

s Starmer spreading complete misinformation on defence..

Published: January 12, 2026, 8:45 pm

As a member of the Religious Society of the Friends of the Truth, or the Quakers as they are commonly called, I am inevitably wary about war. A predisposition towards peace is a fundamental Quaker commitment, which I share, whilst also being aware that, like all other guidance anyone can provide for human behaviour, this cannot be taken as an absolute. That is because conditions where war is inevitable, however catastrophic it might be, will occur, and then conflict is unavoidable. That is because foolish leaders will, on occasion, secure power and will, as a result, create situations where this outcome is necessary to restore order, whatever the cost to humankind.

Although I am not a regular attender at Quaker meetings these days, because a great deal has happened since the time when I was, my commitment to the Quaker principles remains, including a belief that finding peaceful solutions is always essential, and eventually the only way to resolve disputes.

Keir Starmer's comments yesterday, suggesting that we need to prepare for a situation where the whole of the UK might be at war, implying that we might face a situation where we could be invaded, were then of considerable concern to me.

In truth, I do not take him seriously or believe him, because I cannot see who it is that he thinks might invade Britain. The likelihood of that happening seems to me as likely as Iraq having weapons of mass destruction seemed to be to me before the UK invaded that country in 2003, which I always, and with good reason, doubted.

To be blunt, I am suggesting that Starmer is putting out some pretty crude propaganda for three reasons.

One is to outdo Farage on jingoism.

The second is to scare the country into accepting austerity, for which there is no good reason at all.

The third is to make him look like a strong leader whom we cannot let down by ever removing him from office.

There need not be the slightest bit of credible military intelligence to stop him from doing any of these things: the warmongering machine has, after all, never turned down an opportunity to spend more. As Dwight D Eisenhower, who understood that machine more than most, [said in 1961](#) as he left the White House for the last time at the end of his term as President:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power is ever-present and must always be on guard against by our people.

I suggest that Starmer thinks of himself as being a part of that complex now: the dividing line between wise counsel in government and the military-industrial complex has, I suggest, disappeared. We should be on guard as a result, as Eisenhower suggested.

I agree we need to increase our defence, but that means:

- * Effective sanctions on Russia and other aggressor countries.
- * Massive improvements in anti-money laundering measures.
- * The imposition of appropriate penalties on those breaking these laws, including UK nationals working in tax havens where abuse might take place and measures on UK entities with facilities in such places if it is shown they are linked to such abuses.
- * A proper health strategy for the UK, because most young people are not fit enough to serve in our forces. Only major dietary reforms at a population level can solve that. Perhaps above all other changes, this might be the most important measure when it comes to defence procurement because without it, we will not have the staff that any armed forces might need.
- * Serious infrastructure reform to reduce our vulnerability: renewable energy and a much reduced dependence on nuclear power are key to this.
- * Better education so that we better understand the causes and consequences of war.
- * Supply of better public services so that people think there is something worth defending in this country.

I could expand that list, but my point is straightforward: unless we think at this level, then planning new nuclear submarines that might be available in twelve years' time is irrelevant. I am suggesting that this Defence Review lacks intelligence, in other words, rather like the suggested threats of invasion do. The piece that is missing from Starmer's thinking is, in fact, the obvious one, which is that to win a war, you have to win the peace, and we are not doing that.

I could be wrong, but as a result I think Starmer is spreading complete misinformation on defence.