

# SUNAK INCREASES UK DEFENCE SPENDING TO PUT COUNTRY “ON A WAR FOOTING”

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Former armed forces minister says spending “should go further.”

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In a clear attempt to secure [positive headlines](#) ahead of next week's local elections—and to create a fresh dividing line between his party and Labour after [polling suggested](#) that voters believe the opposition is better equipped to handle most national issues—Tory Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has announced a boost to defence spending.

The defence budget will now be increased to 2.5% (rather than 2 percent) of GDP by 2030—ahead of Labour's [pledge](#) to boost spending to the same level, but only “when economic conditions allow.”

Tories have welcomed the move, although former armed forces minister James Heapey [said](#) spending “should go further.” He added that “anybody who thinks that 2.5% is going to bring with it a growth in the navy, or a growth in the air force or a growth in the army doesn't really understand just how expensive all this stuff is.”

Indeed, Britain's armed forces are in [such a sorry state](#) that they require money to be brought up to a reasonable standard before they can be expected to grow.

<https://twitter.com/SkyPoliticsHub/status/1782846182949105859>

Sunak said that the cumulative spending of £75 billion (€87bn) on core defence funding over the next six years will put the country's defence industry “[on a war footing](#).”

It comes amid concerns about America's commitment to NATO, with Donald Trump looking likely to win this year's presidential elections. Earlier this year, UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps [praised](#) Trump for forcing European members of NATO to spend more on defence, and Shapps has been [pushing](#) Sunak to increase spending commitments for some time, too.

Tories are more likely to welcome this increased spending because some of the money is coming from [cuts](#) to civil service jobs. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has [calculated](#) that the pledge will increase cuts to unprotected government departments by about £8bn (€9.3bn) in 2028.

Sunak also this week signed up—though much more quietly—for more European defence co-operation, particularly with Germany. There has been little fanfare surrounding what has been described as a “[new chapter](#)” in UK-German defence relations, which will see the joint development of Remote-Controlled Howitzer 155mm Wheeled Artillery Systems “as an initial step.”