

Research impact: making a difference

Influencing foreign policy and diplomacy around the world

Growing out of Cold War studies, a new research centre called LSE IDEAS influenced diplomacy and policymaking in the UK, US, China and Africa

What was the problem?

In 2004 academics from LSE's International Relations Department created the Cold War Studies Centre (CWSC) to conduct focused research on the impact of the Cold War on international relations and policy. The CWSC also brought together researchers in history, political science and international affairs for mutual discussion and direct engagement with the public, particularly through events and publications.

As world events shifted from the Cold War framework, the research of CWSC became more wide-ranging, from US foreign policy in Iraq and Afghanistan to the emergence of China as a global power. This expanded focus on contemporary international affairs, and a growing need to coordinate LSE's engagement with foreign policy practitioners, led to the restructuring of the centre to enable it to better address the public policy interests of a post-Cold War world.

What did we do?

In 2008 the CWSC was replaced by a new centre called LSE IDEAS. The signature work of the CWSC was repositioned as a key project and continued its specific focus on the Cold War and its impact, whereas IDEAS was given a much broader remit as a think tank for international affairs, diplomacy and strategy.

LSE IDEAS was founded by Professor of International Relations Michael Cox, a co-founder of the CWSC who assumed the position of IDEAS Director. Professor Paul Kennedy of Yale University became the inaugural Philippe Roman Chair, and his lecture *Measuring American Power in Today's Fractured World* was the first LSE IDEAS event.

The centre hosted interdisciplinary research projects, produced working papers and reports, held public and off-the-record events, and delivered cutting-edge executive training programmes for government, business and third-sector organisations (and continues to do so today).

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Between 2011 and 2013 alone, LSE IDEAS hosted or participated in 319 global events and its members produced 55 publications. Besides the Philippe Roman Chair, it launched international partnerships with Peking University in Beijing and Columbia University in New York to offer joint MSc courses. In addition, LSE IDEAS/ IRD launched an Executive Masters in Diplomacy and Strategy in 2010-2011. Now in its fifth year, it has attracted over 100 senior professionals—including three UK Ambassadors—from 25 countries.

What happened?

Through such multi-faceted and ongoing engagement with policymakers, opinion-makers and thought leaders, LSE IDEAS provided its member academics with an invaluable opportunity to inform policy debates and to connect their academic research more directly with the practice of diplomacy and strategy at the country, regional and international levels.

In particular, academics affiliated with IDEAS played a significant role in international relations and policy-making through consultation to foreign ministries and international organisations around the world, and through engagement in so-called 'Track II' diplomacy forums that allowed foreign policymakers to exchange and test ideas outside of the formal diplomatic sphere.

For example, Cox was a contributor to the US National Intelligence Council's long-term assessment titled 'Global Trends 2030', published in 2013 and used to inform American foreign and domestic policy-making. Cox was also appointed to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advisory Group in 2013, and the British Embassy in Beijing approached Cox to have one of his articles translated under the UK-China Strategic Communication Initiative, which attracted a great deal of interest among senior Chinese foreign policymakers.

Professor of International Relations Toby Dodge, also Director of the LSE Middle East Centre, was invited to brief officials at the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DfID), including a one-on-one briefing for the British Ambassador to Baghdad. He also participated in a workshop for the UK National Security Council on 'Developing British policy towards Iraq' and briefed the US National Security Council.

'A heady mix of first-class scholarship, exciting international visitors and lectures, joint programs to train promising young foreign policy specialists from around the world, high-profile and off-the-record events, and astute publicity...rewarded within six years with the accolade of the world's second-ranked academic think tank.'

Dr Priscilla Roberts
University of Hong Kong

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Through his work with LSE IDEAS, Professor of International Relations Christopher Hughes gave evidence to the UK Parliament during its assessment of the country's China Strategy. He was also a consultant to both the FCO and the Ministry of Defence, and was invited to give presentations at the Cabinet Office on maritime disputes between China and its neighbours.

Associate Professor in International Relations Jurgen Haacke participated in a briefing for the incoming UN Secretary General's Special Envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, discussing the state of relations between Myanmar and other ASEAN members. Following the US decision to engage the Myanmar regime, Haacke took part in discussions on US policy towards the country and developments within Myanmar involving senior Obama administration officials.

The influence of LSE IDEAS and its affiliated academics, through these and other activities, has been formally recognised and acknowledged. In 2011, the Think Tank and Civic Society Program at the University of Pennsylvania announced at the World Economic Forum in Davos that LSE IDEAS was the world's fourth ranked university think tank. By the 2013 rankings, LSE IDEAS had risen to second place and was also among the top ten 'think tanks to watch'. Both positions were retained in the 2014 rankings.

Michael Cox is Director of LSE IDEAS and Emeritus Professor of International Relations. He helped establish the Cold War Studies Centre in 2004 and expand it into IDEAS in 2008. In 2011, he launched a new Executive Masters in Global Strategy designed to teach senior foreign policy practitioners. He is now general editor of two successful book series: Palgrave's *Rethinking World Politics* and Routledge's *Cold War History*. His areas of expertise are in the foreign policy of the US and American grand strategy. He is also concerned with Britain and the US, world politics after 11 September, the trans-Atlantic relationship in crisis, the history of the Cold War and post-Cold War international relations.

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Toby Dodge is Director of the LSE Middle East Centre, a Professor in the International Relations Department at LSE, and a Senior Consulting Fellow for the Middle East, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London. His research focuses on the role of the post-colonial state in the international system. The case studies he has examined are largely in the Middle East, specifically Iraq. His work has looked at the interaction between Iraq, the international community and the United States, firstly under sanctions after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and then after regime change in 2003. Dr Dodge has carried out research in Iraq both before and after regime change.

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Christopher Hughes is Professor of International Relations and Head of Department in the LSE Department of International Relations. His research includes Chinese politics and international relations with a special focus on the impact of Chinese nationalism; Taiwan's identity politics and its relationship with China; Sino-Japanese relations, with a focus on Chinese foreign policy making; the political impact of information technology in China; China and Asian regionalism; China's relations with regions outside Asia, especially Africa; and the significance of traditional ideas in contemporary Chinese foreign policy.

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Jurgen Haacke is Associate Professor in International Relations. His research interests and expertise relate to three areas in particular: the international politics of Southeast Asia; regional organisations and arrangements in the Asia-Pacific, especially ASEAN; and the politics and foreign relations of Burma/Myanmar.

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