

BARONESS GOLDIE DL
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

4/8/1/1/ap

29 September 2023

Dear Roger,

During the Lord Soames debate on the role of the Armed Forces and the UK's Defence Policy on 7th September 2023, you asked whether the UK's Armed Forces should be putting its efforts east of the Suez.

Defence Command Paper 23 set out that the Government will increase the lethality of our Armed Forces, reiterating our leadership role in NATO through providing an enhanced warfighting force to the Euro-Atlantic. The Euro-Atlantic region will remain our clear priority and will continue to receive more investment and attract more activity than any other region. It is our home region and UK national security, and the security of the wider region, are inextricably linked.

However, the Government also recognises that our ambitions cannot be limited to one region. Instability in, and threats emanating from, other regions around the world will have an impact on both the UK homeland and our interests globally. Our adversaries are not contained to their own regions but will compete with us everywhere. Similarly, the UK's interests continue to be challenged by non-state threats like terrorism, piracy, and organised crime.

Defence therefore recognises the need to be able to compete, challenge and contest threats globally. Our Armed Forces need also to be ready to seize opportunities; this requires persistent forward presence not only in Europe but across the globe.

I hope this explains the position.

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

*Yours sincerely,
Annabel Su. Goldie*

BARONESS GOLDIE DL

The Lord Baron Liddle
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW