

Letter from Steve Brine MP

WE SAID at the election in May, this government would be about security – economic and national. This week in parliament it has been about both.

On Monday, we had first sight of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) as outlined by the prime minister. The SDSR is a comprehensive blueprint that sets out how we harness all the tools of national power and it rightly makes clear we cannot choose between conventional defences against state-based threats and the need to counter threats that do not recognise national borders. It prioritises the need to deter state-based activity, tackle terrorism, remain a world leader in cyber security and ensure we have the capability to respond rapidly to crises as they emerge.

As I said in the House of Commons

this week, I welcome the UK's commitment to spending 2 per cent of our GDP on defence and 0.7 per cent on international aid. We remain the only major country in the world today to do that and both are only possible because we have a strong and growing economy.

I think the significant defence interests we have locally, not to mention the people who rely on it for their livelihoods, will welcome much of the SDSR. Portsmouth will have a very strong future for instance, not least as the Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier will be based there.

These are incredibly serious times and the decisions we MPs will likely have to take in the next few weeks are among the toughest we face. They weigh heavy indeed and I am grateful to the many constituents who have already

been in touch to give me their opinion on possible military action in Syria. I know there will be more to come.

My approach will be careful and measured as always and I will want to study the full spectrum approach as the government makes the case for Britain to join our international allies in going after IS at its headquarters in Syria, not just Iraq. In particular, I want to know how such action will be one element of a comprehensive and long-term strategy to defeat IS, in parallel with a major international effort to bring an end to the war in Syria. I would urge all constituents to study carefully the statement from David Cameron as presented to parliament today.

Find more about my work as your MP, in Westminster and the constituency at stevebrine.com or through 01962 791110.

26.11.15