

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London
Unit of Assessment: 21, Politics and International Studies
Title of case study: NATO and the Changing Nature of International Security from Europe to South Asia
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study refers to the REF-period impact achieved by Michael J. Williams, who joined the Unit in 2008. His research comprises a number of projects that bring new understandings of risk to bear on the evolution and development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1949, the conceptualization of security in the post-9/11 world and NATO's role in promoting security in the transatlantic area via 'out of area' missions such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Williams combined advisory roles and a strong public profile developed over the period to bring his research to politicians, policymakers and publics both nationally and internationally, engagements that supported the achievement of non-academic impacts of his work. His research has informed the thinking of policy-makers, military officials, international organizations and development actors dealing with security and development, contributed to policy formation at national and international levels, and raised public awareness of the difficulties of policy coordination in conflict and development initiatives.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research for this case study divides into two broad strands:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovative theoretical research applied to the study of NATO: Williams's work makes an original contribution to research on the evolution of the nature of threats by applying Ulrich Beck's 'risk society' thesis to the analysis of NATO's evolution as a security organisation. The risk society thesis proposes that the move from modernity into late and post-modernity compels the evolution of a society's views of security from a reactive stance towards a more proactive position. Consequently, NATO's original security rationale, predicated on the defence against communism, had to be adapted to encompass new, more amorphously defined security risks such as 'terrorism' and 'climate change'. Williams's theoretical contribution not only accounts for how and why NATO survived the end of the Cold War, but also indicates the reasons for its development over the subsequent 20 years. Beyond the academy this research has implications for policy-makers dealing with the development of security and foreign policies at the strategic level. 2. Civil-Military Relations in Post-Conflict Reconstruction: This applied research explored the relationship between civilian government, civilian non-governmental actors and military forces in conflict zones, with Williams's field research focusing on Afghanistan. It relates to the first strand in that it speaks to NATO's evolution into a proactive security risk manager via the war in Kosovo and more recently its mission in Afghanistan. A chief obstacle facing NATO has been how to provide 'security' in an Afghan context where the traditional equation of military power with security, which envisions security in terms of freedom from invasion or subjugation by a foreign power, has become problematic. Williams's research demonstrates how security in Afghanistan must be embedded in a development agenda aiming to provide 'human security' by improving health care, education and justice systems. This requires the cooperation of diverse actors who have historically had conflictual relations with one another. Williams's research focused on efforts to plan and coordinate civilian and military assets, and involved interviews and on the ground case studies of civil-military planning and operations.
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (2009) <i>NATO, Risk and Security Management: From Kosovo to Kandahar</i>. Routledge. (2011) <i>The Good War: NATO and the Liberal Conscience in Afghanistan</i>. Palgrave. (2011) '(Un)Sustainable Peacebuilding: NATO's Suitability for Postconflict Reconstruction in Multiactor Environments', <i>Global Governance</i>, 17.1:115-134. (2011) 'Empire Lite Revisited: NATO, the Comprehensive Approach and State-building in Afghanistan', <i>International Peacekeeping</i>, 18.1:64-78. (2012) 'Political-Military Lessons from U.S. Operations in Vietnam and Afghanistan', <i>PRISM: Journal of the National Defense University</i>, 3.4:91-107. (2013) 'Enduring, but Irrelevant? Britain, NATO and the future of the Atlantic alliance', <i>International Politics</i>, 50.3:360-386.

Key research grants:

1. Robert Bosch Alumni Grant (\$2,500) (October 2013)
2. Robert Bosch Fellowship, German Ministry of Defence and Cassidian (Sept 2012 – June 2013)
3. University of London Central Research Fund (£2,000) (2010/11 academic year)
4. Faculty Research Initiative Fund (£1,000), Royal Holloway (2010/11 academic year)
5. Resident Fellowship, Nuffield College, Oxford University (Sept – Dec 2010)
6. Investigator on NATO-NGO relations, 'Research Partnership on Postwar State-building) funded by Carnegie Corporation, New York, (total grant: \$1 million), with Roland Paris (Ottawa) as Principal Investigator (2009-2011).
7. Workshop and Research Grant, US Department of Defence (\$25,000 USD) (2008)
8. Strategic Studies Research Grant, NATO Allied Command Transformation (£21,500) (2008)

Evidence of quality:

Williams has produced two research monographs published by well-respected commercial academic presses, with a third co-authored monograph forthcoming in 2014 with CUP. His work has been reviewed in a number of top-tier journals and received critical acclaim from leading scholars in the field. The review of *NATO, Risk and Security Management* in *International Affairs* (86: 3, 2010, p. 770-1) concluded that Williams's 'excellent' book 'adds to the existing literature with a fresh look' that questions the 'traditional analyses' and is a 'valuable contribution' to the literature. The *RUSI Journal* labelled *The Good War* and its underpinning research a 'thought-provoking indictment of good men who were clearly out of their depth' (December 2011). Martin Bayly's review of *The Good War* in *e-IR* holds that the work succeeds in 'helpfully outlining and providing a framework for understanding NATO's problems in Afghanistan....In dealing with NATO specifically Williams takes a necessarily open-minded view of the analytical problem'.

