

Ross: SNP plans would threaten Scottish defence jobs

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Scottish Conservative MPs elected on June 8th will stand up for Britain's military – and back a commitment to increase spending on defence, the party said today.

Douglas Ross, who is standing in the Moray constituency, highlighted this week's commitment by the Prime Minister to spend an extra £1 billion a year on defence.

He is calling on the SNP to explain their own plans – after senior SNP MPs suggested earlier this year that, if Scotland became independent, they would “start from scratch” with a new “bespoke” independent Scottish defence policy.

Such a plan could threaten the 30,000 jobs in Scotland that rely on the military, either directly or indirectly.

By contrast, the Conservatives will go into the June 8th election with a clear pledge to meet a commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence.

Such spending will underpin existing commitments to Scottish military bases, including RAF Kinloss, RAF Lossiemouth and HMNB Clyde. Recent spending decisions have ensured that RAF Lossiemouth is to benefit from £400 million as one of the RAF's three fast jet bases. A further £1.3 billion has been earmarked for upgrades to the Naval base on the Clyde.

Scottish Conservative candidate for Moray, Douglas Ross said:

“The fact is that the Conservatives are the only party at this election who will back our military wholeheartedly and secure the thousands of jobs here in Scotland that rely on defence spending.

“We will always put Britain's national security front and centre.

“It's now clear that, if ever given the chance, the SNP would ‘start from scratch’ and put tens of thousands of jobs in danger.

“We must not allow that to happen. And the best way to ensure it cannot happen it by saying No to a second referendum on June 8th and voting Scottish Conservative.”

SNP defence plans could destroy 30,000 jobs

New analysis of SNP defence plans shows they would destroy over 30,000 jobs across Scotland. SNP Defence spokesman Brendan O'Hara has confirmed that 'a bespoke independent Scottish defence policy' should 'start from scratch' rather than take a population share of 8 or 9 per cent of existing forces and assets – because that would mean 'we're pushed down a road from which it is sometimes very difficult to come back'.[□]

Official statistics show this would mean losing over 10,000 military personnel and almost 4,000 MoD civilian jobs based in Scotland.

It would hit the 9,570 jobs directly supported by UK government spending, and over 20,000 jobs created by defence industries.

The SNP's own figures suggest the MoD's assets in Scotland are worth £7.8 billion.

Brendan O'Hara, the SNP's Westminster defence spokesman, said that an independent Scotland may choose to 'start from scratch' rather than claim UK military assets. 'One of the big debates is what do we do with the military assets? Do we start from scratch, do we take an eight per cent share or a nine per cent share of them? If we do take a share, what do we take? What are the maintenance contracts? There's a whole load of things. I'm personally very much of the opinion that if we adopt a nine per cent share of the hardware, then we're pushed down a road from which it is sometimes very difficult to come back. I don't think you can have a bespoke independent Scottish defence policy if you are immediately saddled with taking eight or nine per cent of asset' (*Daily Record*, 18 March 2017, [link](#)).