

Draft Exit Agreement: Deep concerns over defence component

This is a comment from **Lt-General Jonathon Riley** (ex-ISAF deputy commander) and ex-military colleagues expressing deep concerns over the defence component of the Draft Exit Agreement:

"The exit agreement shows that the Cabinet Office does not intend to regain the defence autonomy it gave away on paper in 2017.

As a result of a below-radar deal reached 15 months ago, the UK will now be transitioning via a third country arrangement, that provides a u-bend route for the UK to come back fully under EU authority in the future.

Political commentators in academia and the media are largely yet to grasp the small print of what is really going on. By that time, it will of course be too late.

It's not wise to stand still in setting concrete and that's what this transition agreement amounts to in terms of defence."

Lt-Gen Riley is ex-ISAF deputy commander and a former commander of UK forces sent to Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Iraq.

His cosignatories to the statement are:

Maj-Gen Julian Thompson (former commander of landings in the Falklands),

Rear-Admiral Roger Lane-Nott (former Flag Officer Submarines, NATO Commander Submarines Eastern Atlantic)

Professor Gwythian Prins

**(with thanks to our colleagues in Veterans for
Britain for this article)**