Research

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) is the world’s oldest defence and security think tank. It produces independent, practical and innovative analysis to address the complex challenges of the modern world.

Through its convening power and membership, RUSI brings together a diverse range of leaders from the public and private sectors to tackle national and global concerns.

Since its founding by the Duke of Wellington in 1831, RUSI has built a global reputation as a trusted authority on defence and security, shaping British foreign and defence policy and providing a forum for independent analysis of the major questions of the day.

In its modern form, RUSI’s geographical and thematic scope has expanded to reflect the challenges of the twenty-first century, from climate change to terrorism to the rise of China. New challenges require new research programmes, and in 2014 the Institute created the Centre for Financial Crime and Security Studies to address the challenges and effects of financial crime and threat finance to the UK and international security.

RUSI’s ability to generate fresh thinking relies on the talent and entrepreneurial spirit of its young researchers, the experience of its senior staff and its close links with scholars and practitioners.

RUSI’s researchers enjoy high levels of access to decision-makers and practitioners in the public and private sectors. This access, as well as the Institute’s convening power, derives from a carefully guarded combination of impartiality, independence and policy relevance across its many areas of work.

The Institute’s corporate and individual members are drawn from academia, the government, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, multilateral institutions, the armed forces and the wider public. They form a global pool of partners and are an important part of RUSI’s work.
RUSI’s impact on policy and public debate:

In the run-up to the 2016 UK Referendum on EU membership, RUSI published research and held briefings exploring policy options should the UK decide to leave the European Union.

In 2015, RUSI experts chaired the independent review of the Ministry of Defence’s Defence Enterprise Approach programme, which could lead to profound changes to the development of defence capabilities.

In 2015, RUSI hosted the Independent Surveillance Review and published its major report on communications interception, the recommendations of which appear in the government’s Investigatory Powers Bill.

During Scotland’s referendum campaign in 2014, RUSI’s research on the implications of independence for the UK’s nuclear deterrent framed the discussion and was cited by leaders on both sides.

Since 2014, RUSI has led training programmes on countering violent extremism in the Horn of Africa and beyond, sharing best practice and innovative thinking with the security services that need it most.

RUSI organised dialogues with the North Korean ruling party and military in 2013, helping to pave the way for deepened communications between the British and North Korean governments.

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“I know what valuable work, in the cause of peace and security, the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies carries out in maintaining the essential links between the Armed Forces and those who make decisions under economic and political disciplines.”

Her Majesty
The Queen

“RUSI is renowned as a home of informed discussion, incisive research, and thought-provoking debate. This well-earned reputation and their insightful forward-thinking makes the contribution of RUSI on national security matters highly valuable in this continually changing sphere.”

The Rt Hon
Theresa May MP
Prime Minister