

AMMERDOWN GROUP RETHINKING SECURITY **RESOURCE PACK**



IDEAS, TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES TO INSPIRE YOU TO
ORGANISE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SECURITY.

Welcome and contents

Welcome to the Rethinking Security resource pack!

This pack provides practical suggestions, resources and inspiration for anyone who is interested in setting up conversations about Rethinking Security, drawing on the material developed by the Ammerdown Group.

The pack includes the following materials:

1. Why organise a conversation on rethinking security?

This document sets out why we think it is important to engage people in conversations about rethinking security.

2. Steps for organising a conversation on Rethinking Security

This document helps you consider the steps you will need to take to convene, prepare and facilitate a discussion event.

3. Resources:

- **Sample Invitation to a Discussion on Rethinking Security**

This invitation text can be used as a template to adapt and customise for your own event.

- **List of links to useful resources**

- TEDx talk
- Rethinking Security publications
- The Ammerdown Invitation
- The Ammerdown Invitation summary and questions

4. Reference materials from Rethinking Security events held to date:

- 1st Conversation, Bath – agenda, notes and guide
- 2nd Conversation, Bath – agenda, notes and guide
- 3rd Conversation, Bath – agenda, notes and guide
- Bradford Conversation – agenda, discussion, methodology, personal reflection sheet, questions, information and quotes sheet.
- Calder Valley Conversation – TO FOLLOW

5. Following up afterwards

This document explains how you can share the material and ideas arising from your event with others who are interested in rethinking security.

6. Background information

Summary of Ammerdown Group Background and Purpose

We need to talk about security!

Security matters to all of us. We all have a stake in the task of building security, both within the UK and in the wider world.

Escalating violence and insecurity suggest that current approaches are not working. Part of the reason for this is that they do not adequately reflect the needs, concerns and hopes of a broad range of people.

The Ammerdown Group is a collective of organisations and individuals who are seeking a new vision of our common security. We are deeply disturbed by the tragic failures of current responses, which are causing suffering and harm across the world and here in the UK. Based on our experiences of working in places affected by violent conflict, and on our commitment to campaigning for change, we are convinced that a better alternative is within our grasp. But we believe that a different approach to security needs to be built on a different foundation. We think it needs to draw on the shared values and experiences of as many people as possible.

We are inviting you to organise a conversation about security which can feed in to this new vision. This conversation could be with anyone whom you would like to bring together – perhaps friends, or colleagues, other people who belong to organisations you are involved with, or people in your local community. It could be a conversation which aims to bring people together who share similar concerns about security - or it could be a conversation between people who have a range of different perspectives.

This resource pack offers you some suggestions and guidance about how you could do this. It includes some sample materials from conversations that have already taken place in communities around the UK. These are for reference only, and are not intended as a rigid set of instructions! You are encouraged to devise your own approaches and methods, to best suit the people you will be speaking with and listening to.

Finally, if you do decide to organise a conversation, we would love to hear how it goes! The pack includes information about how to get in touch with us to share your questions and discoveries.

Email: ammerdown.invitation@gmail.com

Web: www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk

Steps for organising a conversation on Rethinking Security

Below is an overview of how you could organise a Rethinking Security conversation.

BEFORE

The success of your meeting depends hugely on the amount of work you put into the planning and preparation. Getting people into the room is the biggest challenge.

Who will co-ordinate the conversations?

There are quite a few tasks that need to be carried out so it helps to have a team working together on this. Skills needed in the team include:

- Good communication skills, both verbal and written. These are for outreach to your targeted communities, as well as for effective communication within the organising group.
- Organising and co-ordinating skills.
- Facilitation and note-taking skills at the meeting.
- Is your organising group representative of the people you want to invite to the conversation?

When will the meeting take place?

- Depending on who you are hoping will attend, you will choose daytime/evening on a weekday or a weekend.
- Not everyone will be able to attend, so think about whose voices you are prioritising.

Where will it take place?

- Is the venue accessible to disabled people, eg people with mobility difficulties?
<http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/accessiblemtg>
- Is it easy to reach by public transport?
- Is the venue free? If not, how will you raise the money to pay for it?

What will you discuss and **How**?

- What is the content of the meeting going to be?

- How will the conversation be conducted?
- What resources do you need?
- How will you lay out the room? Informal seating in small groups may help people to have more intimate conversations.
- What roles will the planning team take during the conversation meeting?
<http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/facilitationmeeting#cofa>
- Look at the guides [here](#) to find out how other people have organised conversations.

Making it **inclusive**

- Think about how you carry out your outreach and to whom – are you only reaching people who are already involved in similar issues, or people who don't usually get their opinions heard?
- Keep your language plain and simple, both in written materials and face-to-face communication. Do you need interpreters at the meeting? Will you be able to pay for interpreters?
- Is the language you are using welcoming and inclusive? Think about how you address people or describe people, eg, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-jasz/why-we-should-stop-callin_b_8091436.html
- If people want to come to the meeting who have access or support needs, will you do your best to meet their needs? Have you provided a way for people to contact you in advance with access requests? Be clear in your publicity about accessibility of the venue and the meeting process. For more information see <http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/access> and <http://www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk/resources/practical-guides/>

DURING

- Let participants know how you will be recording the conversations, and what you will do with the information afterwards. <http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/minutes>
- Get permission from participants before taking pictures/videos. Tell them where their image will be used, eg posted on FB or in an article, and **only** use it for agreed purposes.
- Stay flexible – as long as the conversation is staying within broad parameters.
- Be alert to who is participating and who is keeping quiet – is there anything you can do to support people's participation, eg, by changing the tool?
<http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/tools>

- Lively discussion is to be encouraged, but make sure the room stays a safe space for all participants.
- Keep to time.
- Agree with people what you have recorded and how it will be distributed.
- Remind everyone of the time and date of the next meeting.
- Ask people if they have any feedback on the way the meeting was organised.

AFTER

- Debrief the event immediately afterwards with the organising team. Discuss highlights, what went well and what to do differently next time.
- Send all participants the notes of the meeting with clear action points.
- Make sure you follow up on your action points!
- Let the Ammerdown Group know the outcome of your conversation.

More in depth information on running a meeting can be found here
<http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/meeting> If you need any further advice, you can email
ammerdown.invitation@gmail.com

Resources that you may find helpful for sparking conversations about rethinking security

- **Re-imagining Security – a TEDx talk by Celia McKeon:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTBYcSL3MrI>
This 17 minute TEDx talk by a member of the Ammerdown Group argues that current approaches to security are failing, and proposes other ways in which we can think about and build security, drawing on stories from around the world.
- **Rethinking Security: Executive summary**
<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/portfolio/policy-resources/>
This short (5pp) document summarises a longer critique of the UK's current National Security Strategy, and sets out the key elements of a different approach to security
- **The Ammerdown Invitation**
<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/ammerdown-invitation/>
This 8 pp document, in the form of an Open Letter, aims to provide an accessible introduction to the challenges of rethinking security, arguing that the current approach is failing and a different approach may better address the needs of the 21st Century
- **The Ammerdown Invitation summary and questions**
<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/ammerdown-invitation/>
This 2pp document provides a simple introduction to the rationale for rethinking security and argues that a different approach is needed. It also includes sample questions for stimulating a conversation.

