



Annual Report

2023

*New geostrategic thinking for
a more competitive age*

2023 in Numbers

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Report



This year we have published over 25 pieces of Research. Learn more about each one below.

Reports

Plateau China: Reform in the ten years after the Third Plenum of 2013

By Charles Parton

In this Report, seasoned China expert and former diplomat Charles Parton analyses how Chinese reform (or a lack thereof) since the Third Plenum of 2013 has seen the country plateau. Parton investigates the likely priorities for Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at the next Third Plenum, as well as its awkward timing.

Given the enormous scope of Xi Jinping's 2013 ambitions, the focus of this Report is on CCP reforms to the issues most fundamental to making the party-state model sustainable in the long-term.



Council on
Geostrategy

Report
Geopolitics Programme
No. GPR02
November 2023

Plateau China: Reform in the ten years after the Third Plenum of 2013

By Charles Parton

New geostrategic thinking for a more competitive age
<https://www.geostrategy.org.uk>

Studies

The People's Republic of China: Political perceptions in Central Europe

Edited by Patrick Triglavcanin

Constructed around nine country-specific sections, this study explains how parliamentarians and political parties in Central Europe view and scrutinise the People's Republic of China (PRC) and PRC-related activities. It also touches on the public's perception of the PRC, insofar as this may animate the political decisions taken in democracies.



IIR - INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS PRAGUE



Hungarian Institute
of International Affairs



CEIAS
Central European Institute
of Asian Studies

To produce the sections, the Council on Geostrategy sought out the assistance of institutions in each country with a strong track record of providing high-end research on topics pertaining to European and international affairs.



The climate and migration: Implications for Britain

By Jack Richardson and William Young

In this Policy Paper, Jack Richardson and William Young examine how climate change may encourage migration and how it may affect British interests, considering both the moral duty to protect human life alongside the need to maintain a secure British border. The authors make recommendations to HM government focused on building resilience at home, enhancing resilience overseas and challenging divisive narratives.

Europe's new 'Moonshot' space plan: How should Britain respond?

By Gabriel Elefteriu

In this Policy Paper, Gabriel Elefteriu FRAeS examines the new European space plan and explores the opportunities and risks it presents for the UK's own space future.

In the Policy Paper, Gabriel Elefteriu explains that this initiative – which may require up to a 30% uplift in ESA's budget – can become either an opportunity or a risk for the UK's own space future, and that success depends on finding an 'optimal' final version of the programme.

Internet neutrality: Options for Britain

By John Hemmings

In a new Policy Paper by John Hemmings, Dr John Hemmings considers how the UK can develop its own policy towards net neutrality to protect Britain against the predation and penetration of providers and services which are based in large authoritarian states.

This Policy Paper addresses why it is in Britain's interests to take a more flexible and pragmatic approach to internet neutrality in order to 'manage, regulate, and build the future of the Internet'.



Council on
Geostrategy

Policy Paper
Geopolitics Programme
No. GPP002
January 2023

The climate and migration: Implications for Britain

By Jack Richardson and William Young

New geostrategic thinking for a more competitive age
<https://www.geostrategy.org.uk>



Council on
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Policy Paper
Geopolitics Programme
No. GPP004
June 2023

Europe's new 'Moonshot' space plan: How should Britain respond?

By Gabriel Elefteriu FRAeS

New geostrategic thinking for a more competitive age
<https://www.geostrategy.org.uk>



Council on
Geostrategy

Policy Paper
Geopolitics Programme
No. GPP003
September 2023

Internet neutrality: Options for Britain

By Dr John Hemmings

New geostrategic thinking for a more competitive age
<https://www.geostrategy.org.uk>



This year we have published seven Primers. Learn more about each one below.

The trilateral initiative: Rekindling relations between Britain, Poland and Ukraine

By Przemysław Biskup, James Rogers, Hanna Shelest

Przemysław Biskup, James Rogers and Dr Hanna Shelest explore the history and rationale for the trilateral initiative between Britain, Poland and Ukraine.

