex abuse scandal, with all its intricacies, substructures and ways of controlling young people in particular.

I mentioned that I am the president of the Boys' Brigade and that ought to be a warning that there is a potential conflict of interest. In case anyone thinks I am about to plead my special cause—your Lordships must correct me if I do that—I mention it also for the positive reason that it gives me ample opportunity to be with young people rather a lot of the time. I listen to them carefully and I am impressed by them. The noble Baroness's reference to our need to respect young people is predominant. They are often despised, marginalised or paternalised and it is incumbent upon us to find ways of getting alongside young people and listening to them.

As well as my work in the young people's organisation I have mentioned, I have worked in the inner city in education for the past many years, with two schools—one in the borough of Islington and one in the borough of Tower Hamlets—in keenly disparate and mixed environments. All kinds of social problems ensue from that. On one occasion I encouraged a young man from one of those schools to write an account of his childhood life. I did that because he had been the victim of a gang attack when he was out with his best friend. The best friend was murdered on the street, in broad daylight, just 100 yards from where I was living while my young friend somehow escaped with his life. The tale he tells is horrific. This is what I asked him to write. He was in his young childhood, aged eight at the time. He and his best friend were kicking a ball around in a piece of parkland when they were surprised by two gangs that were fighting each other. They were using baseball bats and broken bottles. Then, in the little memoir that this young man wrote as part of the therapy that I thought might be useful for him as he got over his own brush with death, he said,

“myself and my friend were safely hidden in a bush afraid to come out of our enclosure. Right in front of our eyes ... two teens had cornered one of the rival gang members. Surrounding him they struck him around the head with a glass bottle. He collapsed on the ground blood leaking from his head. He began foaming at the mouth. We were petrified ... two days later news came that this individual had lost his life ... I was eight years old and I had witnessed my first murder”.

It certainly was not the last.

These are the realities within which our children and young people too often are growing up in our cities, and, as reports remind us, in rural areas. I will echo what has been said amply by other speakers.

How do we provide for our young people? I know that the Government will tell us—I can write the lines for the Minister—how much money they have committed and that it is the responsibility of local authorities to disburse that money. Quite right, yet when we look at local authorities' spending power, as has again been said by others, we find that because local authorities have a desperate need to make provision for adult social care, homelessness prevention and so much else, within the terms of their spending power it is the youth provision that suffers the most.

If there is one thing I want to communicate in my remarks it is not so much making the case, which I think is self-evident, but trying to emphasise the need for urgency in contemplation of this whole area of our national life. Various figures have been quoted. I have seen figures both in line and at odds with ones that have been quoted. It is very hard, except that we can see in percentage terms a huge decrease in money devoted to youth services. However it is calculated and whatever the actual figures we come up with, certainly more than half and sometimes two-thirds have been cut since 2010. It is anticipated that those cuts will go on being severe for the next two years. We can understand local authorities taking money from the easy part of their budgets, but it is a counsel of despair and puts our young people in jeopardy for the rest of their lives.

We know from our newspapers that, after Mrs May's announcement for the NHS just a few days ago, all those representing the NHS, defence, social care and education are raising their voices and demanding substantial injections of cash. The needs of our children and young people are likely to be lost in the clamour and the positioning for extra money if it can be found. We must not allow that to happen.

I will spend quite a lot of my summer break with young men and women from the Boys' Brigade's work in Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, and the Republic of Ireland. I will be offering my thoughts about leadership to hundreds of young people gathered for training at our regional centres. The Scottish and Northern Irish devolved Governments are more than happy to inject some core funding into youth movements such as the brigade, the Scouts and others—it is not just my own interest here. They seem less inhibited about finding money from, for example, the proceeds of crime that have been recuperated and from dead bank accounts and to put that at the disposal of young people. That seems a very practical way of proceeding. I wish that we could have a similar response here in England.