Finally, check out the 'examples and templates from conversations' sub-folder of this pack, and particularly the resource sheets devised from the Bradford conversation.

Rethinking security: an invitation

Dear friend,

Security around the world is deteriorating. The number of armed conflicts is rising, and every year millions of people are being forced from their homes. UK government policy is making this worse. It prioritises spending on offensive military actions and continues to subsidise arms exports, including to states that have used weapons on civilian populations. It is also taking a range of increasingly draconian measures to address security risks here in the UK. Elsewhere in the world, insecurity is growing and the recent election of Donald Trump in the US increases uncertainties about the future.

We invite you to join with others for a series of discussions about security: what it means to us and how it can be increased, both here in the UK and globally.

Our starting point is an article entitled *Security for the future: in search of a new vision*, published online at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ammerdown-invitation>. It was written by the Ammerdown Group, a collection of peacebuilders, campaigners and academics who identified a common concern about the disastrous effect of global militarist policies on local populations.

They published this article to promote conversations in different communities- to reveal what people think about the current reality and create fresh ideas and momentum for change.

We (*insert a description of who you / your group / your network is*) have decided to play a part in that process by convening such a conversation here in (*insert village / town / city*) and think you/your group as someone/one who/that would have a lot to contribute to it.

We will hold three sessions (amend as appropriate) to discuss the issues outlined below.

Session 1: The current context and issues (date and venue)

Session 2: Increasing security for all – changes we want to see (date and venue)

Session 3: Planning for our Future – how and where to these conversations forward

Please let us know if you will be attending, and also whether you need any assistance on the night. We will do our best to support everyone's participation.

With all good wishes,

The Bath Conversations

Introductory note on the Bath conversations

The Bath conversations were arranged as three separate sessions:

- a. **Rethinking Security;** After brief introductions we watched a 15 minute TED Talk given by one of the Ammerdown Group, moved into a free-ranging discussion in small groups on the thoughts presented in the article and the TED Talk and ended with plenary reflections on the ideas emerging from the groups.
- b. **Towards a Strategy for Common Security;** The second session followed a similar pattern to the first, focussing this time on the kind of policy shifts that could begin to contribute to greater security for all. We focussed on the Ammerdown document entitled 'Towards a Strategy for Common Security'.
- c. **Ideas for Action;** The third session focussed on actions that could take the conversation out to others with the aim of opening up thinking and shifting opinion in relation to UK policy.

We shared by email the following documents with participants specific to each of the three sessions;

- d. **Rethinking Security;** Rethinking Security Discussion paper link
- e. **Towards a Strategy for Common Security** Give notice that one part of the meeting will be group work around the elements 1. Rethink our approach to security alliances 2. Reduce the emphasis on military power in the UK's policy, economy and culture 3. Put peacebuilding at the heart of common security. Participants might look at these elements in advance and make a tentative choice about which group they would be most interested in joining. Explain that should they finish work on their element they should feel free to consider the others.
- f.

As participants arrived we directed them to their circle and reallocated when one was too popular/unpopular.

We shared typed notes with the Ammerdown Group.

Rethinking Security Agenda Notes

Session 1

- 7:30 pm Welcome and introductions; Rethinking Security; 'After brief introductions we will watch a 15-minute TED Talk given by one of the Ammerdown Group, move into a free-ranging discussion in small groups on the thoughts presented in the article and the TED Talk and end with plenary reflections on the ideas emerging from the groups'.
- 7:35 pm Brief background re the Ammerdown group and its purpose – see attached document.
- 7:40 pm Celia McKeon's TED Talk *Reimagining Security* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTBYcSL3MrI>
- 7:55 pm Small groups (of 5 or 6) to discuss responses to the article and talk, and to come up with their own ideas
- 8:25 pm Bring ideas from different groups into plenary, through individual reflections on what was important, and discuss further as time permits
- 8:55 pm Brief summing up and pointers to next session on 18th May, signalling distribution of strategy doc and giving copies to any not on email
- 9:00, or latest 9:15 Finish.

Resources:

1. Registration paper collecting names and email addresses
2. Copies of the agenda
3. Summary of Ammerdown group Background and Purpose
4. Copies of the article?
5. Internet connection, projector, speaker to share TED talk
6. Flip charts, marker pens, tape or blu-tac for fixing to walls

Notes on the first Rethinking Security conversation

Altogether thirty-two people came together in Bath Quaker Meeting House on April 20th for the first of three 'Rethinking Security' conversations. We'd been expecting 23, so that was great.

After a welcome and a brief explanation of the origin and purpose of the Ammerdown Group, we watched Celia McKeon's TED talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTBYcSL3Mrl> , which got an extremely positive response.

We then organised ourselves into four groups to discuss our responses to that, in conjunction with the summary Security for the Future paper that had been circulated before the meeting and then to move into an exchange of our own ideas. The room was very quickly buzzing and we could have continued in our groups for a long time more.

After a few minutes of extra time we came together again to hear from each other some of the main strands of thought from the different groups. (The organisers had decided not to have group reports as such, since that can be time consuming and use up most of the space for further discussion; but of course it's a matter of swings and roundabouts and doing it this way meant that some ideas from individuals and groups never got an airing, so I'd be very happy to collect the missing bits from anyone who wants to send me them and send out an appendix to this summary.)

I hope I captured the main thoughts that emerged from this final plenary session on flipchart. Here's what I had, in the order given:

- There are almost insurmountable difficulties to be overcome but also empathy, love and belief in equality as power for change
- Here in our conversations we have felt the security to disagree
- Statistically, across the world people are safer now than ever before, but there are haves and have nots and if you're in the latter group that's not much comfort
- There are differences in language and philosophy. Some see things in black and white, good or bad terms; others as all a mixture of both.