Discursive statecraft: China's information operations

By Hannah Bailey

Hannah Bailey examines the Chinese Communist Party's discursive statecraft operations on international social media platforms.

The '10 Be Clears': Clarifying relations with China

By Charles Parton

Charles Parton lays out ten suggestions for dealing with the threat posed by China under the CCP in a mini-strategy

The 'People's War on Terror' in Xinjiang: A model for China?

By Hannah Theaker

Dr Hannah Theaker investigates the roots and future of repression in Xinjiang conducted by the Chinese Communist Party.

What is strategic advantage?

By Gabriel Elefteriu, William Freer, James Rogers

Gabriel Elefteriu, James Rogers and William Freer provide a refined definition of strategic advantage, and how the UK can create it.

Slicing away at the status quo: Beijing's cross-strait strategy

By Gray Sergeant

Gray Sergeant analyses how Beijing's strategy across the Taiwan Strait has evolved since the summer of 2022

Is Britain losing its scientific edge?

By Mann Virdee

Dr Mann Virdee assesses the state of the science sector in Britain and the best way forward for the 21st century.



This year we have published nine Explainers. Learn more about each one below.

Is China a threat?

By Charles Parton

Charles Parton explores the nature of the threat posed by the CCP and strategies it uses for building the capability to carry out its aims.

The Chinese economy after the ‘Two Sessions’

By George Magnus

George Magnus investigates what the Chinese Communist Party’s ‘Two Sessions’ of 2023 reveal about the direction of the Chinese economy.

After the ‘Two Sessions’: China in 2023 and beyond

By Charles Parton

Charles Parton OBE explains the implications of the Chinese Communist Party’s ‘Two Sessions’ for Chinese economic and foreign relations.

China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Ten years on

By Pippa Ebel

Pippa Ebel looks at the future of China’s Belt and Road Initiative through analysing the challenges it faces and how Beijing may adapt to them.

Negotiating with Chinese – some practical considerations

By Charles Parton

Charles Parton OBE gives advice for undertaking negotiations with representatives of the Chinese Communist Party.

De-dollarisation would upend the global economy

By George Magnus

George Magnus argues that the US dollar will remain the world’s dominant currency for the foreseeable future.

Hypersonic weapon systems: High expectations

By Gabriel Elefteriu and William Freer

Gabriel Elefteriu and William Freer provide an overview of hypersonic weapons and the capabilities certain countries possess currently.

How Australia ‘positions’ the United Kingdom

By Patrick Triglavcanin

Patrick Triglavcanin investigates the contemporary Australia-UK relationship and its historical foundations.

Why alliances matter

By Gabriel Elefteriu

Gabriel Elefteriu explores definitions of alliances and why they matter to the UK, investigating both the costs and benefits.

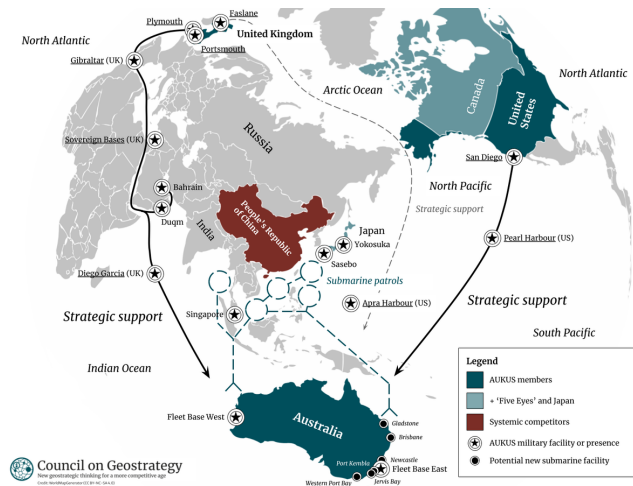


In 2023 our GeoAtlas publications have continued to be popular, visually depicting geostrategic developments and phenomena. This year, we published five. Here are some of our most successful:

The 'refresh' of the Integrated Review

23rd March 2023

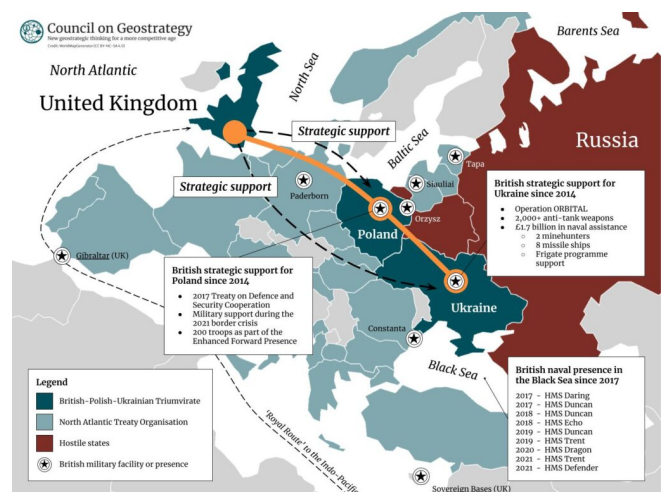
[Click here to enlarge](#)



A Sinocentric world: The Belt and Road Initiative

11th May 2023

[Click here to enlarge](#)



The Royal Navy's global reach

11th July 2023

[Click here to enlarge](#)





First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference 2023

The Council on Geostrategy, in partnership with King's College London was delighted to host the First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference 2023. The conference was held at the magnificent Lancaster House on Tuesday 16th May and Wednesday 17th May.

Across the two days we heard keynote speeches from **The Rt. Hon. James Cartlidge MP**, **The Rt. Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP** and **The First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key**, an in-conversation session between Admiral Sir Ben Key, Admiral Pierre Vandier and Admiral Michael Gilday and an additional five panel sessions.



On the evening of Tuesday 16th May we were honoured to be joined by **Sir Robert Knox-Johnston** and **Royal Marines Band Service** at the Official Black Tie Dinner at Lancaster House. We were also joined by the three winners of the First Sea Lord's Essay Competition.

On the afternoon of Wednesday 17th May, the Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory took place at King's College London, led by Alessio Patalano and the Centre for Grand Strategy. Meanwhile at HMS President, conference attendees had the opportunity to visit the XV Patrick Blackett.



For further information, including videos of the panels and the keynote speeches, please visit our [conference website](#).



Maritime Britain in the 21st century

With the Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre

On Wednesday 22nd November, we hosted an event in partnership with the **Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre** at the Army and Navy Club. The day-long conference included three panel sessions, each with its own breakout discussion. The conference explored the concept of maritime Britain, covering topics ranging from people and technology to culture and strategy.



Indo-Pacific Conference 2023

Hosted by the Australian High Commission and the Indian High Commission, in partnership with the Council on Geostrategy and King's College London

On Thursday 30th November, the Australian High Commission and the Indian High Commission in London hosted the inaugural Indo-Pacific Conference 2023 in partnership with the **Centre for Grand Strategy** at King's College London and the **Council on Geostrategy**.

Through three panel sessions this one-day conference explored how Australia, the United Kingdom and India can better cooperate in the Indo-Pacific to promote an open, stable and prosperous region. The conference received welcoming remarks from H.E. Stephen Smith, High Commissioner of Australia to the UK, H.E. Vikram Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to the UK and Jenny Bates, Director-General, Indo-Pacific, FCDO.

Building on the UK's commitment to an in-depth engagement with the region as outlined in the 2023 Integrated Review Refresh, the conference was a timely opportunity to explore greater cooperation between the three close partners.



Geostrategy Forum



This year we launched our Geostrategy Forum. Between March and December we held 13 breakfast sessions at the In and Out Naval and Military Club.



The Indo-Pacific – geopolitical challenges, opportunities and the role of the Royal Navy With Capt. Ian Park – Assistant Head Military Indo-Pacific, Ministry of Defence

On Wednesday 18th January, we welcomed Capt. Ian Park to our Geostrategy Forum session to discuss the significance of the Indo-Pacific region and the role of the Royal Navy.