I have listened to a lot of pop music in my time because my children tell me that, if I want to know what young people are thinking, that is what I have to do. It is really inimical to me. I have had a classical education, I am an innocent abroad, so I listen to grime and garage and rap and I do my best—that is all I can say. On the verge of my adult life, I felt that I could echo Van Morrison's "Brand New Day". I am sure the noble Lord, Lord Storey, will remember that too. In my middle years I sang along with D:Ream, "Things Can Only Get Better", which of course the Labour Party used as its song of triumph at the 1997 election. Now the notes are less positive. It is much

more Foo Fighters. Dave Grohl is touring at the moment with his song "The Line", which, as he puts it, is,

"a search for hope in this day and age where you feel as if you're fighting for your life with every passing moment, and everything is on the line".

I see the noble Baroness, Lady Newlove, nodding. She has found a way to roll her sleeves up where she is. If she has any spare time, I will take her on to my team as well. We could do with a bit of her energy.

The important thing for me is not this statistic against that statistic. It is not this kind of a case against that one. It is just sensing the urgency of the needs of our children and young people at this time and finding the will and the resolution to do something about it.

7.51 pm

Lord Ashton of Hyde: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Storey, who introduced the subject in a very measured way, as did other noble Lords, against an undoubtedly difficult situation. I will come to the financial situation later. This is a very important topic, and I think there are few more pressing issues facing this country than the quality of the investment we make in the personal and social growth of our young people.

I will race through my speech because, unfortunately, I have only two minutes more than every other noble Lord, and I have a lot to talk about. I will do the best I can and write otherwise. We want to make sure that young people have the opportunity to thrive and prosper in our future economy, especially to be active and engaged citizens. My department, DCMS, provides national youth policy leadership, supports youth voice and makes strategic investments to drive excellence and innovation partnerships. Direct delivery of local youth services rightly lies with local authorities and their partners. I will come to that later.

Our national flagship policy is the National Citizen Service, which has been mentioned. It is open to all young people age 15 to 17. It is designed to deliver a concentrated programme of positive activities, personal development and social action for young people. This is delivered through more than 300 organisations, more than 80% of which are from public or voluntary and community sectors. I am pleased to say that more than 400,000 young people from all social backgrounds have so far taken part in NCS, and we expect another 100,000 in 2018. It is important to note that they have given more than 12 million hours of volunteer time.

I am, of course, aware that local youth services operate in a challenging funding environment, which is why we have a track record of funding and supporting successful new delivery models. For example, Knowsley Youth Mutual is an organisation run jointly by staff and young people which was supported by the Government to spin out from the local council. Similarly, Space, formerly the Devon Youth Service, operates eight youth hubs across the county, delivering a range of open-access services, including specialists and one-to-one support. Noble Lords will be pleased to know that we are continuing that support for innovation. We are investing £40 million to support 90 innovative

[LORD ASHTON OF HYDE]

voluntary-sector organisations in different parts of the country. With the Big Lottery Fund and the #iwillFund, Youth Focus: North East, a youth work charity, has received £150,000 over three years to deliver 50 social action projects in 50 local communities.

During the past four years, the Office for Civil Society, which is now in DCMS, has spent more than £667 million on youth. In January this year—this goes to what the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, said; it is not just the devolved Administrations—the Government announced a further £90 million from dormant bank and building society accounts specifically to support disadvantaged and disengaged young people with their transition to work.

The noble Lord, Lord Storey, mentioned youth expression, so let me turn to the support that we give to young people to have their say. We provide funding to the British Youth Council to deliver youth voice activities, including the UK Youth Parliament, the Make Your Mark youth ballot and the Youth Select Committee. We are clear that youth policy will be a central part of the forthcoming civil society strategy—which I hope will please my noble friend Lady Newlove. That will demonstrate our continuing commitment to invest in the future of young people. In preparing for that, we have gone out and listened to young people and organisations that work with them at recent events across the country.

Perhaps I may tackle head on local authority cuts. It is true that local authorities have decided to prioritise their spending elsewhere. The Government make more than £200 billion available to local authorities, but we believe that difficult decisions are best made at the local level. However, that does not mean that we have not been aware of that, and I have explained briefly some of the areas on which central government has spent money in addition—as I mentioned, in my department alone, that has amounted to £667 million over four years. There is also other cross-government spending—I could go through that in detail, but I do not have time. Of course, local authorities are still doing a good job. It varies, but, in 2018-19, they still spent £460 million on youth services.

