Business Plan
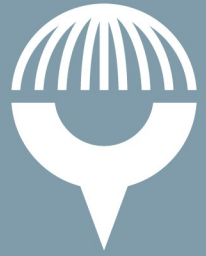
2011-12

open briefing
the civil society intelligence agency

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Copies of this plan can be downloaded from **www.openbriefing/about/businessplan**

Business Plan

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Section I

Introduction

Open Briefing is the world's first civil society intelligence agency; an accessible platform for insight and analysis on key defence, security and foreign policy issues.

We provide open source intelligence assessments and independent security briefings, so that a better informed civil society can properly engage with peace and security debates and influence positive policy developments in these areas. Launched in October 2011, it is the think tank that is a little bit different.

" The concept of this new think tank is most timely. Open Briefing potentially will be a great force for good in helping to make transparent areas of activity that are often shrouded in secrecy and where misinformation is commonplace. In the long term it could have an important impact on policy. Furthermore, Chris Abbott is uniquely well qualified for taking on the important task of establishing Open Briefing." **Bevis Gillett, Trustee, The Marmot Charitable Trust**

Rationale

Policymakers rely, at least in part, on access to timely and accurate information upon which to base their decisions. In the spheres of national and international security, this information is largely secret and held back from the public domain. This leaves the process open to political manipulation and creates a public unable to engage properly with these issues or hold policymakers to account. The 2003 invasion of Iraq demonstrated what happens when political priorities are allowed to influence intelligence assessments, and the near-constant media coverage of the US embassy cables leaked by Wikileaks this year demonstrates the public desire to know the information that policymakers are working with.

Fortunately, information of this nature is no longer the preserve of governments alone. Nor is it only private military companies and corporate consultancies that can access such data. The internet is bridging the gap between citizens and information, and driving an explosion of independent think tanks, citizen journalism, social media, news websites, wikis and individual analysts and commentators, that has created a wealth of publicly available sources, accessible by anyone with an internet connection. The problem now is sifting through them all to find the relevant information. Sources include: think tank reports, defence industry news, conference proceedings, academic journals, corporate security briefings, government data and reports, foreign media, speeches and interviews, development agency reports, social media, and specialist websites.

Such open sources are valued and widely used by analysts both inside and outside the intelligence community. However, policymakers often overlook such publicly available material, erroneously preferring the perceived authority of classified information, even if that information has come from a single uncorroborated source. The dangers of this preference have been made apparent by the revaluation that a key source of information about Iraq's supposed biological weapons programme was an Iraqi defector known as Curveball, who has since admitted fabricating his story in the hope it would lead to the eventual overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The limited evidence pointing to Iraqi weapons of mass destruction was contradicted at the time by a wealth of open source information – from media interviews to IAEA statements – but classified intelligence was manipulated to counter this and support the political decision to remove Saddam.

It is clear that only an aware and knowledgeable citizenry that can ensure the proper meshing of intelligence and political action by their governments. Journalists, NGO researchers, academics and concerned citizens need an organisation that they can turn to for timely, concise analyses of current events and key issues from different perspectives.

Model of social change

The current security discourse is dominated by what might be called the control paradigm: an approach based on the false premise that insecurity can be controlled through military force or balance of power politics and containment, thus maintaining the status quo. Security policies based on this paradigm are self-defeating in the long-term as they simply create a pressure cooker effect. The most obvious recent example of this approach has been the so-called war on terror, which essentially aimed to 'keep the lid' on terrorism and insecurity, without addressing the root causes. Such approaches to national, regional and international security are deeply flawed, and are distracting the world's politicians from developing realistic and sustainable solutions to the non-traditional threats facing the world. A new approach is needed.

However, there is not yet a realisation in policy-making circles that the control paradigm is failing. There is also currently not enough pressure from civil society and the public to force policymakers to recognise this failure. This is in part because there is a disconnect between people and information, and the traditional mediators of this information gap – the media and politicians – are all-too-often driven by an ideological worldview that supports the status quo.

Open Briefing exists to interject in this process and provide timely, accurate and accessible information and analysis, in order to promote a fact-based worldview and a shift in the way we think about security. This approach is based on a model of social change with three tenets:

1. **Kuhnian revolution.** There will not be a fundamental change in the way we think about security until there is a new paradigm to replace the old thinking.
2. **Sustainable security.** This new paradigm should be based on an understanding of integrated security trends and the development of preventative responses.
3. **Taoist model.** Human psychology means progress will be achieved through inclusive dialogue not confrontation, and we should be prepared for advances to be slow and subtle.