The Geostrategic Outlook in the Baltic-Black Sea Arc

With H.E. Eitvydas Bajarūnas – Ambassador of Lithuania to the United Kingdom

On Wednesday 1st February, we welcomed H.E. Eitvydas Bajarūnas to our Geostrategy Forum session to discuss the geostrategic outlook in the Baltic-Black Sea arc and the geopolitical challenges facing the UK and Lithuania.



Japan's New National Security Strategy and Indo-Pacific/Euro-Atlantic Cooperation

With Mr Masami Oka – Vice Minister of Defense for International Affairs

On Tuesday 14th February, we welcomed Mr Masami Oka to our Geostrategy Forum session to discuss Japan's new national security strategy.



The 'refresh' of the Integrated Review

With Prof. John Bew – Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Foreign Policy

On Tuesday 28th March, we welcomed Prof. John Bew, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Foreign Policy, to our Geostrategy Forum session to discuss the recent 'refresh' of the Integrated Review.

Geostrategy Forum



China: Systemic challenge, threat, or partner?

With Charles Parton OBE – Associate Fellow, Council on Geostrategy

On Tuesday 18th April, we welcomed Charles Parton OBE, our Associate Fellow, to our Geostrategy Forum session to discuss whether the PRC is a systemic challenge, a threat or a partner.



Poland's role in the future of Europe

With Arkadiusz Mularczyk – Secretary of State for European Policy

On Thursday 27th April, we welcomed Arkadiusz Mularczyk, the Secretary of State for European Policy, to our Geostrategy Forum session to discuss Poland's role in the future of Europe.



Implications for Royal Navy strategy of war in Europe and the pacing threat from China in the Indo-Pacific: Balancing our commitments

With Vice Admiral Andrew Burns CB OBE – Fleet Commander, Royal Navy

On Thursday 4th May, we welcomed Vice Admiral Andrew Burns CB OBE, the Fleet Commander, Royal Navy, to our Geostrategy Forum session to discuss the Royal Navy strategy and what the balance of our commitments should look like.



The Integrated Review Refresh: Key national security priorities

With Chris Rampling OBE – Director for National Security, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

On Wednesday 7th June, we welcomed Chris Rampling, Director for National Security at the FCDO, to our Geostrategy Forum to discuss the recent 'refresh' of the Integrated Review.

Geostrategy Forum



The refresh of the Defence Command Paper: Implications for British Defence

With Dr Robert Johnson – Director, Secretary of State for Defence's Office of Net Assessment and Challenge (SONAC)

On Thursday 20th July, we welcomed Dr Robert Johnson, the Director of SONAC, to our Geostrategy Forum to discuss the recent 'refresh' of the Defence Command Paper.



AUKUS: Two years on

With The Rt. Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Minister of State for the Indo-Pacific, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

On Tuesday 12th September, we welcomed The Rt. Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP to our Geostrategy Forum to discuss AUKUS on its second anniversary.



The UK-US relationship: Opportunities in the Indo-Pacific

With Matthew Palmer, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the United States

On Wednesday 4th October, we welcomed Matthew Palmer to our Geostrategy Forum to discuss the UK-US relationship and the opportunities for the two countries in the Indo-Pacific.



Defence and security policy: Labour's approach

With Luke Pollard MP, Shadow Minister for the Armed Forces

On Tuesday 31st October, we welcomed Luke Pollard MP to our Geostrategy Forum to discuss what a Labour government's approach to defence and security policy would look like.



Emerging thoughts on the Royal Navy's future Strategy

With R. Adm. Anthony Rimington, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Policy)

On Tuesday 21st November, we welcomed R. Adm. Anthony Rimington to our Geostrategy Forum to discuss the Royal Navy's future Strategy.

Find information on our upcoming Geostrategy Forum sessions for 2024 [here](#).

Private Events

London Dialogue

Expert Commission on the Trilateral Initiative

On Monday 19th June, we hosted the second dialogue of our Expert Commission on the Trilateral Initiative in the House of Lords, Westminster.