- It may be easier to believe in equality if you see others and their ways of thinking as a mixed bag like your own, which can be unifying.
- Human beings are naturally belligerent.
- According to current genetic science, sociability and cooperation are human beings' strongest point
- Progress is possible but economic and cultural problems stand in the way [the point about the economic divide was reiterated later]
- That sociability and cooperation can be used to good or bad effect
- It's ideas that count, the way we think that makes the difference [culture again]
- The polarisation of wealth between the West and the rest – and greed – are matched by a polarisation of ideas
- We desperately need dialogue and the internet leads to exchanges that are not dialogical because there's no real live, active listening
- We need to talk with 'the other' and reach out to people who are different from us
- Open handedness involves vulnerability
- We need good energy, not negative thinking
- The war culture like a forest fire. To set it ablaze you need the wood, a spark and wind. The wind is the huge vested interests (what US President Eisenhower called 'the military-industrial complex') of those who will gain from war and they have a vested interest in making us feel insecure
- Fear is indeed growing and Europe has become a gated community
- If you ask 'What's the biggest problem for Europe?', 'Immigration' is the answer that comes up, but if you ask an individual about what's the biggest problem for them, that won't be the answer. There's a storyline that's creating a sense of insecurity
- We need to talk to one another. Hearing other people's stories can change the way we see them
- We do need to think about the protection of others in some situations
- Preventing or defusing violence before it gets going should be our first aim
- We need to draw on all forms of Conflict Transformation to address violence and resolve conflict

- Some people are very keen to talk about the 'poor accountability' of DFID and 'wasted money', yet they don't seem to talk about the terrible waste of warfare, which dwarfs any other
- The mass media have a hugely negative influence and manipulate the way things are seen and distort the truth
- Gender and militarism are closely related. After war, women are expected to bear unreasonable burdens in the recovery process. Non-gendered approaches are better. All should participate equally

We could have gone on for a lot longer but stopped, by agreement, at 9.15, after a brief introduction to the second meeting on May 18th, which will pick up the threads and move on to explore ideas for moving in a different direction in UK security policy. It felt as if this first meeting had been appreciated and that there was enthusiasm for the next.

Rethinking Security Agenda

Session 2

Towards a Strategy for Common Security; The second session will follow a similar pattern to the first, focussing this time on the kind of policy shift that could begin to contribute to greater security for all. We will focus on the Ammerdown document entitled 'Towards a Strategy for Common Security'.

7.30 Welcome back, introduction to session and framing the purpose and process of this second meeting, with the policy document in that context. Help participants select which group to sit in, according to the three elements. And ask each group to identify a note-taker and a presenter at the beginning. (see 3 below)

7.40 Each group to discuss the 'Ammerdown Questions' - The questions posed at the end of the 'Security for the future' summary sheet beginning with 1. What does 'security' mean to you? etc. No report back at this point but groups to carry the thinking from this discussion into their thinking on what follows.

Each group to reflect on their 'element' and the actions needed to achieve it. Share agreements, disagreements, insights and suggestions. The elements are;

- a. *Rethink our approach to security alliances*
- b. *Reduce the emphasis on military power in the UK's policy*
- c. *Put peacebuilding at the heart of common security.*

Groups should respond to the following:

- (a) Consider the list of 'Proposed policies'? Do we roughly agree with them? Would we add others? Would some take priority over others? Were some contentious in your group?
- (b) What resistance to these actions do we anticipate? How might that be overcome? How do we democratise the process of policy making?
- (c) How do we build a connection between what individuals experience personally in their communities and the formation of political policy?

Groups to note their responses on flip chart paper (40 mins)

8.20 Main part of meeting - Plenary session. Each of the three groups to present their thoughts. Post results by hanging flip charts around the room. There may be in practice quite a lot of overlap in the focus and thinking of the three groups (20 mins)

5. Finale. Summarise and emphasise important points. Take issues from those who feel their concerns/thoughts haven't been addressed. Point up main activities and preparation for next and final session (10 mins)

Maybe use Platform for Humanity diagram to suggest possible focus areas [including of course Trident and other demil. Issues for us].

9. 00 – 9.15 finish

Resources:

1. Registration paper collecting names and email addresses
2. Copies of the agenda
3. Hard copies of 'Towards a Strategy for Common Security' (soft copies already emailed)
4. Label for each discussion group with title of discussion (see 2 above)
5. 3 Flipcharts and marker pens. Tape or blu tac to attach to walls.
6. Copies for each participant of 'Ammerdown Questions'
7. Copies for each participant of the following questions;
 - (d) Consider the list of 'Proposed policies'? Do we roughly agree with them? Would we add others? Would some take priority over others? Were some contentious in your group?
 - (e) What resistance to these actions do we anticipate? How might that be overcome? How do we democratise the process of policy making?
 - (c) How do we build a connection between what individuals experience personally in their communities and the formation of political policy?

Notes from the second Rethinking Security conversation

As advertised, our main focus was on the Ammerdown document entitled 'Towards a Strategy for Common Security' and on arrival we selected which group to sit in, according to the document's three main categories of proposals: *1. Rethink our approach to security alliances, 2. Reduce the emphasis on military power in the UK's policy and 3. Put peacebuilding at the heart of common security.*

In these three groups we first looked again at the questions at the end of the initial document, 'Security for the future', noting down and then discussing our responses to them. The thoughts we shared provided the context for our thinking on the Strategy document and the proposals made under the heading we had chosen.

When our time was exhausted – inevitably when we still had lots to say – one person from each group presented the notes from these discussions that they had committed to flip charts. The first had focussed closely on the document text in their discussions and the second on their own additional ideas, while the third answered the questions given about responses to the different items in their section.

There was in practice quite a lot of overlap in the focus and thinking of the three groups.

The following are the groups' summaries.

Group 1 (an expanded version of the flipchart notes):

Rethink our approach to security alliances

Document text: 'Strategic alliances with states whose responses to conflict are habitually violent, abusive or corrupt are not bringing security to British citizens or anyone else. Strategies that have rested far too heavily on military power, and the enormous injustices and costs associated with them, are making us all more insecure. In particular, the UK's attachment to violent and repressive allies is limiting this country's ability to build more effective, collaborative alliances, in Europe and further afield.'

We need to:

- a) acknowledge the UK's changing position in the world, and the growing importance of other geographic areas and cultures in influencing future change'

Our comment: We acknowledge this is all right, but we think successive UK governments have not begun even to admit it. They have failed to move beyond a "We won the war" mindset. Hence our suggestion that this point should be about examining the UK's current position then developing and implementing a vision of what its place in the world *could* be (then points b and c amplify that vision)

Document text:

- b) strengthen diplomacy and build the power of collaborative, just and inclusive relationships, both nationally and internationally

Our comment: No problem with this at all but we think it should explicitly mention 'soft power', especially since the 2014 Select Committee report

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/15002.htm>.