Williams's research has led to visiting positions at Wesleyan University (USA) and the Rothermere American Institute (Oxford University) during the REF period. He has given high profile talks on the evolution of NATO at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst (22 May 2009), the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (17 February 2010), the Royal Netherlands Defence Academy (25 February 2010), Chatham House (21 April 2010), the European University Institute (24-26 April 2010), the UK Royal Defence Academy (10 November 2010), the University of Melbourne (28 January 2012) and Carnegie Europe, Brussels (20 November 2012). He has spoken on the challenges and developments in the field of civil-military relations at the Center for European Policy Analysis (23 July 2009), the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Berlin (26 November 2012), the German Parliamentary Society in Berlin (27 Feb 2013), and numerous times at the London School of Economics.

Williams's fast developing research profile helped him win a Bosch Fellowship, which is awarded to a very small number of highly accomplished young Americans from academia and other professions. Through this fellowship, held from September 2012 to June 2013. Williams worked as a special assistant to the German Parliamentary State Secretary for Defence, advising on NATO issues and German security policy with relation to NATO, and with the private firm Cassidian (Airbus Military), advising on their transatlantic and European strategies.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Williams combined engagements with media and policy users and formal advisory roles to establish a powerful profile conducive to achieving impact. Through these efforts, he informed policy and public debate throughout the REF period. Williams frequently served as an analytical source for major international news outlets, appearing on CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, and Sky News. He published 27 articles in *The Guardian* in the period and served as a panellist on CNN International's 'Connect the World with Becky Anderson'. Williams is also a founding member and frequent contributor to Atlantic-Community.org, the world's first and pre-eminent open foreign policy think tank, established in 2007 to engage the public, students, academic researchers and policymakers in an open and transparent discussion of international affairs. Williams has taken on these roles as a way to influence the wider public debate on various issues related to his research expertise by providing counterpoints and information not readily available to the public. His rationale is that in a democracy the public has ultimate oversight of policy through elections and

the pressure it can bring to bear on elected policymakers, so that the role of the research expert is to facilitate discussion helpful to a democratic society. Williams's efforts produced an emergent dynamic, where, for example, his *Guardian* writings led to invitations for television appearances, and his presence in public debate attracted the attention of policymakers who requested his involvement in their deliberations with invitations, for example, to provide parliamentary testimony and to engage in policy discussions with party officials.

Williams's research and expertise led to his inclusion in international policy-planning exercises and consultative assignments with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, NATO Allied Command Transformation, the US Joint Forces Command, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the UK Ministry of Defence and the House of Commons Defence Select Committee. He was selected three times as a 'transatlantic opinion leader' by NATO, and taken on select trips in 2006, 2008 and 2012 to the mission in Afghanistan. Williams was selected because of the influence of his research and media work on NATO policy, and the trips were designed to allow NATO policymakers to garner external analysis and to 'red team' NATO operations. The visits also facilitated Williams's research by putting him in contact with key officials on the ground, and allowed him to feed back further recommendations to NATO HQ. Williams was also named to the Media Advisory Group of the Ministry of Defence in recognition of the impact of his analysis for international news outlets on public opinion. He provided briefings for the senior leadership of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour Parties. His work has been requested for official parliamentary inquiries and was subsequently published by Parliament. Williams served as a foreign policy advisor Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, specifically advising on NATO's role in Afghanistan. He co-authored the campaign's official policy paper on Afghanistan with Barney Rubin (NYU) and Seth Jones (RAND).

Williams's research has had particular impact on three users during the REF period.