Of course, we are looking not just at spending amounts but at great examples, two of which I mentioned, of how local authorities and youth organisations are developing new and innovative models for delivering youth services for benefits. We are looking at the youth sector as part of the civil society strategy—I am afraid that I cannot promise that it will be before the Summer Recess, but it will be out in the summer and the noble Lord, Lord Storey, will not have long to wait.

My noble friend Lady Newlove talked about the OnSide Youth Zones. We recognise some of the brilliant examples across the country of new models. OnSide is providing large, state-of-the-art youth clubs—unlike perhaps those in which the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, disoced. In partnership with councils, businesses and philanthropists, they are a good example of what can be done. We are proud that we as a Government have invested £20 million in the establishment of some of

the first youth zones through the Myplace funding; they are currently in receipt of £2 million through the youth investment fund.

The noble Lords, Lord Storey and Lord Griffiths, and my noble friend Lady Newlove talked about youth offending, gangs and knife crime—I think that practically everyone did. We recognise that the causes of crime and violence are complex and often tied to local factors. We are investing £80 million, in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund, to ensure that young people have opportunities to develop the skills they need and the resilience that can improve their life chances. The Home Office recently announced an £11 million early intervention youth fund to support youth groups and community organisations in the prevention of crime and violence.

The issue of statutory provision was mentioned by several noble Lords. It is true that local authorities have a statutory duty to secure access to sufficient services and activities to improve young people's well-being, so far as is reasonably practical. I recognise that this is a challenge, and we are aware of divergent views on this subject. I cannot say more at the moment, but suffice it to say that we understand the issues behind this statutory youth service and we are considering it.

The noble Earl, Lord Listowel, and the noble Lord, Lord Storey, talked about youth workers and how important it is that they are recognised, valued and possibly even fully qualified in order to ensure the consistency of high-quality youth work, and for the reason mentioned—that a bad youth service is worse than not having one at all. We obviously recognise the importance of having well-trained, professional youth workers for the delivery of high-quality services. We expect that all organisations will take seriously the need to ensure that practitioners working with young people have sufficient training and, more importantly, understand the responsibility of safeguarding the children and vulnerable adults they work with. Safeguarding, particularly, is a responsibility for all organisations in the sector, no matter how large or small, and that should be simple and non-negotiable. The Charity Commission—and DCMS has responsibility for the Charity Commission—is there to ensure that the highest standards of transparency and safeguarding procedures are in place, and it has definitely gone up the Charity Commission's agenda.

The noble Lords, Lord Judd and Lord Addington, talked about sport and its role. I absolutely agree with the points raised on the power of sport to engage young people. We want people to get out and do sport—or to undertake activity more generally. Activity is more important, in some ways, but sport makes activity enjoyable for a lot of people. It is good for your health, it is good for mental well-being, it keeps people out of trouble and we absolutely support it. The Government's *Sporting Future* strategy, published in December 2015, set out how important it is for all children to have a good experience. That extended the age range for which Sport England, which is one of our arm's-length bodies, is responsible, to cover children from the age of five, in order to have a greater impact across the whole of a person's sporting life. We have also developed a new Active Lives: Children and Young

People survey, which builds on the existing, adult-focused Active Lives to cover children between the ages of five and 15. This survey was launched in September and will provide a world-leading approach to gathering data on how children engage with sport and physical activity, with the first results expected this December.

I finish by saying that Sport England will be investing more than £194 million between 2016 and 2021 into projects focusing on improving children's capability and enjoyment of physical activity. We absolutely agree with the noble Lords on that. I hope I have

shown that we have taken meaningful action at a central government level, not just relying on local authorities to do their statutory duty. We have a strong record of delivery on that; it is one that recognises the undoubted challenges but does support change. We are going to build on our achievements in that, and we intend to deliver yet more for our most important generation. I am looking forward to the civil society strategy in the coming months.

House adjourned at 8.04 pm.