We should also teach people that confidence-building measures work by slow, steady encouragement of 'collaborative, just and inclusive relationships'

Document text:

- c) end military and political alliances of convenience with repressive and cruel regimes, and focus more on solidarity with the people living in conflict-affected societies

Our comment: We were not happy with the simplicity of 'end ... alliances'. There is a place for engagement and involvement with anyone - including repressive/cruel regimes, inside or outside alliances. It's not the alliances *per se* that are the problem – it's the fact that we tacitly condone or legitimise violence by not challenging bad behaviour perpetrated by allies. So we can be in alliances but not be an accomplice to their repression or cruelty. So we *shouldn't* sell arms and we *should*:

- strengthen civil society especially in conflict and post-conflict areas
- trade
- offer our services for peacekeeping and peacebuilding (and earn money for this – replace income lost from ending arms sales!)
- participate in and support international finance for measures that increase democracy, inclusion, human rights – make the World Bank and the IMF do the job they were meant to do

Group 2 (which launched straight into its own ideas):

Reduce the emphasis on military power in the UK's policy

Document text:

Aggressive military postures, capabilities and responses are ill-matched to the most urgent security challenges we face today; they are reinforcing cycles of violence and mistrust.

We need to:

- a) Acknowledge fully the losses and injuries suffered by both the Armed Forces and civilians in recent interventionist wars and provide comprehensive support and rehabilitation
- b) De-escalate the arms race, by actively supporting initiatives for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation – demonstrating the UK's commitment by the non-renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system
- c) End subsidies for the UK arms industry and invest in transferring associated skills, production capacity and labour to engineering and manufacturing for sustainable energy
- d) Progressively reduce UK spending on military solutions, starting with a commitment to bring it in line with the European average
- e) Invest in and adapt current peacekeeping capacities to include a far greater emphasis on civilian roles
- f) Promote a national debate about the role of the military in our cultural identity, exploring its different consequences for men and women, girls and boys and the origins and impacts of valorising violence.

Our ideas:

- ❖ We should look again at how we measure economic activity: focus on resources and conservation and not on consumption. (Currently statistics on 'growth' are inflated by the military

economy that produces nothing useable [other than for destruction])

- ❖ We (the UK) should stop acting like a colonial power and have a clear policy of 'keeping out' of other countries unless it is clear that we can do some good
- ❖ There should be transparency about military funding for activities and military teaching materials and presence in schools; also about academic research commissioned and funded by the military
- ❖ The most vulnerable pupils/students particularly should be protected from military recruiting
- ❖ Cost-benefit analysis is needed on the relative cost-effectiveness of spending on military and peacebuilding interventions, which would show how much more effective the latter is in terms of achieving peace. (Currently diplomatic and peacebuilding efforts are seriously restricted by lack of funds)
- ❖ On the basis of that evidence, spending should be transferred from warfare to peacebuilding

In addition, one proposal for future action came from this group, to be carried over to our third session: that we should in future commemorate and celebrate the ending of wars rather than their beginnings, starting with 11.11.2018, the centenary of WWI's ending.

Group 3:

Put peacebuilding at the heart of common security

Document text:

A 'peacebuilding' approach focuses on the real drivers of current conflicts, and builds relationships and initiatives capable of addressing these. Significant expertise exists within the UK – not least as a result of the ongoing Northern Ireland peace process – as well as a wealth of experience from elsewhere in the world. The UK needs to make just peace a genuine and practical priority, rather than a marginal concern that is subservient to our supposed economic and security interests.

We need to:

- a) Put dialogue and cooperation at the heart of international relations, building relationships on the basis of shared commitments to human rights, freedoms and dignity, and working for the democratic reform of international institutions
- b) Prioritise political strategies to address conflicts, for example, in the Middle East, North Africa and Ukraine.
- c) Support locally-led peace initiatives in countries experiencing violent conflict, developing inclusive processes which enable the equitable participation of all those affected, particularly women and marginalised groups
- d) Ensure that the UK makes political and economic choices that support peace. Aid must address the drivers of conflict – by supporting people’s rights and empowerment and avoiding reinforcing poor governance, exclusive growth and other known drivers of conflict.
- e) Address the complex root causes of ‘terrorist’ violence, end the use of rhetoric and strategies that alienate Muslim communities at home and abroad and invest in building bridges of respect and understanding
- f) Work with others to urgently address the deep causes of insecurity and conflict: climate change, inequality and marginalisation, scarcity, mass migration, militarised violence and repression. Without addressing these issues, we can never build lasting peace and security.

Our responses:

We agree with the above and would want to add ‘democratic reform’ and ‘free access to information’. (We recommend a website called ‘Full fact’, which checks facts and presents facts in an accessible way about the EU referendum.)

Resistance to change will come from the media, business and political powers and those with entrenched cultural norms.

To overcome that resistance we must reduce fear as a driver of feelings of insecurity that are generated by the above and used to justify military preparations and responses and do so at all levels, from the personal to the national. In place of fear we must build and foster community, for instance in schools and social housing.

Inspiration for cultural change can be found in stories of local decision making and peace action. The initial video cited local decision making groups in the Philippines which spread because they were successful.

We and others need to recognise that there is no such thing as total security and provide support for integrating the big changes ahead, such as climate

change. We need to recognise that people need each other and need more help than is currently available. If we were organised for providing all the help needed, there would be very little unemployment.

People may need individual support to negotiate change.

Additional thoughts

After the group reports we had little time for plenary discussion but one additional thought was related to the last point above: that people's own personal experiences and responses were liable to be overwhelmed as they got sucked into the national discourse.

One suggestion for shifting public opinion was that prominence should be given (particularly in education) to the successful preventative action taken by the UN and others. It was possible to stop war from happening and success stories should be publicised.

The concern was expressed that, in the part of the document on Alliances, there was 'no sense of power to act' in the wording of the document, 'especially in the verbs, such as "acknowledge" and "strengthen", which do not require any particular action'.

Preparation for our third session

We ended this second session by looking ahead to the third, to which we hope as many as possible of you will come, as we turn our attention to possible action that we could take, whether in our own circles, coming at the security question from our own key focus (e.g. demilitarisation, environmental protection, democracy or social and economic justice), or together, as the group of people who have been part of this conversation. It is our hope that people will begin thinking about this in good time and come with ideas at the ready, so that we can inspire each other and translate at least some of our thinking into action for the change we want to see.

Since the meeting:

Lin has written to say 'Here is the link to the Full Fact website:

<https://fullfact.org/>

For those with time, here is a Full Fact video of an event yesterday, (17th May), explaining how they work and sample findings: <http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=4e4c5a6a441f72299683193db&id=839ec81655&e=064f2c40b6>

Another fact checking link is the BBC "Reality Check: the EU referendum":

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35603388>

Farzana has written saying we may want to see the following, if we haven't seen it already. It is about the devastation of wars in Iraq:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=EHS0Cq8hje4&feature=youtu.be>

Rethinking Security Agenda

Session 3

Ideas for Action; The third session will focus on action that can take the conversation out to others with the aim of opening up thinking and shifting opinion in relation to UK policy.