1. **UK Labour Party defence policy.** Williams made specific contributions to the official Opposition's Shadow Defence Review from 2012 to 2013, whose work will feed into a 2014 White Paper on Labour's defence and security strategy that will underpin its 2015 manifesto stance. He attended three roundtable discussions and advised the Labour team on issues including the UK's nuclear posture, the regional sources of likely future threats, the principles that should shape UK counter-terror strategies overseas and future force structure. The Shadow Secretary of State for Defence recognised the important ways in which Williams's close collaboration with practitioners and officials in both the West and in Afghanistan informed his research, noting that he 'has a breadth of knowledge which is vital and valuable for our work and in each discussion he has provided the group with specific insights from his work overseas, in particular from his knowledge of US policy-making in the security field'. The Shadow Secretary further confirmed: 'The impact of Mike's contribution has been to identify the areas which the Shadow Defence Team must consider and research in detail in order to produce a meaningful White Paper, and to provide specific policy ideas which we will reflect on as we develop our platform'. He also highlighted specific policy ideas Williams helped Labour assess, including 'how to define UK strategic interests overseas, a key element of our consultation paper, and...how the UK should respond to the threat of militancy in North and West Africa, which has helped Labour to develop a position which is distinct from that of the UK Government'. He affirmed that Williams's work on defence and restructuring 'will feed in to our White Paper'. Williams also edited the final version the Shadow Secretary's speech to the Henry Jackson Society (10 July 2012) that discussed the ethics and norms of international humanitarian intervention undertaken by NATO and other organisations.
2. **German Parliamentary State Secretary for Defence and Cassidian (Airbus Military).** Through his Bosch Fellowship, Williams worked on a series of projects in the German Ministry of Defence, advising the Parliamentary State Secretary on Afghan National Army (ANA) developments and producing a report identifying ways that Germany can influence better European defence coordination despite the pressures of European austerity measures. He carried out a briefing on the strategic situation in Afghanistan for the Secretary, providing him with information to question the German High Representative for Afghanistan on his

presentation of the situation on the ground. The Bosch Fellowship also gave Williams the opportunity to work for Cassidian in their Future Concepts Division, providing strategic insight and recommendations to the CEO and Board of Directors on issues relevant to the organisation's future business plans. Williams advised on whether Cassidian should pursue transatlantic versus European-only projects. The company was at the time focussed on mainly transatlantic relations. Williams supported continuing this but advised that a dedicated focus on joint European projects was also needed. Cassidian is now in the process of restructuring to focus on increasing in-house capacity so as not be as reliant on US manufacturers (and therefore also US politicians).

3. **NATO Policy Makers – Emerging Security Challenges and Operations.** Williams' work was utilised extensively by NATO HQ in Brussels and NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, VA. His research on civil-military relations in Afghanistan provided NATO with critical analysis of current operations and influenced the development of future NATO doctrine and policy. NATO has undertaken a process of developing a new strategic concept and new operational framework, and Williams has been involved since 2006 in the discussions and deliberations of this process. He was originally contracted by NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk in 2006 (with US Joint Forces Command), 2007 and 2008 to conduct various studies on security environment, on the impact of emerging security challenges on the organisation and on alliance cohesion. He has subsequently continued to work with the Office of the Secretary General, Office of Policy Planning and Office of Emerging Security Challenges to help frame the debate and provide foundation documents for review by allied states to assist in their development of a new strategic concept. The 2012 trip to Afghanistan was in relation to this work. The Press Officer for the Public Diplomacy Division of NATO HQ said of Williams's tours of Afghanistan and his subsequent advice that he 'provided highly valuable insight and analysis on a wide range of issues, ranging from the tactical aspects of counter-insurgency operations, the Afghan-Pakistani interplay, the development of civil-military relations, NATO's cooperation with other international organizations within the comprehensive approach construct and the Atlantic Alliance's partnerships with Central Asian Republics and Russia'. The Press Officer also noted Williams's role in a number of important outreach initiatives based on the findings of the tours. The NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges confirms that the work of the Carnegie Corporation funded project to which Williams contributed had a direct impact on NATO discussions and thinking on future civil-military policy. He also affirmed the value of the feedback Williams provided from his three trips to Afghanistan and that Williams's 'work on the interface between military forces, civilian diplomats and civilian non-governmental workers, has helped develop a better common understanding of the mutual interests and different operating procedures of these organizations' and 'provided insight into how NATO policy-makers should think about these challenges and how the Alliance might respond to similar challenges in the future'. The Assistant Secretary General further maintained that 'Michael Williams's work has certainly been beneficial and influential to [NATO's] thinking'.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Written testimonial from the Shadow Secretary of State for Defence corroborates Williams's impact on UK Labour Party defence policy.
2. Written testimonial from the Head of the Office of the German Parliamentary State Secretary of Defence corroborates Williams's impact on the PSS's views and policy positions.
3. Written testimonial from the Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, NATO HQ corroborates Williams's contribution to NATO thinking on civil-military policy.
4. Written testimonial from the Press Officer of the Office of the Spokesperson, NATO HQ, corroborates Williams's role as a Transatlantic Opinion Leader and the impact of his visits to Afghanistan and the insights fed back to NATO therefrom.
5. Written testimonial from Cassidian (Airbus Military) corroborates Williams's role in their Future Concepts Division and the impact of his advice on the company's future plans.
6. Williams's 2012/13 Bosch Fellowship is corroborated by: <http://tinyurl.com/ppx8ua2>
7. Williams's contributions to *The Guardian* can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/napqbva>.