Joined by representatives of The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) and the Foreign Policy Council 'Ukrainian Prism', as well as

Parliamentarians from the three nations, the Commission discussed reconstruction, Ukraine's place in Euro-Atlantic structures and ensuring victory for Ukraine.



We were delighted to be joined by The Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia and United Nations at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, who delivered a speech over lunch in which he discussed Britain and Poland's support for Ukraine.



The geostrategic connectivity between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific

Roundtable discussion | Australian High Commission, Australia House

On **Thursday 13th July**, the Council on Geostrategy was proud to host an exclusive closed-door roundtable discussion at the **Australian High Commission** to discuss 'The geostrategic connectivity between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific: Strategic implications and minilateral opportunities' over three seminars.

We were delighted to be joined by **The Honourable Stephen Smith, Australian High Commissioner to the UK**.



Energy security in Europe: The Baltic example

Roundtable discussion with Minister Dainius Kreivys, Energy Minister of Lithuania | Palace of Westminster

On **Wednesday 19th July**, the Council on Geostrategy was delighted to host an exclusive closed-door roundtable discussion with **Minister Dainius Kreivys**, Energy Minister of Lithuania, to discuss 'Energy Security in Europe: The Baltic example' at the Palace of Westminster.

The Minister discussed the energy security issues in the Baltics and wider Europe in light of Russia's war against Ukraine and shared examples of Baltic efforts to achieve energy independence. This event was moderated by James Rogers, our Co-founder and Director of Research.





The Chinese navy: From minnow to shark

Panel discussion | Palace of Westminster

On **Tuesday 10th January**, the Council on Geostrategy was proud to host a discussion in the Palace of Westminster to celebrate the launch of an Explainer, '**The Chinese navy: From minnow to shark**', with the authors, Dr Edward Hampshire and Capt. Dr Kevin Rowlands. The panel was chaired by Lord Mountevans.



Geopolitics in the Himalayas: Towards a British strategy

Panel discussion | Palace of Westminster

On **Thursday 17th January**, the Council on Geostrategy was proud to host a panel discussion in the Palace of Westminster to celebrate the launch of a Policy Paper, '**Geopolitics in the Himalayas: Towards a British strategy**', with Gray Sergeant, the author of the paper, Robert Barnett, Dr Alexander Evans OBE, Dr Isabel Hilton and Eerishika Pankaj. The panel was chaired by Lord Risby.

The climate and migration: Implications for Britain

Panel discussion | Palace of Westminster

On **Tuesday 28th March**, the Council on Geostrategy was proud to host a discussion in the Palace of Westminster to celebrate the launch of a Policy Paper, '**The Climate and migration: Implications for Britain**', with the authors and our Associate Fellows, Jack Richardson and William Young, and Steph Spyro, Environment Editor and Senior Political Correspondent at the Daily Express.



The panel was chaired by **The Rt. Hon. Philip Dunn**, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, House of Commons.



Protecting offshore critical infrastructure in a maritime century

London International Shipping Week | Panel discussion

On Tuesday 12th September, the Council on Geostrategy was proud to host an event during London International Shipping Week in partnership with the Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre. This event, held at the In and Out Naval and Military Club, focused on the growing significance of critical maritime infrastructure, as well as the key geopolitical and security risks it faces.

This panel event involved interventions from four leading geopolitical strategists and Royal Navy representatives to discuss the security and well-being of critical maritime infrastructure amid intensifying geopolitical competition.



In conversation with Maj. Gen. (rtd.) Mick Ryan

In partnership with the Defence and Security Circle of the National Liberal Club

On Thursday 5th October, the Council on Geostrategy was delighted to host an in conversation session with Maj. Gen. (rtd.) Mick Ryan, Energy Minister of Lithuania, chaired by prominent journalist Latika Bourke, Sydney Morning Herald.

After his recent visit to Ukraine, this in conversation session, hosted at the National Liberal Club, provided the opportunity for those attending to hear Maj. Gen. (rtd.) Ryan's thoughts on Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and its implications for the Indo-Pacific.