7.30 [7.35] Welcome and introduction to evening: focus on action – personal, by different interest groups (including...) and those of us who've been part of this conversation

7.40 Personal ideas written on post-its, shared briefly in pairs and stuck on flipcharts for quick browse

7.55 Collect on flipcharts the other interested groups represented by those present and ideas discussed in those groups and report back agreed on what to take forward, with next step decided

8.25 Report back from groups and brief discussion

8.40 Ideas for follow-on action by the Rethinking Security Group; selection of what feels both feasible and most supported. Planning as far as next step (ie far enough to give it a good chance of happening)

9.10 [latest] Concluding remarks from all who want to make them

Resources:

1. Registration paper collecting names and email addresses
2. Copies of the agenda
3. Post-it notes
4. Flipcharts, markers and blu-tac or tape.

Notes from the third Rethinking Security session

Our third session on Rethinking Security was, as advertised, focussed on action that can take the conversation out to others with the aim of opening up thinking and shifting opinion in relation to UK policy. Participants were asked to come with ideas to share on what we could do, first as individuals, then in the various groups, circles and movements we belonged to and finally as participants in this conversation, to date. Twenty-one of us participated.

As it was in the first two sessions, energy was high and ideas flowed. And, as before, the time was far too short. The first task we were given was to think about what we could do personally, write our intentions of post-its and then discuss them with one other person before sticking them on the big board for us all to browse through.

Personal plans for action majored on use of the internet, particularly Twitter and Facebook, and on conversations with anybody we could have them with. They also included trying to put our beliefs into action in the way we live.

Some other ideas for action that emerged in the plenary discussion that followed came up again later, for instance on public meetings and work in schools.

Many of the ideas for personal action were focussed on things to be done in relation to, or with, specific groups. These were listed on flipchart and in some cases grouped, as follows:

1. Bath Anti-cuts Campaign
2. Cultural and academic groups such as BRLSI, New Oriel Hall Film Club, Bath Festival and Bath University (I-SEE and other groups and departments), Scientists for Global Responsibility plus 38 Degrees
3. Addressing climate change: Travel Watch, Transition Bath and Fossil-free Banes?
4. Young people in education, particularly in schools (learning from practice in Bath Woodcraft Folk)
5. Political parties as represented in the meeting: Green Party, Labour Party and Libdems
6. Peace groups including Bath Stop War, which includes CND, CAAT and MAW (Movement for the Abolition of War), plus UNA
7. Quakers

Quakers and those involved in the Bath Anti-cuts Campaign chose not to use time in this meeting to talk among themselves. The others became the focus of discussion in groups, as chosen by participants. There was a constant hum of animated and concentrated conversation from all of them and it was hard to cut them short for lack of time. They could clearly have taken their ideas further. Their reports were as follows:

Group I: Cultural and academic circles and others

The discussion in this group was focussed on the issues that needed to be raised in public venues. What came through strongly was that climate change was a security issue. It was noted that the U.S. military had identified it as such. The group proposed that a forum should be created to educate the public on this and suggested a public meeting (see later) and petitions. Other points from this group were fed into the last part of the session, on our collective options.

Group II: Political Party members

This group presented its proposals for action on flipchart:

- Speak out
- Work for democracy
- Use Facebook more for the anti-war message and Britain.org to promote true security
- Challenge NATO assumptions and reduce spending on Defence/War
- Enter into discussions with those of other views
- Seek to influence the media
- Be more active
- Change transport priorities
- Have a presence in the 2018 Bath Festival

Group III: Schools (a discussion based on the ideas voiced earlier)

1. Provide relevant material for assemblies/PSHE (curriculum on 'Personal, social, health and economic education') on security matters
2. On bullying, volunteering policy help and materials linked to security and democracy
3. On gender issues – 'sexting', power, self-esteem, peer pressure – offer mentoring?
4. Democratise the process, as in Woodcraft Folk

Peace (Bath Stop War Coalition)

- On our weekly peace vigil in front of the Abbey (Sat. 11.30 – 12.30), Have themed discussion topics such as Syria, What is Security? Did you know ...? (about different things), What does Trident mean for your security?

- Cultivate local media, especially commercial radio, and develop our use of Twitter for outreach
- Send speakers to other groups
- Get the message out via local events, e.g. a fete
- Undertake a 'listening project' (use questionnaires, with open questions, to get people talking about what security means for them and how it could be achieved)
- Street theatre, e.g. with the 'Trident monster'
- Share Rethinking Security results and develop a list of challenging questions and answers to them

Since none of these ideas could be fully elaborated in the given time, some may fall by the wayside – for the time being, at least. But the thinking shared and ideas generated will stimulate and inform the future involvement of those who took part and ideas will be taken forward in the different groups represented, with opportunities being created or grasped when they arise.

Our final, brief focus was on some potential follow-on action by our circle of Rethinking Security participants. Ideas listed were:

- ❖ Use the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration as a platform for our thinking
- ❖ Celebrate peacemaking and wars that didn't happen; learning more about UN achievements
- ❖ Focus on Syria, eg through an exhibition of children's pictures of life in a camp
- ❖ Events on Conscientious Objectors (already planned)
- ❖ Create opportunities to speak to people outside our own circles, e.g. by getting BANES to organise an event or through a campaign for divestment [from noxious companies]
- ❖ Hold a public meeting on Climate Change, Conflict and Security, with expert speakers
- ❖ Organising/supporting themed displays, e.g. at Bath Stop War's Saturday Vigil
- ❖ Holding a public meeting or 'hearing' at which participants in this process present their thinking to Bath MP Ben Howlett and ask for his response, then the responses and questions to him or us by others

Again, there was insufficient time to discuss these ideas other than in a very cursory way. However, we were agreed that reaching out beyond our own circles was important and the proposal for a *themed presence on Saturdays in front of the Abbey* (at the usual vigil time of 11.30 – 12.30) was agreed on, as one way of awakening public awareness, which would also be good preparation for a *public hearing with Ben Howlett* (which should bring in Conservative Party members too).

A public meeting on climate and conflict as related issues would also have the potential to bring in a wider audience and would, like other suggestions, be something to take forward if we can.

There are many other ideas that could be pursued because we came up with so many! How can we harness the energy and ideas we generated during these three sessions of Rethinking Security, keep up the momentum. How much can we realistically hope and work for?

We had plenty of ideas of what to do individually and in our own particular groups. Some of the thinking about combined action and synergy can begin at the next Bath Stop War Coalition planning meeting, on Wednesday July 6th at Bath Friends Meeting House, starting at 7.30. Please join us then, if you can and would like to, or come and talk to others and swell the numbers at our weekly Saturday vigil, even for a short time. We will notify you of themed events.

Meanwhile, unless I hear to the contrary, I will keep you on the list for occasional mailings, as all those present last night requested. (Do let me know if you would rather not be included.) It would also be good to know how many of you would be happy to have your names made visible to others, so that you can be in touch with each other directly. The list could be split between those who would be like that and those who wouldn't.

