

Ian Kearns and Ken Gude published 'The new front line: Security in a changing world' as a working paper for the ippr Commission on National Security on 13 February 2008.

The full text of the working paper can be accessed at:

<http://www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=588>

In their paper, Kearns and Gude argue for a wider conceptualisation of what constitutes 'national security', and identify five 'forces of change' in the contemporary security environment:

Globalisation
Poverty and failing/failed states
Climate change
Political Islam (Islamism)
'Socio-economic vulnerability' (the susceptibility of critical national infrastructure to attack)

They therefore reach three key conclusions:

That on security issues, governments cannot act alone, particularly on issues such as critical national infrastructure. That 'security must be common to all or is unlikely to be delivered for any' That 'the core challenge of security policy is to enhance and extend our mechanisms of government'

The paper concludes with a list of questions that need considering if the challenges that this broadened definition of 'national security' raises are to be address effectively.

Media reaction

Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Thinktank warns of new threats to Britain's national security', Guardian (13 February 2008).

Private Eye (22 February 2008) argued that the paper was 'packed with scary ideas'. 'In places the paper read like a Jack Bauer fantasy,' they reported. They noted, however:

The IPPR's "Security Commission" is one of its most high-powered gatherings, with Paddy Ashdown, George Robertson, Charles Guthrie and many other big names on board. It is also one of the IPPR's better-funded programmes, receiving money from Raytheon, De La Rue, Booz Allen Hamilton and EDS.

Some of these companies already make millions from the homeland security boom in the US, so perhaps its no surprise the IPPR seem intent on scaring everyone to death here too.