CHALLENGES FOR NATO
WAYS OF WAR CENTRE WELCOMES JAMIE SHEA
William Simonds, student on the MA Strategic Studies 2015/2016

On the 29th February, the History department and the Ways of War Centre had the pleasure of hosting Professor Jamie Shea, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges. The subject of this event was a conversation on his current role with NATO as well as current debates and dilemmas in security and defence. Students and staff alike turned out in high numbers for the opportunity to hear a first-hand, expert view of the contemporary global situation.

Giving historical context and comprehensive analysis on the state of today’s tumultuous security environment, Professor Shea translated expert opinion into clear and relatable information, prompting provocative questions and vibrant discussion.

Over the course of the event, discussion covered several topics. Russia’s resurgence in the east raised questions regarding hybrid and cyber warfare and how best to counter these methods, before shifting to Russian opinion over recent NATO expansion and what avenues were available to rebuild bridges and avoid fatal miscommunication, such as that seen in Turkey. Looking to the south of Europe, the discussion turned to how NATO and the West can best address instability and violence in the Middle East and North Africa, being mindful of the significant blood and treasure already spent in Afghanistan and Iraq to limited benefit.

Guests considered these external issues against the internal challenges facing NATO. With military spending among member-states averaging well below the 2% of GDP commitment and the US shifting its focus away from Europe, European member-states find themselves facing the need to either increase spending or increase integration. However, as one guest noted, in a period of prolonged economic stagnation and increased pressure to fund social programs, significant spending increases pose political challenges to leaders domestically. This formed the backdrop for broader discussion as to how best to devote resources to each of the eastern and southern zones, as members from both parts of NATO seek to ensure security in their respective spheres.

The Q&A session included several other topics of interest, including the continued role and relevance of nuclear weapons in Europe, what lessons NATO has learned from its history, and the increasing prevalence of Private Security Companies in modern conflicts. In keeping with the broader public discourse, debate on Brexit occupied some time as participants reflected on how debate should approach the subject of security and what a potential exit would entail.

With candid dialogue, in-depth analysis, and thought-provoking questions, the audience was given a look behind the curtain at the current state of international peace and security. Complex challenges in the global system await complex solutions, but the conversation with Professor Shea left participants far more informed as to the nature of these challenges and the paths to their solutions. Thanks goes out to the staff and students who attended and contributed to the stimulating discussion, and a special thank you to Dr Jamie Shea for sharing his time and thoughts.
SMALL RESEARCH GRANT AWARD

Tom Long was awarded a British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Small Research Grant of 8,700 pounds for the project "Middle Power Regionalism in the Americas."

This grant will fund the first stage of a project that examines regionalism and middle powers in the Americas. In particular, it explores how Brazil has created, shaped, and employed regional institutions to mediate its relations with the United States, other Latin American states, and questions of global order. The larger research programme will examine the trajectories of Brazilian and Mexican regionalism from the creation of the modern inter-American system until today. The examination of Brazil’s changing approach will shed light on the role of regions as an intermediary between national foreign policy and global issues.

EXPERIENCING THE CHALLENGES OF DIPLOMACY

By Leen Najjab and Corinne Heaven

The Model United Nations module not only explores the United Nations system and the range of global issues it tackles, but also offers students the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and processes of the organisation. The module includes a simulation of the UN Security Council, where students - known as delegates - represent various countries and their positions. The students develop a range of skills, such as researching current issues of international politics, public speaking, debating, negotiating and teamwork that prepares them for the participation at an international conference.

From 1 to 5 March, the students participated at the KU Leuven Model United Nations conference. KULMUN, one of the largest conferences in Europe, hosts 150 delegates each year that debate current topics in different committees. The Reading delegation discussed a range of challenging topics, such as the crisis in Syria, cyber warfare and the dispute in the South China Sea. As in previous years, the delegation’s outstanding involvement was recognised by the secretariat of the conference: many congratulations to Alessandra Teixeira and Leen Najjab who both won the ‘best delegate’ award in their committee!

Leen recalls: “It was an incredible experience which gave us the opportunity to improve our public speaking skills and increase our confidence. We also met an interesting and excellent variety of people. The topics were current, heated and engaging which kept the conversation running and sparked many interesting debates. The module is an exceptional one as was the trip.”