For now, thank you once again for your participation. It's been great for us all, I think, to have had a chance to think together in such an interesting and engaged group of people and to share so much concern and determination. Many thanks from Bath Stop War and UNA members.

I will be proud to report back about our sessions at the July meeting of the Ammerdown Group. Remember that its website, with its new Rethinking Security document, is there to provide resources for taking this Rethinking into new circles: www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk

The Bradford Conversation

Bradford Conversation Agenda

- 5.45-6.15 **Self-reflection** sheet & info on the walls to browse. Plus 'elephants in the room' flipchart for anything people felt they unable to talk about (nothing listed).
- 6.15-6.30 **Intro** (purpose, process etc.).

+ **Name & (briefly)** – something you are currently working on or thinking about.
- 6.30-6.50 **Intro to film & film showing.**
- 6.50-7 **Reflection/Immediate personal response** to the film – in pairs.
- 7-7.45 **Q & A** Thoughts/questions to Dermot & Ivan – whole group discussion.
- 7.45-8.15 **Brain Picking** - Lisa to introduce the 'Ammerdown Group' conversation and invite people to share key questions for further conversation plus any ideas for future conversations/exploration (15 mins in small groups and 15 minutes to share questions for further conversation.
- 8.15-8.30 **Closer** – briefly share something relevant that's in our heads.

Bradford Conversation Methodology

1. Identified film for discussion and secured access, thanks to the film makers
2. Identified suitable venue for film screening and interested participants.
3. Identified projector, speakers etc needed for showing the film
4. Advertised event / invited participants
5. Shared agenda and personal reflection sheet, asking participants to consider this before the event
6. Printed copies of agenda for participants. Also printed or prepared by hand extracts from the 'Queries, Information and Quotes' resource. Prepared attendees sheet to collect names and email addresses of participants.
7. Prepared venue by mounting extracts from the 'Queries, Information and Quotes' around the room to stimulate thought and discussion, the personal reflection sheet, and flip-chart entitled 'Elephants in the Room'. Also prepared equipment for showing film.
8. Identified note-taker.
9. When gathered shared agenda with each participant and proceeded with event as described in agenda.
10. Collected notes on completion.
11. Followed up with participants to thank them and share notes with them.

Resources needed:

- Film
- Projector
- Speakers
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Blu-tac

Bradford Conversation Personal Reflection Sheet

Security – as a minimum - ‘the state of being free from danger or threat’.

Identity - who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that *define* you.

Questions for reflections (write responses if possible, you won’t be showing them to anyone else apart from 6).

1. What current dangers and threats do you currently fear?
2. What UK security policy (or lack of) helps you feel more or less safe?
3. Have current UK security policies impacted on your sense of identity – if so, how?
4. What one thing might you change about UK security policies and why?
5. How might people with a very different view of security respond to your ideas?
6. Imagine you are going to host a public conversation/creative workshop about ‘security & identity’ what question/s would you like to ask others to consider? (Please write this question as clearly as possible on a post-it).

Bradford questions, information & quotes (displayed round the room)

Questions

- What brings security?
- What brings security in the world as we find it now?
- Is the risk of atrocities by non-state groups a major threat to life in Britain?
- What should be the balance between managing current potential risks and taking action on root causes?
- What are the drivers of insecurity?
- Are 'military capable, strategically allied states' more secure than other states?
- What is the current security paradigm, is it working and if so, for whom?

Drivers of insecurity:

- Climate change
- Militarisation
- Economic inequality
- Scarcity of resources
- Violent conflict
- Terrorist attacks

Risk:

National Security Risk Assessment prioritises (as Tier 1) the following threats in the next five years

- *'Terrorism', particularly atrocities committed by ISIS, al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups;*
- *Cyber-warfare, as well as terrorism, crime and espionage conducted in cyberspace;*
- *The risk of an international military conflict that draws in the UK;*
- *Instability overseas;*
- *Pandemics and other public health crises; and*
- *Natural hazards such as flooding in the UK*

☞ *The Government's risk assessment acknowledges but does not prioritise the following as needing urgent action:*

- *Advances in technology.*
- *Shifts in global economics/the balance of power.*
- *Climate change.*

Number 1 threat to UK: 'atrocities by non-state groups'.

HM Gov., 2015b, pp. 85-87.

For the first time in twenty years, an advanced military state [Russia] has challenged the borders of European nations, and the security challenges in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia have increased dramatically in scale and complexity. Russia has annexed Crimea, and Russian-backed separatists have taken much of Eastern Ukraine. DAESH (or ISIL) have seized the second largest city in Iraq, and now control areas of a territory larger than the United Kingdom. The Libyan government has retreated to a ship off the coast. The President of Yemen has fled from his capital. Boko Haram controls swathes of Northern Nigeria. South Sudan—the newest country in the world—is in Civil War. Over 10,000 civilians were casualties in Afghanistan last year. Serious instability persists in Darfur, Somalia, the Central African Republic, and Pakistan. Three million people have been displaced and two hundred thousand killed in Syria.'

House of Commons Defence Committee, 2015a

What we're facing in Iraq now with Isis is a greater and deeper threat to our security than we have known before.

David Cameron, 29 August 2014

Islamist terrorism has never been a major cause of mortality in the UK or in other western countries; but it maintains the capacity to spread fear and alarm.

David Anderson QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (2013 Report on Terrorist Attacks).

'Statistics' & risk

Suicide

In 2013, 6,233 suicides were registered in the UK. This corresponds to a rate of 11.9 per 100,000 (19.0 per 100,000 for men and 5.1 per 100,000 for women).

The male suicide rate is the highest since 2001. The suicide rate among men aged 45-59, 25.1 per 100,000, is the highest for this group since 1981.

http://www.samaritans.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/branches/branch-96/files/Suicide_statistics_report_2015.pdf

Air pollution

Outdoor air pollution is contributing to about 40,000 early deaths a year in the UK

Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Paediatrics and Child Health.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-35629034>

Road Traffic Accidents

2013 - 1,713 people were killed in reported road traffic accidents in Great Britain.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/annual-road-fatalities>

Murder

574 murders recorded in the year ending Sept 2015. (Office of National Statistics, 2015).

Domestic Violence

2 women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner (Office of National Statistics, 2015).

Terrorist attacks

2005 to 2013, 38 Britons were killed in terrorist attacks abroad.

2015 - 30 Britons were killed in Tunisia.

2005 – 52 killed on UK soil (7/7).

2013 – Lee Rigby killed.

2009 - Massereene Barracks shooting – 2 soldiers killed by the Real IRA.

+ In November 2013, Andrew Parker, Director General of MI5, stated that 34 terrorist plots had been foiled since the 7/7 bombings.

