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TREC: Renewables for Security and Stability

by Dr. Gerhard Knies, Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC)

Imports of fuels such as uranium, natural gas and oil, are considered to be politically risky, since the global reserves are shrinking inexorably. This is leading to higher prices, to political dependencies and to limits on supplies. By contrast, solar power is plentiful and inexhaustible, and its extended use will lower costs and improve the technologies. Against this backdrop, the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC) was founded in September 2003. TREC is an initiative in the field of renewable forms of energy, of The Club of Rome, the Hamburg Climate Protection Foundation and the National Energy Research Center of Jordan (NERC). The aim of TREC is to develop a concept for energy, water and climate security in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (EU-MENA) and to make this concept a reality in cooperation with people in politics, industry and the world of finance. In order to provide clean energy for Europe and for sunbelt countries quickly and economically, cooperation between the countries of EU-MENA is needed. Power from deserts, as a supplement to European sources of renewable energy, can speed up the process of cutting European emissions of CO₂ and it can help to increase the security of European energy supplies. At the same time, it can provide jobs, earnings and other benefits for people in North Africa and the Middle East.

To determine the feasibility of this approach, two studies were commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and have been conducted by the German Aerospace Center (DLR). TREC has also been involved in the conduct of these two studies which have evaluated the potential of renewables in MENA, the expected needs for water and power in EU-MENA between now and 2050 and the potential for an intercontinental electricity transmission grid spanning the whole of EU-MENA. Satellite-based studies by the DLR have shown that, using less than 0.3% of the entire desert areas of the MENA region, Solar Thermal Power Plants can generate enough electricity to supply current demands in EU-MENA, and anticipated increases in those demands in the future. Solar thermal power plants (also called Concentrating Solar Thermal Power, CSP) use mirrors to concentrate sunlight to raise steam and generate electricity. Excess heat from additional collectors can be stored in tanks of molten salt and then be used to power the steam turbines during the night, or when there is a peak in demand. In order to ensure uninterrupted service during periods with overcast or bad weather, the turbines can also be powered by oil, natural gas or biomass fuels.

An interesting by-product that can be a great benefit to the local population is that waste heat from the power-generation process can be used to desalinate seawater and to generate thermal cooling. Accordingly, this approach has potential to alleviate shortages of fresh water in the MENA regions. The trade winds of southern Morocco may be harnessed to generate additional supplies of electricity. Clean electricity can be transmitted via High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission lines throughout EU-MENA with overall transmission losses that would be no more than 10-15%. Increased demand by Europe would lead to more business opportunities for the MENA countries. This in turn may help to increase political stability and improve relations between Europe and MENA. Too large a dependence on one country and on only a few power plants can

be avoided by diversifying the range of sources of renewable energy, as illustrated by the figures showing large numbers of solar power plants and wind farms in many countries — and by the use of several different HVDC transmission lines to Europe. Possible worries about security of supply will also be reduced if there are many different owners of the facilities, both public and private.

By 2050, between 10-25% of Europe's electricity may be clean power that is imported from the deserts. International trade in renewable energy will tend to increase the number of available sources and should help to strengthen international stability. The creation of new jobs in the MENA region should enhance its internal stability. Employment would be created in construction phase, in the maintenance of power plants, and in the generation of electricity and water for local people. There is also the possibility of generating hydrogen through inexpensive and inexhaustible supplies of energy as a possible substitute for fossil fuels for transport. Furthermore this would reduce the reliance on biomass to generate electricity, freeing more biomass reserves for its use in the transport sector.

The Club of Rome and TREC support this concept. Countries, such as Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, and the United Emirates have already shown a strong interest in this kind of cooperation. As a means of implementing the DESERTEC concept, TREC proposes an initiative that would be as ambitious as the Apollo SPACE program that took people to the moon. In addition to feed-in regulations and other measures in support of clean power generation from the deserts, this Apollo 'DESERTEC' programme could be boosted by a number of projects that are technically possible, but require financial and political support. One example is the Gaza Solar Power & Water Project. The aim of the project is to build combined solar thermal power and desalination plants. These plants, part of a potential international recovery programme for Gaza, could be located in the Egyptian Sinai coastal region, with appropriate water and power lines into the Gaza strip, providing supplies for 2-3 Million people. This project could mark a turning point in the currently disastrous social and economic development of Gaza, in the regional conflicts over water and even contribute positively to the stalled peace process between Israel and Palestine. The total investment required would be about 5 billion Euros. However, as suggested in the recent Stern report, this kind of investment would be safer and much cheaper than letting climate change proceed unchecked, and then paying for the resulting damage. By the middle of the 21st century, the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East could provide most of the power needed in the MENA region, and become inexhaustible sources of clean energy for European countries, thus helping to cut emissions of CO₂ from electricity generation by 70% and phase out nuclear power at the same time – with decreasing electricity costs in the long-term.

Dr. Gerhard Knies is member of the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC). He co-founded the Hamburg Climate Protection Foundation in 1995.

For more information on TREC, please see <http://www.trecers.net>

For more information on the studies conducted by the DLR, please see <http://www.dlr.de/de/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-13>

For the Club of Rome, please see <http://www.clubofrome.org>

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POLICY & RESEARCH

No End in Sight to Unrest in Bolivia

The radical political changes in Bolivia taking place since 2000 have invariably been accompanied by conflicts over natural resources. Confrontations have ranged from protests and social movements in Cochabamba against high water prices that ultimately forced the multinational companies to withdraw, to road blockades in El Alto that resulted in deaths, bringing to the fore resentment against water privatisation and divisions about the processing and marketing of Bolivian oil and gas reserves. Last but not least, the inequitable distribution of land is also a cause of conflict.

The nationalisation of oil and gas reserves just a few months after Evo Morales assumed office in 2005 signalled a change in political direction. It appeared that this step would lessen the potential for conflict. But in fact a Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) conflict analysis study on Bolivia surmises that the new legislation could lead to new flashpoints proved correct. On 8 January 2007 there were clashes between supporters of Bolivian President Evo Morales and security forces in the Cochabamba region, which left at least 22 injured. Demonstrators attacked the provincial government building and set it on fire. They were demanding the resignation of Governor Manfred Reyes Villa, who supports autonomy for the four eastern provinces of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando and Tarija – all of which are rich in mineral resources.

In a national referendum held in early July 2006 the population in these regions voted in favour of greater autonomy. At the national level, however, about 56 percent of voters were against granting more independence to the provinces. They thus backed President Morales, who has categorically rejected any further provincial autonomy. The key issues at stake are the distribution of revenues from mineral resources, border demarcations between the provinces, and the allocation of funds for building up a strong regional structure. According to the FES report the outcome of the conflict will depend largely on the stance adopted by the Morales government. If the government attempts to block the regionalisation process in Congress – and thereby the institutional mechanisms for managing the conflict – tensions are likely to escalate. *(by Judith Winterstein)*

IPS news provides updated information on the situation in Bolivia: <http://www.ipsnews.org>
The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) report entitled "Studien zur Länderbezogenen Konfliktanalyse Bolivien" (in German) is available at <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/04120.pdf>.

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A Pipeline for Peace?

The Red Sea Dead Sea Canal project (RSDSC) has taken a great step forward. This 180-kilometre pipeline seeks to link the Dead Sea with the Red Sea by pumping around 1,900 million cubic metres of water annually from the Red Sea. Officials of the Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian Authorities met in December 2006 with representatives of the World Bank and donor countries to launch a feasibility study. The meeting discussed further proceedings including timetable and funding. France, Japan, the Netherlands and the US have already contributed \$8.8 million to fund the \$15 million feasibility study, while the overall cost of the project is estimated at \$3 billion. The meeting is an indication of success, as it was not easy to overcome all obstacles faced at the beginning of the project. The World Bank is playing a major role in eliminating differences among parties,

while at the same time securing and coordinating finances for the project and the study phase.

Environmental experts have repeatedly warned that the Dead Sea is in danger of drying up as the Sea level has dropped by more than 30 metres during the past 20 years, largely due to diversion of water from the Jordan River for agricultural and industrial use. "This project will help ease the shortage of water for all of us," Israeli National Infrastructure Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said at the summit, according to the Reuters news service. He also highlighted the importance of the project for the peace process in the region. "A peace agreement is a piece of paper that can be cemented only through economic projects. The study is an excellent example for cooperation, peace and conflict reduction." Palestinian president's economic adviser, Mohammad Mustafa confirmed: "The study is essential in promoting sustainable development of the entire Jordan Valley basin."

