

My speech on Too many wars

Some years ago I was asked to speak to the local British Legion. Whilst praising them for the sacrifices our armed services have made, I chose to speak about how we could and should fight fewer wars. We can learn from past wars which were not all well judged.

Last Friday I was asked to speak to local Conservatives about Defence at a lunch. I returned to the theme.

I made clear I do believe as we want peace we need to prepare for war. There are nasty enemies around who only respect force and think again if we deter.

I also made clear my admiration for the sacrifices of my parents generation to see off a major threat to our island home from Germany and to go on with the USA to liberate western Europe. So too to our armed forces who evicted Argentina from the Falklands and helped free Kuwait.

The loss and sacrifice made in Afghanistan was great but it was undermined by the USA 's overhasty surrender of the base and airport that was a commitment and support for the domestic police and army of the Afghan state. Take it away and the Taliban swept to power undoing many of the reforms and improvements. The USA must too look back on Viet Nam with a heavy heart.

I have published the slides I made for the talk. These set out how the UK should build its strength. Wars depend not just on armed service personnel but also on the ability of a country at war to feed its population and make its armaments and necessities of daily life. There is much more to be done to grow our own food , produce our own steel and timber, and fabricate our own weapons.