In October 2023 we launched 'Defence Talks: Securing UK Advantage', a new podcast presented by the Council on Geostrategy in partnership with trade association ADS Group, and sponsored by industry powerhouse BAE Systems.

Find out more about the first five episodes below:



The Refresh of the Defence Command Paper: Implications for British Defence

Featuring **Dr Robert Johnson**, Director, Secretary of State's Office for Net Assessment and Challenge, and **Shashank Joshi**, Defence Editor at *The Economist*.



Greater diversity in the defence community: Opportunities and challenges

Featuring **Angela Owen OBE**, Founder of Women in Defence UK, and **Richard Blackmore**, Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at BAE Systems.



Our country needs you: The relationship between UK society and the Armed Forces

Featuring **The Rt. Hon. James Heappey MP**, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, and **Howard Mustoe**, Industry Editor at *The Telegraph*.



ESG and industry: How collaboration can secure the UK's advantage in innovation

Featuring **Kevin Craven**, Chief Executive Officer at ADS Group, and **Camilla Hughes**, former ESG lead at Rothschild & Co Global Advisory.



History rhymes: Learning how to secure a military competitive edge

Featuring **Prof. Sir Lawrence Freedman**, Emeritus Professor of War Studies at King's College London, and **Dr William James**, Ax:son Johnson Research Fellow at King's College London.



Selected below is a curated list of our most popular articles from each month of 2023. You can read all of our [56 Long Reads here](#), [17 Short Reads here](#) and [29 Big Asks here](#).



Reciprocity redefines the British-Japanese defence relationship

by Philip Shetler-Jones | 17th January 2023

Why DSIT's success is vital for British power

by Allan Nixon | 23rd February 2023



What does victory look like for Ukraine?

by Alexander Lanoszka | 7th March 2023

China's undersea capability: Meeting the challenge

by Emma Salisbury | 18th April 2023



Artificial Intelligence: What are the geostrategic implications?

Big Ask | 12th May 2023

The panda in the room – the UK's China strategy

by Charles Parton | 1st June 2023



Inside out: Europe's accidental empire builders

by Roderick Parkes | 3rd July 2023

Australia stands with Ukraine, as must we all

By Stephen Smith | 24th August 2023



Expanding Taiwan's international participation

by Gray Sergeant | 20th September 2023

How Britain can become a Net Zero superpower

by Mann Virdee | 9th October 2023

How secure is Xi Jinping's rule?

Big Ask | 10th November 2023

How Britain can better support Ukraine to fight a war of attrition

by William Freer | 18th December 2023



Members, Partners & Sponsors



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- Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (Global Strategic Partnership Framework);
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office;
- The Genesis Initiative;
- Heinrich-Boell Foundation;
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- John Caudwell;
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- L3Harris;
- Leonardo UK;
- Lockheed Martin;
- London International Shipping Week;
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- QinetiQ;
- Rolls-Royce;
- Royal Navy;
- Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre;
- Serco;
- Stena;
- Thales;
- Taipei Representative Office;
- 1 anonymous donation (UK).



About Us

Since our official launch in March 2021, the Council on Geostrategy has established itself as a reputable think tank dedicated to generating a new generation of geostrategic thinking for a more competitive age. Our non-profit organisation focuses on shaping British strategic ambition in the international environment increasingly defined by geopolitical competition and the environmental crisis. We seek to empower the United Kingdom, together with key allies and partners, to succeed and prosper in the twenty-first century, with a particular focus on our naval power and reach. We promote a strong Britain, working closely with allies and partners, to uphold an open international order – for a more secure and prosperous future.

In addition, the Council on Geostrategy produces cutting-edge research, hosts private and public events and conferences for key stakeholders (in Westminster, Whitehall, and the business community) and actively engages with the media both nationally and internationally. As a non-partisan organisation, we are guided by a diverse Advisory Council. Our Leadership, Staff and Associate Fellows combine next-generation thinkers with well established names in the field.

More information about our mission, work and expertise can be found at:



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