

Integrated Security Thinking: Who's Doing It?

Dispatch no. 2 (10)

In today's world of rapidly increasing population, globalisation and climate change, most would agree that maintaining a balance between the sustainability of the nation-state system and the security of the individual people who live within its boundaries is a delicate and important challenge. However, thinking holistically on security—that is, accounting for short- and long-term challenges to the security of states, communities and individuals—is complex and requires special social and technical capabilities and methodological means. In this brief SÄKER provides an overview of existing organisations working with broadened definitions of security and how the Swedish Defence Research Agency could complement their work.

Background

This brief is one of a series that explains the concept of integrated security, as it has been developed by an interdisciplinary team of scientists at FOI, the Swedish Defence Research Agency. FOI's study is seeking to develop new solutions to some of the policy dilemmas that decision-makers grapple with when engaging in complex crises and armed conflicts. These briefs highlight those insights. One of the questions addressed by the study is to what extent other organisations are working with the same, or similar, approaches. The short answer is "Not many". A longer answer follows below.

What Were We Looking For?

The reasoning behind our search was that it would be useful for finding gaps and spurring improvements in conventional approaches to conflict and crisis analysis. While most organisations have their own set of standards on how to analyse threats to security, experience is seldom shared. Moreover, a number of actors in the field of conflict and crisis analysis tend to overlook aspects and dimensions that need to be part of an informed analysis. An important but basic distinction could be made between those actors that use technological means as part of their assessment, and those using only a social science approach.

The overview of research organisations that in one way or another are working on integrated security builds on the rather unique capability of FOI. FOI appears to be unique in its particular configuration of integrated security. It is not only broad conceptually, but it is often very discipline-inclusive. It strongly highlights technical capabilities and practical aspects as integrated characteristics of seeing comprehensive security as an applied concept, which is sought after and created, as a desired condition. This in turn makes it action-oriented and methodological in its concern.

A list of forty organisations that also appeared to be working with broadening notions of security was compiled. Given the indicative nature of the study, it was sufficient to classify the organisations on the basis of how they presented themselves in open media, such as their websites and in accessing their respective search engines.

In the following, the organisations looked at in the study, and their approach to integrated security, are briefly described. They are listed in a hierarchical fashion, in descending order according to their degree of divergence from FOI's general approach to security studies. This is further explained at the beginning of each section. In the section headings, integrated security is abbreviated as IS. Comprehensive security is abbreviated as CS. Each of the lists is organised alphabetically.

Similar Concepts and Terms, without Technological Research Capability

The organisations in this section include a concept that they generally perceive as falling under integrated security and thereby follow in their suite of concerns. Their definitions of integrated security, sometimes also called a holistic security approach or comprehensive security, are similar to FOI's. Direct use of sophisticated technologies for primary data gathering is not mentioned in their self-descriptions. They rely heavily on social science methods, although secondary data from technology-based sources may provide inputs to their analyses.

- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (USA)
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (USA)
- FFI, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment
- ODI, Overseas Development Institute (UK)
- RUSI, Royal United Services Institute (UK)



- Stimson Center (Henry L. Stimson Center, USA)
- Woodrow Wilson Center, Environmental Change and Security Program (USA)
- Worldwatch Institute (USA)

Similar Concepts to FOI's, though not termed IS, but include Technological Focus

The organisations in the next list discuss broad definitions of security that resemble FOI's notion of integrated security, but without calling it that. They generally tend to integrate numerous kinds of approaches, and include both direct use of sophisticated technologies for primary data gathering, and rely heavily on social science methods. Even though they do not apply conceptual stringency in their discussion of diverse security perspectives, their overall approaches make them the group that is most comparable to FOI.

- CIA/CISSM (University of Maryland) (USA)
- Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (USA)
- RAND Corporation (USA)
- The Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, CCAPS (Climate Change and African Political Stability), University of Texas at Austin (USA)
- SEI, Stockholm Environment Institute (Sweden)

Similar Concepts to FOI's, not termed IS, but do not include a Technological Focus

Like the organisations in the previous category, those in this section work with broad definitions of security that resemble FOI's notion of comprehensive security, but without calling it that. Unlike the organisations above, however, they do not mention direct use of sophisticated technologies for primary data gathering in their self-descriptions. They rely heavily on social science methods, although secondary data from technology-based sources may provide inputs to their analyses.

- Adelphi research gemeinnützige GmbH, and Adelphi consult GmbH (Germany)
- Brookings Institution (USA)
- Center for Climate and Security (USA)
- Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs (UK)
- CNA Corporation (USA)
- PRIO, Peace Research Institute Oslo (Norway)

Vaguely Broad Concept, not termed IS, and do not include a Technological Focus

The organisations in this category, in common with all the organisations above, demonstrate that there is a need for broader definitions of security. Unlike those above, however, they generally appear to have a more wide-ranging focus on developing conceptual rigour, not least in several of their theoretical discussions. One shortcoming however is that these organisations seem to work without direct reliance on sophisticated technologies for primary data gathering. Although at least some of them may rely heavily on data from technology-based sources in certain of their focus areas, this does not appear to be the case with regard to their work with broader notions of security as discussed here.

- Air University DoD-Minerva Initiative on Energy and Environmental Security, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama (USA)
- American Security Project (USA)
- Center for a New American Security (USA)
- Center for American Progress (USA)
- DSTL, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (UK)
- E3G, Third Generation Environmentalism (Belgium and USA)
- FIIA, Finnish Institute of International Affairs
- Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Germany)
- Institute for Defense Analyses (USA)
- International Alert (UK)
- National Democratic Institute (USA)
- Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (Germany)
- SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sweden)
- TNO, The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research
- UI, Swedish Institute of International Affairs

Conclusion

The overview provided in this brief indicates that there are enough organisations working with broadened definitions of security for eventual collaboration to be feasible. At the same time, FOI's approach is so novel that there is ample room and opportunity for making serious contributions to the methodology, implementation and theoretical development of integrated security. FOI's study builds a platform that begins to address the shortcomings. As other briefs in this series explain, it is a good beginning, but much more remains to be achieved.



This brief was written by an interdisciplinary team of scientists at FOI, the Swedish Defence Research Agency. It could be read as a stand-alone document but can also be read in the context of connected briefs on integrated security of which this particular topic is a cohesive part.

The project leader was Mikael Eriksson (Defence Analysis) and lead scientists included Annica Waleij (CBRN Defence and Security), Birgitta Liljedahl (CBRN Defence and Security), Louise Simonsson (CBRN Defence and Security), Christer Andersson (Defence and Security, Systems and Technology), Richard Langlais (Defence Analysis), Michael Tulldahl (Sensor and EW Systems) and Ulf Söderman (Sensor and EW Systems). Many other members of FOI provided support.

For further information on related activities of this project please consult www.foi.se.