The Changing Character of Armed Conflict: Understand, Plan, Act

Executive Leadership Course of the Oxford Changing Character of War Programme

This intensive one-week executive leadership course will equip participants with a critical understanding of the changing character of armed conflict as well as the conceptual and practical tools necessary to anticipate and tackle future conflict. The course takes an interdisciplinary, participatory approach and combines academic rigour with innovative practical thinking. It is critical for current and future leaders involved in policy-formulation, practice or research related to security, defence and peacebuilding.

The combination and convergence of new technologies, including cyberware, in the context of the information age, and the corresponding prevalence of low-tech challenges by violent non-state actors has created significant challenges to addressing future security threats. The changing geo-strategic balance, or perceptions of change, against a background of fundamental shifts in the global economy, has added to the sense of uncertainty. Nevertheless, there are well-established hot spots of conflict which allow analysts the opportunity to make more concrete assessments, while international institutions continue to provide mechanisms for diplomacy and co-operation.
Structure and Methodology

This course will involve critically reflecting on recent examples, assessing risks, planning and testing policy ideas and forecasting strategic trends. Modelled on successful programmes we have run in the past, it will be structured into intensive participatory breakout sessions, evaluation of case studies and practical exercises. A number of distinguished keynote speakers will complement the interactive course sessions. Course facilitators will include distinguished academics and experienced practitioners.

Participants

Global in outlook, the course is principally designed for government officials, staff of international organisations and NGOs, military professionals and the private sector with several years of work experience in issues related to security, defence or peacebuilding. It is also for scholars researching armed conflict.

Facilitators and Keynote Speakers

The course is led by Dr Rob Johnson and Dr Annette Idler with input from keynote speakers, including Sir Lawrence Freedman KCMG, CBE, PC, FBA and Sir Hew Strachan FRSE FRHistS, and other small group facilitators.

Dr Rob Johnson is Director of the Changing Character of War Programme. His primary research interests are in strategy, its development, and the history of war which informs it. Dr Johnson is also concerned with the issue of civil-military relations in the making of strategy, and has examined the problems of maintaining internal security, the dynamics of insurrection, and the role of auxiliary forces in a number of other publications. Dr Johnson convenes the UK Strategy Forum, and advises and delivers direct support to a number of governments and armed forces in defence and security matters. He runs an annual strategic leadership course for international participants at the Royal College of Defence Studies.

Dr Annette Idler is Director of Studies at the Changing Character of War Programme. Her research interests lie at the interface of conflict, security, transnational organised crime and peacebuilding, and the role that a variety of violent non-state actors, including rebels, paramilitaries, terrorists and criminals play in these dynamics. She has carried out extensive fieldwork in war-torn border regions, and has directed and delivered courses internationally to practitioners and academics on issues related to armed conflict. Dr Idler draws on her professional experience with UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and GIZ, to actively engage the policy community.

Themes

Sessions will be held on each of the following themes:

- The Changing Character of Conflict: A Historic Overview
- New Security Threats and Revolutions in Military Affairs
- Behavioural Patterns among Violent Non-state Groups
- The Relationship between Policy and Strategy
- Wars of the Future: New Conflicts, New Policy?

A Typical Day

A typical day will begin at 9.00am with a plenary address by a keynote speaker. There will be opportunity for Q&A with the speaker as well as a chance to discuss the theme of the day in depth in smaller groups. After lunch, breakout sessions will include timed exercises and case studies as well as detailed analysis of materials provided in the course reading pack. Dinner is provided each evening in the College Hall, allowing participants the opportunity to network informally. A variety of activities are arranged in the evening, but participants will also have access to the Oxford libraries should they wish to study.

A banquet dinner and drinks reception will take place on the Wednesday evening.

Please note: Changes to the draft programme and speakers may be made at any time prior to the start of the course.

COURSE DATES

20 to 24 June 2016

LOCATION

The course will take place over five days in purpose-built conference facilities at St Catherine's College in the heart of Oxford. Fees include full board accommodation, with delegates housed in en-suite accommodation on the College site. A banquet dinner and drinks reception will take place on the Wednesday evening.
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About Us

The Changing Character of War Programme (CCW) is devoted to the interdisciplinary study of war and armed conflict. It is a successful, policy-relevant research programme based in Pembroke College, University of Oxford, and enjoying global influence and international partnerships. Directed by Dr Robert Johnson and Dr Annette Idler, with a Programme Committee chaired by Professor Dominic Johnson and a large number of Research Associates from a variety of disciples within the University, CCW is unique in its delivery of high-quality, high-impact research, combined with practice, policy and advisory engagement.

More than 16 titles have been published in the CCW series at Oxford University Press. CCW conferences, workshops, and seminars bring to Oxford representatives of the armed services, governments and international organisations, as well as leading academics from across the world, including from our partner institutions in the US, Canada, Norway, and Australia. The Programme’s vibrant Visiting Fellowship Scheme adds breadth and diversity to its research through its combination of practitioner experience and international perspectives.

Further information: www.ccw.ox.ac.uk
Follow us on Twitter @OxfordCCW

Requirements

- Minimum of 5 years work experience in a relevant field or postdoctoral level
- Application form, motivation letter and CV to be submitted by 15 May 2016
- Able to demonstrate visa requirements
- Proficiency in the English language
- Able to cover fees of £2800 (includes en-suite accommodation, all meals, banquet dinner, and Bodleian reader’s card).

Enrolment

To register for the Executive Leadership Course, please submit your application documents (application form available from www.ccw.ox.ac.uk) by 15 May 2016 to ruth.murray@pmb.ox.ac.uk.