

SISPR – Students Initiative for Security Policy Research

Learning by Travelling and Intercultural Research

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The idea of building up an international research team dedicated to an interdisciplinary study of the global topic of security studies was developed through the wish to enlarge our knowledge on this field and to get a broader view on international topics in addition to normal university lectures.

The project was initiated in February 2007 by an enthusiastic team that wanted to go beyond the limits of the classroom. We wanted to get to know and understand other cultures, not only see the theoretical part of an analysis, but really to get in touch with the people. We think that this is the best way to understand such a sensitive field like international security and related policy issues, being able to do research on a high quality level.

The **Students Initiative for Security Policy Research (SISPR)** is this project team.

The concept of security is subject to constant change – SISPR intends to examine all aspects of the concept of security. Traditional security studies dealt primarily with national and military security. The concept of security studies was extended in the mid-1990s to include a more comprehensive notion of security, which includes political, economic and social factors. Additionally, the idea of human security needs to be taken into account – human security emphasises a system of stability, security and prosperity as well as the protection of the individual and its liberties.

For these reasons, SISPR focuses on various thematic highlights, and will always attempt to approach these thematic clusters from a scientific point of view. At the same time, a certain degree of novelty will be pursued.

Initiating this ambitious project, we not only wanted to conduct research on our own, but also to motivate students, getting them in touch with the issues. In this context, our main purpose was to bring complicated political debates to the university and the students and we used different methods to gain a better understanding of Security Policy issues.

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Event series

The subject of our first research project is the Energy/Security policy analysis with cases on Iran, EU/USA, Venezuela and Russia. Since the Iranian Nuclear Program is a major concern in the relations between Iran and the USA/EU, we organized a series of lectures delivered by the US, Iranian and German representatives to UN and IAEA. It was revealing to observe how these diplomats expressed their views on the Iranian Nuclear Program, and it was even more interesting to see students commenting on the topic and address their questions to the speakers.

Informal discussions with politician and experts

There are many points which the politicians and experts would not express in an official lecture with hundreds of people in the audience, because the issue is too complicated to speak about in less than an hour. Moreover these people are usually concerned about the reflection of their speech in the media and its possible impact. In such situations we invite them to an informal chat with a small-sized group of interested students in order to discuss the topic in more detail under Chatham House rules, “When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”

Study trip

In order to experience Iran with our own eyes, away from typical media, we organized a study trip to Iran to experience this country. For a better view of the domestic political system, economy and the Iranian society, the program of the study trip included meetings with Iranian and international diplomats, Teheran journalists, harassed bloggers and students. We had number of discussions which helped both sides to reach to a better understanding of each other's concerns and interests regarding the issue of security policy.