What is security?

Latin root, se + cura - free from fear or anxiety

Security - shared freedom from fear and want, and the freedom to live well.

UN General Assembly, 2005.

Military spending

The UK is the six-largest military spender in the world (along with France the largest in the EU) and is one of nine states worldwide with nuclear weapons. (SIPRI)

UK defence budget (planned spending) 2016 - £45.1 billion out of a total budget of £759.5 billion. http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk/government_expenditure.html

Cameron's speech

We are all British. We respect democracy and the rule of law. We believe in freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, equal rights regardless of race, sex, sexuality or faith.

We believe in respecting different faiths but also expecting those faiths to support the British way of life. These are British values. And are underpinned by distinct British institutions. Our freedom comes from our Parliamentary democracy. The rule of law exists because of our independent judiciary. This is the home that we are building together.

Whether you are Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Christian or Sikh, whether you were born here or born abroad, we can all feel part of this country – and we must now all come together and stand up for our values with confidence and pride.

And as we do so, we should together challenge the ludicrous conspiracy theories of the extremists. The world is not conspiring against Islam; the security services aren't behind terrorist attacks; our new Prevent duty for schools is not about criminalising or spying on Muslim children. This is paranoia in the extreme.

In fact that duty will empower parents and teachers to protect children from all forms of extremism – whether Islamist or neo-Nazi.

We should challenge together the conspiracy theories about our Muslim communities too and I know how much pain these can cause.

We must stand up to those who try to suggest that there is some kind of secret Muslim conspiracy to take over our government, or that Islam and Britain are somehow incompatible.

People who say these things are trying to undermine our shared values and make Muslims feel like they don't belong here, and we will not let these conspiracy theorists win.

We must also de-glamourise the extremist cause, especially ISIL.

David Cameron (Extremism Speech extract July 2015)

Security Quotes

Using Celia McKeon's Ted Talk¹ as inspiration I arranged the quotes into 'clenched fist' or 'open hand' approaches to security, placing the quotes in different parts of the room underneath those images.

¹ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/ammerdown-invitation/security-for-future-in-search-of-new-vision>



Clenched fist approach to security quotes

The UK must wield 'all our instruments of power and influence to shape the global environment...'

Security Strategy HM Gov, 2010

We [the UK] take the view that our role in the world is supplemented by what we do in the world militarily and we, like the United States, tend to react with military resources; the Germans tend to want to pay for things; the Italians tend to want to... convene conferences, everybody making contributions in their own way and our contribution tends towards the military because we think it's a strong card in our hands – nothing wrong with that.

RUSI Director Michael Clarke (RUSI, 2014)

Our new world rests on order, the danger is disorder.

Tony Blair

Since the formation of NATO in 1949, by contrast, UK grand strategy has consistently been based on a permanent alliance and economic partnership with fellow democracies in the US and Western Europe, and on support for the rules-based international order created after 1945...This grand strategy has been largely successful, helping to ensure a period of prosperity and security unprecedented in the nation's history. Its place as a permanent member of the UN Security Council remains secure, as does its ability to help shape international affairs across a wide range of issue areas.

Malcolm Chalmers (RUSI)

[N]o Prime Minister wants to be remembered as the one who oversaw a step change down in the United Kingdom's standing on the international stage. This is why successive Prime Ministers have supported the retention of a nuclear capability knowing full well that the replacement costs will fall to their successors.

Andrew Dorman, Kings College 2015

I think the problem is that we have not seen that we need to approach this issue of Muslim extremism as we might approach World War Two back in the 30s...This is a real threat to us and we're sleepwalking in the way we're approaching it...(ISIS is) an existential threat to all of us.

General Sir David Richards, head of the British armed forces from 2010 to 2013.



Open hand approach to security quotes

'[I]t is not necessary to assume an innate lust for power in order to account for the sometimes fierce competition that marks the international arena. In an anarchic domain, a state of war exists if all parties lust for power. But so too will a state of war exist if all states seek only to ensure their own safety.'

Kenneth Waltz

The government's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC, warned legislators against:

'provoking a backlash in affected communities, hardening perceptions of an illiberal or Islamophobic approach, alienating those whose integration into British society is already fragile and playing into the hands of those who, by peddling a grievance agenda, seek to drive people further towards extremism and terrorism' (Anderson, 2015).

The scope and approach of this strategy reflects the way our understanding of national security has changed. In the past, the state was the traditional focus of foreign, defence and security policies, and national security was understood as dealing with the protection of the state and its vital interests from attacks by other states. Over recent decades, our view of national security has broadened to include threats to individual citizens and to our way of life, as well as to the integrity and interests of the state. That is why this strategy deals with transnational crime, pandemics and flooding – not part of the traditional idea of national security, but clearly challenges that can affect large numbers of our citizens, and which demand some of the same responses as more traditional security threats, including terrorism. The broad scope of this strategy also reflects our commitment to focus on the underlying drivers of security and insecurity, rather than just immediate threats and risks.*

**Underlying drivers listed as: climate change, energy scarcity, poverty and inequality, poor governance, and certain factors associated with globalisation.*

2008 Security Strategy (Note: 'open hand'ish').

The past decade may be remembered as the time when the West suffered a collective failure of grand strategy, being too militarised in its outlook to recognise the limitations of force...

Lukas Milevski 2011.

...a shift of military effort from crisis response (waiting for the future to happen) to "upstream" engagement to positive manage conflict, prevent violence and build peace.

MCDC. From: 'Understand to Prevent: The Military Contribution to the Prevention of Violent Conflict'. 2014. (Report by military officers from 7 countries).

Peace that is not built from the bottom up, with the involvement of all strata and identity groups, is no peace and will not hold.

Diana Francis

If we are focussed only on the prevention of violent crises and do not set out to transform global relationships, economic, social, political and environmental, we shall go on failing to protect on the grand scale and continue to face growing numbers of outbreaks of widespread violence in which those who have lived lives of daily misery are finally dispatched with brutality.

Diana Francis

[T]he explosive compound of growing social inequality and the rising volume of human suffering relegated to the status of "collaterality" ... has all the markings of being potentially the most disastrous among the many problems humanity may be forced to confront, deal with and resolve in the current century.

Zygmunt Bauman, 2011

Yet there is much that the UK can do to support, accompany, promote, and enable locally driven peace processes and initiatives. Developing good practice, investing in expertise and strategies, and placing mediation and peacebuilding on a higher footing in relation to security and military responses in the toolkit of responses to conflict, would be an economic, people-centred and politically effective way to enhance national security. Furthermore, finding ways to forge new and collaborative partnerships, which will have collective impact on complex conflict systems, is a key challenge for the 21st century.

