Dear Stewart,

Following your question in defence oral questions on Monday 21 October 2019, I undertook to write to you about changes to our rights and responsibilities under Article 42(7) of the Lisbon Treaty.

Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) provides that if an EU Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The UK’s rights and responsibilities that arise under this Article will end once the UK leaves the EU and ceases to be a Member State.

While the UK would no longer be bound by Article 42(7) TEU, we would retain the collective defence obligations shared by all NATO Allies under the North Atlantic Treaty. Most EU Member States are also our NATO Allies. NATO remains the cornerstone of our collective defence.

The Government published analysis of UK-EU defence and security cooperation in September 2018, in response to the House of Commons Defence Committee report on its proposals for a future security partnership with the EU.

We want a friendly and constructive relationship, that will enable us to face the security challenges that lie ahead, and which respects the sovereignty of the UK and the independence of the EU. The future relationship should enable the UK and the EU to combat the shared threats faced by our citizens, domestically and abroad.

I hope this explains the position.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

[Signature]

THE Rt HON BEN WALLACE MP

Stewart Malcolm MacDonald MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA