A Message from the Chairman

In recent years RUSI has reinforced its strong reputation for world-class research and strategic analysis. The papers produced by our research fellows and analysts are read all over the world. Leading members of the RUSI team are seen, heard and quoted regularly in the British and international media. Some research, such as that conducted ahead of the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review, has made a major impact on both public perceptions and government thinking. It has been very impressive, as the new Chairman, to meet the highly dedicated and knowledgeable individuals who make this possible.

Our task at RUSI is to be a major independent centre of thinking on defence, security and international issues. We involve serving members of our armed forces, and security and intelligence agencies, but our work is clearly distinct from that of government. We want the UK and our allies to have the strongest possible ability to analyse and anticipate future threats and opportunities, but we add to that the additional benefits of being able to think independently of official constraints or orthodoxies.

In the last year, the Institute has brought together a distinguished array of actors from the public and private sector, serving professionals and outside experts for a series of meetings and conferences. These have included Dr Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, and Admiral Michael Rogers, the Director of the US National Security Agency. Senior figures from both sides of the Atlantic have addressed the meetings of our new Chairman’s Circle. And our overseas representations in Japan and the Middle East have continued their own excellent work.

Our new Director-General, Karin von Hippel, has already done outstanding work, and is putting great energy into taking the Institute to the next stage of its development. She is supported by a very strong management team. Now that we own our splendid building at 61 Whitehall, we are working on how to improve and develop it for the needs of a modern organisation. This means we need to raise additional sums of money, but we are developing our plans for that too. Combined with our determination to maintain high research standards and recruit the best people, this is an exciting and forward-looking time to be involved with RUSI.

As the world enters a more volatile and unstable period, our work will be more important than ever. I am grateful to all colleagues for the hard work they put in meeting that challenge, and to all those who give their time to serve on our Advisory Board or as Trustees. We will continue to ensure that this organisation builds on its renowned past, and enhances its strengths for the future.

The Rt Hon the Lord Hague of Richmond
Chairman of the Council
I am delighted to share with you my first Annual Report since assuming the role of Director-General. My predecessor, Professor Michael Clarke, left behind a thriving research-led organisation, one that influences both government policy and the public debate on matters of international defence and security. He also prepared the groundwork for RUSI’s future, for it to grow in the ways envisaged by the Trustees and Council members, by arranging for the Institute to purchase the freehold for our historic building at 61 Whitehall.

We are working with our architects to upgrade 61 Whitehall, which will secure the Institute’s independence and our ability to speak truth to power for decades to come. I will be sharing plans for the transformation of our building into modern office space and first-class conference and meetings facilities (including the associated fundraising campaign) in due course.

At the same time, we are undertaking a careful and targeted expansion of our research agenda so that RUSI remains at the forefront of think tanks in world-leading research. 2016–17 promises to be an exciting year for us: RUSI will be leaning in on Brexit, as the government and public grapple with the implications of the United Kingdom’s vote to leave the European Union. Our experts will be examining the threats and opportunities related to Brexit as they pertain to defence and security, and disseminating our analysis in a variety of forums.

In addition, we will stay focused on other core security challenges, such as thwarting the global expansion of Daesh (and other terrorist groups), managing migration and refugee flows, countering financial crime and terror financing, responding to a more assertive Russia and China, and addressing cyber-threats. RUSI’s experts will also provide advice and analysis on core defence issues, such as the implementation of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review and the Pentagon’s Third Offset strategy.

As RUSI turns 185 this year, we are committed to playing the vital role envisaged by our founders. As you will see from the following pages, various groups are actively engaged in RUSI’s core activities, including our governing and advisory bodies; our Associate Fellows; our individual and corporate members; and numerous other friends. It goes without saying that our achievements would not have been possible without their intellectual input and generous contributions, along with that received from governments, foundations, multilateral institutions and others.

We welcome your feedback on our work, so please get in touch with your thoughts, ideas, criticism and questions!

Dr Karin von Hippel
Director-General