

The Revolt of Britain's Defenders

Editoriale

It's no secret that Europe's welfare states jeopardize the continent's ability to defend itself. The bracing news Thursday was the revolt of British defense officials who told the truth about the Labour government's insufficient military funding.

The U.K. pledged last year to meet [NATO](#)'s new standard and spend 5% of GDP on national security by 2035, including 3.5% on the military. At the time Prime Minister [Keir Starmer held forth](#) on the need to act with "agility" and "speed."

Yet on Monday he presented Defense Minister John Healey with a defense plan in which spending would rise to only 2.68% of GDP by 2030, up from 2.6% next year, the defense minister said in a letter of resignation to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Starmer has been "unable, and the Treasury has been unwilling, to commit the resources that the nation needs to defend the country at this time of rising threats," Mr. Healey wrote. He said the plan "falls well short of what is required" and jeopardizes the safety of the country and the readiness of British armed forces. He chose honorable resignation rather than defend this plan to voters.

Alistair Carns, minister for Armed Forces, also resigned Thursday, saying "we owe those who serve the UK the kit to do the job and loyalty to stand by them when it's done. We are failing on both."

Labour won't fund defense because it puts a higher priority on welfare spending, which it refuses to reform. About one in 10 working-age people in the U.K. now claim a sickness or disability benefit, and nearly a million Brits under 25 aren't employed, in school or in training.

The resignations are a jolting repudiation of the government by officials who best understand the threats Britain is facing. Germany's army chief [warned Thursday](#) in an

interview with Politico that “all 32 NATO partners agree that Russia might have the capability to invade a NATO partner country in 2029.”

Let’s hope the resignations awaken our friends in London about the peril they face, lest they have to write another chapter in “while England slept.”