However, critics point out that the feasibility study does not sufficiently consider alternative options to tackle the causes of the water crisis, such as improved integrated water resource management. Even though it is the aim of the study to assess the consequences of this major natural engineering project, many questions have yet to be answered, before the so called Peace Conduit will actually contribute to peace and stability in the region. *(by Christiane Roettger)*

For more information on the project, please see

http://www.menafn.com/qn_news_story_s.asp?StoryId=1093136148

and Friends of the Earth Middle East <http://www.foeme.org/projects.php?ind=51>

For an assessment on the impacts, please see

<http://www.environmental-expert.com/Files%5C6063%5Carticles%5C5010%5CLJV435644H41N472.pdf>

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The Prospects for Environmental Peacemaking in Africa

Options for environmental peacemaking are at the heart of two policy briefs written by GECHS SSC member Patricia Kameri-Mbote, which are now available from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. In the newest brief of the Navigating Peace series of the Environmental Change and Security Program (ECSP), Kameri-Mbote lays the historical foundation of water management in the Nile River Basin, and recommends policies for facilitating cooperation among the region's many water users. One of her main points is that high-level negotiations like the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) are not sufficient. Instead, civil society must be involved. Since the inhabitants of a river basin play critical roles in the success of any international agreement, she argues, interstate negotiations should also include stakeholders beyond the national governments.

In her second brief, published by the Africa Program of the Wilson Center, she broadens the focus beyond water cooperation and points out that rather than being a source of competition, Africa's dependence on natural resources can facilitate dialogue and provide a pathway to peacebuilding in the troubled Great Lakes Region. As examples the researcher refers to a cross-border biodiversity project in East Africa that offers potential for peacebuilding. To reduce biodiversity loss, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, UNEP's Global Environment Facility and national environment agencies in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania selected four biodiversity hotspots that lie on political borders. The countries' national environmental agencies, along with the East African

Community (EAC) institutions based on the EAC Protocol on the Environment, are working with local communities on each side of the border to discuss forest management issues and identify inconsistencies between national policies and local cooperative norms. These interactions could yield peace dividends, as participants build relationships and identify their common environmental interests. A further example with environmental peacemaking potential could be found at the Albertine Rift, a transboundary ecosystem spanning several states in the Great Lakes Region. As a first step, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda signed a declaration establishing a shared management system consisting of joint patrols, training, animal trafficking law enforcement, and conservation efforts in October 2005. *(by Dennis Taenzler)*

The policy briefs are available at

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/NavigatingPeaceIssue4.pdf>

<http://wilsoncenter.org/topics/docs/Patricia.pdf>

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New Efforts against Illegal Logging

Indonesia and the European Commission agreed to tackle illegal logging after a meeting between M.S. Kaban, Indonesian Forestry Minister and Louis Michel and Stavros Dimas, the respective Commissioners for Development and Environment. This marks the beginning of formal negotiations towards a voluntary partnership agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). This agreement will provide assurance that Indonesian forest products imported by the EU are verified to be legal. Similar formal VPA talks were initiated with Malaysia in September 2006. The agreement should foster cooperation between the partners and strengthen capacity building by conducting market and technical studies as well as knowledge-sharing. Commissioner Dimas emphasized: "Indonesia has played a leading role in placing illegal logging on the international agenda. The EU and Indonesia recognise that as consumers and producers of tropical timber we have a joint responsibility to eradicate illegal logging and move towards our shared goal of sustainable forest management."

Already in December 2006 Liberia's Forestry Development Authority announced that it is preparing a new bidding process for logging concessions following the lifting of the United Nations Security Council's three-year ban on Liberian timber exports. In July 2003, the UN Security Council considered Liberia's logging industry as a threat to peace and security since the revenue from timber had been used by former president Charles Taylor to fuel armed conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia. As a result, sanctions were imposed with significant consequences for the country's export earnings. The current government has implemented new legislation on logging to ensure revenue would benefit the whole country. Under the new law, Liberia's forests are to be divided into three categories: protected forests, forests for community timber activities, and forests for commercial logging. However, implementing the law will pose some challenge since a mechanism needs to be found how the forests should be shared among various communities, and how communities can best benefit from the forests. *(by Dennis Taenzler)*

For the press release of the European Commission, please see

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/25&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=frn>

For more information on the issue "Illegal Logging", please see <http://www.illegal-logging.info>

For more information on the FLEGT process, please see

http://ec.europa.eu/development/body/theme/forest/initiative/index_en.htm

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Business Investment in Peace

Much is known about what not to do in post-conflict settings. To better identify what different stakeholders should do, more successful examples from post-conflict regions regarding private sector investments and their enabling environments are required, as well as more research and data on the dynamics of conflicts. This was an overarching conclusion of the Wilton Park Conference "Investing in Peace: Spurring Private Sector Involvement in Post-Conflict Peace-Building", which took place on 11 - 13 January 2007. The conference was co-hosted by the German Federal Foreign Ministry and supported by the Global Public Policy Institute.

