The outgoing Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Sir Richard Shirreff, addressed the U K Defence Forum on this topic last night. Although it was under the Chatham House Rule, so of his views have been previously published. They are reproduced on the next page. Nick watts, Deputy Director General, will be interviewing General Richard for Volume II of our Strategic Reflections series.

The Russian invasion and annexation of the Crimea and Putin's bizarre and hyper-nationalistic speech in the Kremlin on 18th March is a clear indication that Russian strategy aims to re-establish Russian power in its 'near abroad', the territory of the former Soviet Union. The consequence: we are now in a new defence and security paradigm in which Russia is a strategic adversary and no longer a strategic partner.

This places a premium on rebuilding NATO's Article V collective defence capability, which means paying for it. In particular, European defence budgets must increase to reduce dependence on the US. At present only three NATO nations spend more than the 2% of GDP on defence recommended by the NAC. This is simply not good enough.

NATO needs to think through what Article V means in the 21st Century and therefore what its red lines are. Ambiguity, asymmetry, instigation of civil unrest by ethnic minorities as a pretext for intervention, followed by ruthless use of force will characterise the security and defence challenges of the next decade in Europe.

The first priority for NATO is defence of the Alliance. This has far-reaching implications: deterrence (both conventional and nuclear); reinforcement options for NATO's eastern borders; forward defence; force readiness and generation; rebuilding lost high-end warfighting capabilities must all be on the agenda. The best way to de-escalate the crisis and seize the initiative is to show a strong hand: 'Thus far and no further' must be the message. Demanding, rigorous training for high-end war fighting from the political to the tactical level will ensure NATO has both the mental approach and means to meet the challenges it faces.

The Ukraine crisis has highlighted the critical need for strategic coherence between NATO and

the EU because the second and third order of the decisions of one organisation will have impacts, sometimes unforeseen, on the other. As a minimum, Berlin Plus must be revived in order to harness and maximize complementarity between NATO and EU.

Global security challenges will still pose a potential threat to Europe, hence the need for a strong, capable reserve. This, together with the threat posed by Russia to NATO's eastern borders, highlights the importance of ensuring a politically and militarily credible NATO Response Force (NRF).
Upstream capacity building to prevent a problem in a fragile or failing state degenerating into a crisis is a highly cost effective way of enhancing Alliance and European security globally. Capacity building is more than professionalizing armed forces and needs to be built comprehensively across government, hence the importance of NATO/EU synergy.

Notwithstanding the need to rebuild capabilities to face the new challenge of an expansionist Russia, we must not lose what we have learned from the last two decades of stabilization operations 'among the people'. In particular, we need to institutionalise the Comprehensive Approach to ensure unity of purpose between military and non-military actors in the problem space. Interaction and, where possible, integration between military and civilian partners (both traditional and non-traditional) will continue to be a sine qua non in resolving future security challenges – even in state on state conflict.

Finally, we must not ignore legacy problems in the Balkans. There has been great progress in much of the western Balkans, not least because of the desire to join the EU. The general point is that this highlights the strategic importance of the EU as a force for stability and therefore security (for which the EU is seldom given credit). The specific point, as far as the Balkans is concerned, is that Bosnia-Herzogovina remains a politically dysfunctional state where security cannot be taken for granted.