

also include the European Union. The crisis in Ukraine over the past year has demonstrated the importance of NATO and the EU standing up to external threats in Europe's eastern, and southern neighbourhoods. Labour will continue to advocate an EU which looks outward to promote stability, peace and prosperity on its borders.

Most immediately we will work with our allies to counter and confront terrorism. ISIL's barbarism and expansionist ideology, alongside terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Al-Shabaab, represent a particular threat to global security. Following a request from the Iraqi Prime Minister, it was right that the UK joined other nations in air strikes against ISIL targets in Iraq. But military action alone will not defeat ISIL. A long-term multinational political strategy, with regional actors playing a central role, is essential for tackling the rise of extremism across the region.

A Labour Government will always do what is necessary to defend our country. Beyond self-defence, Labour has been clear about the need to learn the lessons of previous interventions, especially the 2003 invasion of Iraq. We will continue the approach we have taken in this Parliament. A Labour Government would not propose the use of military force without judging whether reasonable diplomatic efforts have been exhausted, the action is proportionate and in partnership with allies, whether there is a clear legal basis, and if there is a clear plan, not just for winning the war but also for building a lasting peace.

Peace and security in the Middle East are one of Labour's most important foreign policy objectives. We remain committed to a comprehensive two-state solution – a secure Israel alongside a viable and independent state of Palestine. There can be no military solution to this conflict and all sides must avoid taking action that would make peace harder to achieve. Labour will continue to press for an immediate return to meaningful negotiations leading to a diplomatic resolution.

Labour will also continue to honour the UK's commitment to support Afghanistan as it seeks to secure an inclusive and durable political settlement. In December 2014, the NATO-led ISAF mission in Afghanistan ended. We can never repay the debt owed to the brave servicemen and women who have