Conciliation Resources, 2015

Programme for a Peaceful City:

Bradford Peace-Hub Discussion on 'Identity & Security'

Purpose of the gathering: to use the film 'Ecce Homo'¹ as a spark to share reflections about the impact of current UK Security policies on us personally. And to share ideas about how to facilitate wider conversations about security and identity (that may relate to the Ammerdown Group invitation).

Brief report of the Thinkspace

The film provided a really good conversation spark. The conversation explored our individual relationship with the State, our own responses to current security approaches and people also shared personal stories about securitisation in relation to identity – with some people facing security approaches on the basis of their identity (being searched at airports to the extent of no longer feeling safe enough to travel) that others are not. The nature of Ecce Homo also led to a conversation about the nature of bureaucracy and justice in the digital age. It would have been good to have more time to explore and discuss the 'clenched fist' and 'open hand' approaches to security.

Thoughts from participants about future conversations including questions for further exploration

- How does identity inform security? How does a sense of security inform a sense of identity?
- If you are settled in your home with your family close by, secure in work etc. what would it take for you to flee everything and risk your life in a boat in Greece?
- Do you consider the State a threat to your security and in what way?
- Why should identity be seen as a potential security threat as opposed to actions?
- What do you feel you cannot talk about?
- How safe do you feel? Why do you feel this? Does everyone feel the same as you do you think? If yes/no why?

¹ The film Director of Ecce Home Dermot Daly, along with Sound Producer Ivan Mack very kindly offered us their film Ecce Homo. The film is an Orwellian dystopia. Dermot and Ivan also participated in the post film conversation. For more info about Ecce Homo see: <https://chocolatebearuk.wordpress.com/news/>

- Does who you are affect how safe you feel? Who are you?
- Does identity matter when it comes to security?

Lisa Cumming 26/04/16

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The Calder Valley Conversation

Hebden Bridge public meeting: agenda

1.30-1.40 – Introduction

1.40-1.55 – Paul Rogers, Why our current approach to security is not working

1.55-2.10 – Celia McKeon, What we mean by rethinking security

2.10-2.30 – Discussion around tables – focus around, does this make sense for us, what else do we want to add

2.30-2.45 – feedback from each table

2.45-3.05- coffee break

3.05-3.20 – Paul Rogers/Celia McKeon in conversation with the facilitator – what actions might we take to bring about change

3.20-3.55 - Discussion around table – focus around, what's missing, what else and what actions to take

3.55-4.15 – Feedback

4.15-4.30 – Drawing it together – Facilitator

Hebden Bridge public meeting: summary of conversation

The following write-up of the public meeting in Hebden Bridge in the Calder Valley was published online at: <http://www.hebdenbridge.co.uk/news/2016/259.html>

“About 60 people gathered round tables in Hebden Bridge Town Hall on Sunday Oct 9th to discuss what human security meant for them - as individuals, in our community, country and globally.

The discussions were introduced by **Paul Rogers**, Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University and **Celia McKeon** who is working on a project on rethinking security. Celia McKeon encouraged us to draw on our own experiences to address the issues of security and how the current discourse needs to change.

Beyond the importance of our basic needs for food, housing, income, work and freedom to lead our own lives, we shared the need for good relationships with others, the ability to listen, connect and express our different experiences and views, and to be heard and accepted, which may at times need good facilitation.

We recognised the importance of being willing to ask for help and to give help, the generosity of spirit which we have experienced in difficult times, for example in the floods, the realisation of our interdependence. We also talked of the need to have confidence in authorities, in the police, in the law and in political processes, though many recognised a democratic deficit and an unwillingness in politics to address key issues, including insecurities regarding old age, sickness and disability and the increasing impact of climate disruption on our lives.

Whilst it is easy to feel powerless, we encouraged each other to engage others in dialogue, including our politicians, to write personal letters, not to give. We need to speak out against censorship, support academic freedoms and debate, join campaigns and action groups, work through political parties and voice culturally outrageous truths with confidence, challenging the status quo.

On a larger, community scale, resources need to be shared out to meet everyone's needs, as inequalities in meeting people's basic needs lead quickly to insecurity, crime and conflict. Our ideas included citizens' income and investment in our health, and social services, not cuts. We keenly felt the problem of the dominant discourse being one of confrontation, which overrides relationship-building and conflict resolution - we need to challenge militarism in our schools and provide alternatives to help build a culture of peace.

We have the difficult task of managing difference in our changing communities, of holding peace between us, of finding a new balance when new people join our communities. We shared the need to build a culture of listening, acceptance and inclusion, where belonging and responsibility are fostered, including a responsibility to act in the face of violence or oppression. We recognised the fear of change and loss of privilege, and how this can be triggered by views and actions seeking change. The challenge of building equality can feel overwhelming and we need to think about how to protest effectively, how to reach out across boundaries and communities, how to improve the way we communicate with and involve our politicians, how to create safe spaces for open dialogue, how to create alliances, connecting through our shared humanity.

Global issues are similar in a larger scale - we felt we need to move towards greater equality of resources for all peoples, and to consider the impact on our global neighbours of all we do. We need an ethical foreign policy and to move away from our national economic dependence on the arms trade to shore up our GDP. There was a theme throughout our discussions of the impact on our

perceptions and our culture of the media, which focuses on conflict zones, on the extremes of affluence and suffering, fuelling insecurities, our sense of helplessness and our disempowerment.

We all need to be able to trust in the accuracy, transparency and trustworthiness of the media. We need to demand more diversity of media sources from our media, including the BBC and Channel 4 and we need to support the positive use of the internet.

This meeting was one of the first of many civic conversations expected to happen as part of the Rethinking Human Security project, which aims to engage people in thinking about how we can best build long-term security for people in the UK and worldwide - for more see www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk."

Share your experiences...!

The Ammerdown Group would be really keen to hear about how these conversations about security go, and to share themes, ideas and actions arising from conversations about rethinking security.

With the permission of participants in your conversation, please feel free to get in touch with us to let us know how the conversation went, and what may have come out of it.

You can do this via email at ammerdown.invitation@gmail.com or by sharing information on our Facebook page (forthcoming).

About the Ammerdown Group

The Ammerdown Group brings together activists, practitioners and academics in search of a new vision for the future of our common peace and security. The group includes participants from Conciliation Resources, Campaign Against Arms Trade, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, International Alert, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Oxford Research Group, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Saferworld, and Three Faiths Forum, as well as independent practitioners, and academics from the universities of Bradford, Coventry, Leeds Beckett and Oxford Brookes.

The Ammerdown Group would love to hear from anyone who is interested in collaborating in efforts to spark conversation and debate about approaches to our security. Please get in touch by email at ammerdown.invitation@gmail.com.

You can also read more on our website: www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk.

The Ammerdown Group takes its name from the Ammerdown Centre, a retreat and conference centre in Somerset, where the group meets together. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent those of the Ammerdown Centre's staff or trustees.

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