Participants and speakers from business, industrialised country and developing country governments, academia and civil society brought together different perspectives and experiences of private sector investments. They all shared the understanding that such investments have an important role to play in creating sustainable peace. At the same time, 'the' business sector is not a homogenous entity, and policy makers should not treat it as such. For example, junior explorative and extractive companies are often among the earliest to enter a (post-)conflict region and have a mixed record regarding their impact on peace and security. Local and diaspora entrepreneurs are also often willing to invest early on in post-conflict transition. They have high stakes in building sustainable peace, but their potential is not yet fully exploited by donors' post-conflict (re)construction strategies.

The most important role of large corporations in post-conflict settings was seen as doing its core business in a responsible way. Taking risks by investing in post-conflict settings is part of this. While extractive industries necessarily have an incentive to go where the resources are, even if the country or region is troubled by conflicts and insecurity, other sectors are frequently deterred by the risks of these contexts. However, an assessment of opportunities besides the risks may give a more comprehensive picture. For example, some telecommunication providers are early investors in post-conflict settings, since they recognise the competitive advantage. Additionally, they offer an important service for nation- and peacebuilding, for example in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The conference made it apparent that more information is necessary to develop a coherent framework of how to engage business in post-conflict investment to create sustainable peace. The cost of failure is apparent in the frequent re-emergence of violent conflict. *(by Moira Feil)*

The conference programme can be downloaded at

<http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/themes/economic/pastconference.aspx?confref=WP848>

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Climate Change – The Greatest Security Threat Since the Cold War?

The world is currently in the process of undisputed climate change, a fact that has recently been reaffirmed by the findings of the fourth report from the UN

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. While scientific insights on the process are becoming clearer, how it will impact upon global security remains decidedly unclear. The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) launched its programme to research the links between climate change and security with an inaugural conference on the 24th January 2007.

Speakers included experts from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Met Office, Shell UK Limited, the Universities of Oxford, Kent and Bradford, and Al Gore's "The Climate Project". Discussions covered a range of topics including the additional pressures that climate change places upon regions where there are scarcities of fundamental resources, the scientific basis for climate change, and industry responses to the situation. Furthermore, scenarios were examined as to how climatic patterns could lead to mass migration and dangerous security situations in South Asia. The key message of the conference was that without planning now, climate change will impact upon the security of both nations and individuals in a potentially catastrophic manner.

In his keynote address to open the conference, John Ashton, UK Foreign Secretary's Special Envoy for Climate Change, likened the security challenge of climate change to those faced during the Cold War: "The last time the world shared a dilemma this complex, a challenge this difficult, this far reaching was the Cold War. I would suggest that the stakes this time are just as high if not higher. This time if we do nothing the threat just keeps getting worse, there is a 'ticking clock' in the background."

Speakers such as Sir Crispin Tickell, the former UK Permanent Representative to the UN and Professor Paul Rogers highlighted how the effects of climate change would have negative security implications and how they could also put further strain on existing political and social tensions leading to conflict. The examples of Darfur and Rwanda were used as examples of this process. The disproportionate impact of climate change on the poorest regions of the world featured highly in discussions.

The potential for political and international institutional responses were examined, and it was stressed that due to globalisation and the interdependence between states there was a requirement for a multilateral response to climate change. Those strategies that were based upon narrow state-centric views could ultimately be self-defeating in policy making in this area.

The conference concluded that a fundamental security objective for the next century should be to reinforce the four mutually connected 'pillars' of security, climate security, water security, food security and energy security. "Climate Security is the one element without which the other three will not continue to stand. [...] Climate change is not a security issue because it gives rise to theoretical security risks, it is a security issue because unless we deal with it people will die on a very large scale, hundreds of millions of people, states will fail that wouldn't otherwise fail." concluded John Ashton. *(by Tobias Feakin, RUSI)*

For more information, please see <http://www.rusi.org>

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The EU and Civil Society: Towards a Structured Dialogue

The current German EU Presidency plans to further develop the project "Role of Civil Society – European Civilian Crisis Management (RoCS)". Drawing on these efforts, the Conference on "Civil Society and Civilian Crisis Management: Enhancing Cooperation and Coherence by Multi-level Dialogues" that took place 2- 4 February 2007 in Berlin provided a platform for representatives of European civil society organisations and political actors to discuss the importance that conflict prevention, civilian crisis

management and peacebuilding efforts have (and should have) at the EU-level, as well as how cooperation with civil society in these areas might be improved.

It became clear that conflict prevention is still an area neglected by the EU and its Member States. Coordination especially among the EU Council and the European Commission is impeded by competence quarrels. Although presentations showed that much remains to be done, initial steps are taken by the EU to account for a more structured dialogue with civil society, not only through RoCS, but also a new initiative to be established: the Peacebuilding Partnership. The cooperation within RoCS will focus on pilot projects in the DRC and Somalia, addressing transitional justice issues and security sector reform, the results of which are supposed to inform the work of the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM). The RoCS report will be presented at a conference of the German Federal Foreign Service in June this year and consequently made public.