US AMBASSADOR VISIT

By Jacob Sanders

On 3 February, the school of Politics, Economics and International Relations hosted the US Ambassador to the UK, Matthew Barzun, for a discussion on the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. Ambassador Barzun began the meeting by talking about the advice that he received from President Obama upon his appointment to the UK and recommended that those in attendance follow the advice too: listen. He then moved on to addressing US interventionism and showed three cases on a quadrant plane. As examples of interventionism gone wrong he cited: Rwanda for a lack of intervention and Vietnam for intervention gone wrong. World War II was the example he gave of US intervention gone right. Ambassador Barzun stressed the need for US engagement in global politics and emphasised the need to get it right and to keep trying even when mistakes are made. In a partial question and answer session, Ambassador Barzun asked those in attendance for things that concern them about the United States to address them individually. Among the concerns listed were: Trump, gun control, and the NSA. Special thanks to Ambassador Barzun for joining the University of Reading for an inspiring discussion.
WAYS OF WAR SPRING NEWS

The Ways of Warfare has this term forged a dual pathway. It has continued to act as an umbrella organisation whose aim is to bring together scholars from every field of the Arts, Humanities and Social Science with a shared interest in understanding war. Currently there are a total of 20 staff members and one external associate. The staff members are drawn from six departments across the university. They are as follows: Politics, Law, Modern Languages, History, Economics and Classics.

Perhaps more importantly it has continued to sponsor events. The Centre receives both funding from SPEIR and has been successful, to date, in attracting £1,500 external sponsorship for events. Both this term and Summer Term 2016 there will be a total of eight events that will be either run or sponsored by the Centre. Direct financial support was given to the visit of Dr Jamie Shea from NATO, and a one day event run by Nadya Ali on the government programme Prevent. BISA was also a sponsor of this event.

The existence of the WOW Centre and its activities signals that Reading is a good place to pursue doctoral studies, and offers an attractive opportunity for practitioners (officers and defence officials). A current example of this is Reading’s success in attracting one of the MOD Visiting Fellowships that have been awarded this year. Major Matt Baylis RM will be joining the Department one day a week for the Summer Term. He will be doing research on a defence related topic.

Dr Geoff Sloan, Director

‘RETRIBUTIVISTS! THE HARM PRINCIPLE IS NOT FOR YOU!’

Patrick Tomlin, Associate Professor in Political Philosophy, was recently awarded a prize by the University for his research. The prize was for his article ‘Retributivists! The Harm Principle was not for you’.

In the journal Ethics, which was judged to be the best output for the past two years across the University’s ‘Prosperity and Resilience’ research theme, Ethics is one of the most prestigious journals in the world for political philosophy. The article covers philosophical issues about punishment and the criminal law – a subject which Dr Tomlin tackles with Part 3 students each year in his ‘Crime and Punishment: Theoretical Perspectives’ module. Dr Tomlin also teaches the ethics of war at Part 3, and his work in this area has also been recognised by the University with a Research 2020 Fellowship. This will allow him to investigate the concept of proportionality in war. Dr Tomlin said ‘It is a real honour for my research to be recognised by the University in these ways. I am especially pleased that the two awards are both for research in areas which I explore every year with students – my research informs my teaching, and my teaching informs my research.’

KEEP IN TOUCH...

Facebook: Department of Politics and International Relations
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CLIMATE JUSTICE CONFERENCE

Authors: Callum Nolan, Joshua Wells, Alex McLaughlin, Danny Waite & Vera Van Gool

Thursday the 28th of January marked the start of the inaugural conference in the University of Reading’s Leverhulme Doctoral Programme in Climate Justice, ‘Climate Justice After Paris’. The two-day event that boasted an impressive mix of academia, civil society and policy makers aimed to dissect the Paris COP21 climate negotiations held at the tail end of 2015. World leaders lauded the negotiations as an unprecedented success, particularly on account of the agreed target to limit global warming to 2 degrees with the very ambitious aim to keep it close to 1.5 degrees. These feelings of jubilation are not universal, and the Climate Justice conference hoped to provide some necessary scrutiny.

The event at Reading brought together an impressive line-up. Excellent keynote speakers, philosophers Henry Shue and Simon Caney, and special advisor Youba Sokona of The South Centre, were present. Panels formed of experts which included representatives from The Mary Robinson Foundation, World Resources Institute and a number of top universities from around the globe were also present. This led to two days of in-depth and fascinating discussion on the key issues that arose from the Paris COP. With a fine-tooth comb, participants reviewed the journey to Paris, reflected on its successes and failures and provided an illuminating insight into the future of the climate battle. A battle that aims to prevent catastrophic, human-induced climate change, whilst striving to keep issues of justice central to the process.
By any standards, the conference was a resounding success. It facilitated an environment in which leading figures in the climate justice movement, from a wide spectrum of disciplinary backgrounds, could discuss and debate all of the key topics from COP21. On top of the above, it was also a great opportunity to showcase our research as the five Leverhulme Climate Justice scholars currently undertaking the first year of our PhDs. We were privileged to be exposed to a level of expertise very few doctoral students would have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from.

