

Defence issues – concerns to put to candidates

We have produced questionnaires on the subjects of fisheries and civil liberties which were available for anyone wanting to raise issues with their candidates during the General Election campaign. Although we will not be producing a similar questionnaire on defence issues, there are a number of areas of concern, which have been highlighted by Veterans for Britain. These include:-

- Fears that the UK, on Brexit will still be giving away some of its defence decision-making to the European Union.
- Fears that the UK may concede any control of its defence policy to the EU to win favour as part of the Brexit negotiations.
- A concern that the European Commission, despite Brexit, may try to engage directly with UK defence manufacturers to build a common EU defence industry
- A concern that upon independence, the UK may remain part of an EU Defence Single Market, under the auspices of the EU Defence Fund.
- A determination that on Brexit, the UK will not be part of a common EU military command structure

Our attention has recently been drawn to an article by David Banks of Veterans for Britain which is well worth reading in full. Mr Banks quotes disturbing evidence that EU-UK military co-operation has actually stepped up since the Brexit vote. With our foreign policy naturally diverging from that of the EU once we leave, this is extremely worrying as the policy being pursued by Michael Fallon seems to be a running down of the UK's defence autonomy.

With the Conservatives' lead in the polls dipping, Mrs May could do worse than to give us a clear indication that "Brexit means Brexit" in defence as well as in other areas. We at CIB

are receiving all too many comments from people concerned that a Conservative victory means Brexit betrayed. Some reassurance at this critical time would not go amiss.

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