To include the view of practitioners in the field, speakers from developing countries were invited to share their experience. Some stressed that the civil societies in donor countries should strengthen partnerships with civil societies in countries receiving aid. Participants emphasized, that those partnerships are not mainly "about money", but rather "about supporting a shared vision of a civil society and democratic structures". In many countries, civil society organisations play a major role in supporting democratisation, human rights and peacebuilding. For them, the dialogue with Northern NGOs is an important way to learn and exchange ideas, but this must not be a one-way street. Instead, both sides can and should learn from each other. However, a major hindrance to the capacity building of local NGOs is, that quite often only short-term projects are supported and not the long-term task of building up administrative capacities and human resources. An important lesson learned is that the funding of individual projects does not automatically create local ownership, sustainable structures for capacity building and the much needed dialogue beyond a mere donor-recipient relationship. *(by Katja Hummel)*

For more information, please see www.konfliktbearbeitung.net

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UPCOMING EVENTS

"Climate-Security Connections: An Empirical Approach to Risk Assessment" in Washington, D.C. (6 March)

An increased understanding of the relationship between environment and conflict can result from integrating physical data with conflict data. This activity, and deriving the benefits from it, is at the heart of a new research effort led by Charles Vörösmarty of the University of New Hampshire's Water Systems Analysis Group and Marc Levy at Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) to be presented at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for International Scholars.

For further information and the live webcast, please see

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=events.event_summary&event_id=219458

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"Forces for Sustainability" in The Hague (14-15 March)

In many places of the world today the environment is under heavy pressure. In some places the situation is even worse because of armed conflicts. To address these challenges, the Institute for Environmental Security has launched the Peace and Sustainability Sessions. They will be held yearly in The Hague at the Peace Palace. The first of those sessions is entitled Forces for Sustainability. This event is organized in partnership with The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the IUCN Commission on Environment, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP). On 14 and 15 March 2007 experts will gather at the Peace Palace and focus on the challenges after disarmament of militias and the transition from military to civilian structures.

Further information and the programme are available at

<http://www.envirosecurity.org/sustainability>

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"Resource Governance in Africa in the 21st Century" in Berlin (26 March)

This international expert panel takes place on occasion of the forthcoming G8 Summit. Its aim is to stimulate dialogue between activists in Europe, North America, Africa, and from the emerging powers of the South in order to develop strategies towards a sustainable use of and investment in natural resources. An international drafting group will be working on a memorandum tackling those issues. The memorandum will be published prior to the G8 Summit.

Participation in this expert meeting is restricted and registration required. For further information, please see <http://www.boell.de/> or contact Lili Fuhr (fuhr@boell.de)

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"Integrating Environment, Development, and Conflict Prevention – European and National Approaches and Challenges" in Berlin (29-30 March)

Interdependencies between environment, development, and conflict prevention have gained significant importance on the international agenda over the past years. Energy, climate policy and responsible resource management are priorities of the German EU Council and G8 presidencies in 2007. This European Conference, hosted by the German EU Council Presidency, is intended to facilitate a dialogue among key officials from EU member states and the European Commission, civil society, the private sector, and the scientific community to identify and discuss key issues, policies, and best practices.

For further information, please see <http://www.adelphi-consult.com/ECC2007>

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FOCUS

This section serves as a platform for Institutions and Initiatives to present their activities on Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation.

RUSI – Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies

RUSI was founded in 1831. Its original mission was to study naval and military science, what Clausewitz called the 'art of war'. It still does so: developments in military doctrine, defence management and defence procurement remain central elements in the Institute's work. In recent years RUSI has broadened its scope of interest to include all issues of defence and security, amongst others terrorism and the ideologies that foster it, as well as the challenges that we face from other human-made or human-assisted threats and from natural disasters. As part of these activities RUSI is running a programme to explore the security implications of climate change.

The Institute has three main activities:

Research: RUSI undertakes rigorous, expert and objective analysis of current trends and developments, both for the Institute's own publications and events and commissioned privately for clients.

Events: RUSI produces a comprehensive programme of conferences, seminars, workshops and talks by leading experts designed to provide insight and foster debate among practitioners, policy makers and analysts.

Publications: RUSI publishes a varied collection of periodicals that are timely, innovative and relevant, designed to meet the needs of members and others.

For more information, please see <http://www.rusi.org>

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