From the Director of the Programme, Professor Catriona McKinnon:

The conference was our launch event for the £1m Leverhulme funded Programme, which will turn into a full blown Research Centre in 2017-18. We are planning a series of major funding bids in the coming 18 months, as well as further exciting events, so watch this space. Films of the conference will be available on our web site soon (http://www.reading.ac.uk/climate-justice/). And we are pleased to report that our experiment with livestreaming the conference on Periscope was a big success, with over 100 people watching the broadcasts over the two days of the conference!

PUTTING THE PEOPLE INTO POLITICS

Dr Mark Shanahan

The Department’s Political Voices strand has continued with two trips and a major-draw visitor in the last few months. In December, Dr Shanahan took a group to the Sennedd in Cardiff to find out about the workings of the devolved National Assembly for Wales. Highlight of the trip was the chance to quiz Plaid Cymru leader Leanne Wood as she stepped up her fight to oust Labour as the leading party in the Principality.

In February, US ambassador Matthew Barzun drew an audience of over 270 students for a rather brief but highly engaging discussion on the state of UK-US affairs. While the visit was short, Ambassador Barzun did take time to chat to Holly Gibbs and Tom Edmonds for the Department’s Tuesday night Politics Show on Junction 11.

Finally, on March 8, 31 students travelled to Parliament with Drs Mayhew and Shanahan. As well as taking in business in the Commons, Lords and a Select Committee, the group got to interview Commons Speaker, the Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP. ‘Mr Speaker’ was more than generous with his time, insight and impressions of well-known Parliamentary figures, including William Hague and Tony Blair, and promised a return trip to Reading when we kick-off our Parliamentary Studies module in the autumn.

EU CONFERENCE - BREXIT

By Brendan Hill

On 9th December 2015, UoR, in conjunction with The European Atlantic Movement (TEAM), hosted an educational conference for staff and students on Britain’s membership to the European Union.

Prof Knapp & Dr Leoussi, assisted by Brendan Hill, and Robert Heslop of TEAM, organised the event that took place in Palmer Building, and involved 2 speakers from each side of the argument.
The findings suggest that the Council’s response to humanitarian crises is not random, but follows specific patterns that are indicated by a limited number of causal paths.

Here is the link: [http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/52/6/712.abstract](http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/52/6/712.abstract)

Dr Daphne Halikiopoulou - ‘The Golden Dawn’s Nationalist Solution: Explaining the rise of the far right in Greece’

Dr Daphne Halikiopoulou launched the Greek edition of her book ‘The Golden Dawn’s Nationalist Solution: Explaining the rise of the far right in Greece’ in Athens in December 2015. The book explains the dramatic rise of the extreme, ultranationalist Golden Dawn in a country that has experienced Nazi invasion and a military dictatorship. It places the rise of the Golden Dawn in the context of the Eurozone crisis and argues that its rise is not merely the product of economic malaise. Rather, the success of the Golden Dawn is dependent on the extent to which it was able to propound plausible solutions to the three sets of crises - economic, political and ideological - that culminated in an overall crisis of democracy in Greece. The authors argue that much of the party’s success can be attributed to its strategic choice to tap into the widespread disillusionment of the Greek people by offering them a ‘nationalist solution’: a rhetoric that emphasizes the twin fascist myths of social decadence and national rebirth.

The event was organised by the Greek publisher epikentro (Εκδόσεις Επίκεντρο) [ADD LINK]. The Greek edition has already sold over 200 copies since its publication in December.


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**ENHANCEMENT WEEK STUDENT TRIP TO CHEPSTOW**

By Professor Beatrice Heuser

Students from the School of Politics, Economics and International Relations and a few guests from other departments went on a trip to Chepstow Castle in Wales during Enhancement Week, February 2016. As the castle was built by the Normans to keep down Welsh insurgencies, the trip was introduced with a seminar on insurgency and counterinsurgency measures by studying the writing of Gerald of Wales, one of the earliest authors on the subject (writing in the 12th century). Students prepared presentations on the Norman conquest of the British isles and the 12th century Civil War.”