Open Briefing's niche

On the surface, Open Briefing has some obvious overlaps with existing organisations and websites. This in and of itself is not problematic: cooperation between similar organisations creates a stronger and more sustainable peace sector by driving the development and spread of best practice and encouraging groups to recognise complementarities. In any case, Open Briefing in fact distinguishes itself in seven important ways:

Open Briefing applies an adapted intelligence cycle to drive activities. Our work is shaped by a process of planning, collection, processing, analysis, dissemination, and feedback.

Open Briefing emphasises the evaluation of sources. All items filed by us are assessed using our RC(C) Evaluation System for evaluating reliability, credibility and confidence.

Open Briefing focuses on atypical sources. We specifically look for information and analysis not being covered in the mainstream media.

Open Briefing promotes a fact-based worldview. Too much policy development is underpinned by ideology-led worldviews; our work is guided by rigorous research in order to promote evidence-based policies.

Open Briefing recognises the role psychology plays in defence, security and foreign policy. We never underestimate the role of personality, interpersonal relationships and social and cognitive biases when undertaking analysis of trends and events.

Open Briefing incorporates social media into everything it does. We use new communication technologies to complement traditional dissemination strategies and allow users to access content how they want, when they want.

Open Briefing is committed to full disclosure, transparency and accountability. We have even taken the unusual step of publicly publishing our business plan and budget online for anyone to read.

In short, Open Briefing will be the world's first intelligence agency for civil society.

Section II

The project

Strategic plan

Vision: A better informed civil society that can properly engage with key defence, security and foreign policy debates and influence positive policy developments in these areas.

Mission: To be the leading authority for open source intelligence assessments, independent security briefings, and insightful and timely comment on defence, security and foreign policy issues.

Aim: To establish a new peace and security think tank and evaluate its effectiveness and value over a 16 month pilot project before securing longer-term core funding and developing various income streams.

Objectives: Open Briefing intends to achieve and hopefully exceed the following SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) objectives over a 16 month pilot project:

1. Establish the think tank and associated online presence.
2. Collect, assess and distribute at least 90 open source intelligence items.
3. Publish at least 15 analyses, 3 dossiers and 2 briefings.
4. Sign up at least 300 subscribers to the organisation's weekly e-bulletin and social networks.
5. Attract at least 500 visitors a month from around the world to the organisation's website.
6. Carry out a thorough evaluation of the organisation's effectiveness and value.
7. Secure longer-term funding for stage two of the project.

❝ Open Briefing is an excellent project with great possibilities for empowering the peace movement and wider civil society. It is typical of Chris Abbott that he should develop it. Moreover, he is one of those rare people who could take it forward and realise its considerable potential."
Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies, University of Bradford

Open Briefing will undertake a number of activities in support of its core peace and security mandate and the above aim and objectives. These include:

- Regional and issue **intelligence desks**
- **Special projects** on important emerging issues
- Policy-orientated **publications**
- **Dossiers** of user-generated information on unfolding events
- **Outreach** to civil society groups and concerned citizens

Intelligence desks

Open Briefing provides open source intelligence assessments and independent security briefings collected from a wealth of reliable sources, including our own analysts. These are filed on our website, **www.openbriefing.org,** together with relevant photographs, maps and analysis. Here they can be accessed by policymakers, journalists, researchers, concerned citizens and others wishing to gain a fresh perspective on key defence, security and foreign policy issues.

Open Briefing is organised around four **issue desks** (please see Appendix I for further information). These are loosely based around the British Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence priorities and emphasise those issues of particular interest to those wishing to influence British policymakers and their allies in Europe and the United States. They are the key areas in which Open Briefing is seeking to bring about positive change:

- Resource security and climate change
- Political violence and dissent
- Nuclear issues
- UK national security

These are complemented by seven **regional desks:**

- Europe
- Asia
- Oceania
- Middle East
- Africa
- Americas
- Polar regions

All items filed by Open Briefing are assessed using our **RC(C) Evaluation System.** RC(C) is a simple alphanumeric notation system for coding the **reliability** of a source, R, the **credibility** of the information, C, and the **confidence** in that assessment, (C). An item coded B2(M), for example, would indicate a moderate level of confidence that the source is usually reliable and the information is probably true. To reduce subjectivity an item is coded by an assessor following a strict set of criteria for each of the three elements of the rating. Please see Appendix II for more information.

Special projects

Open Briefing undertakes occasional special projects in response to a need to drive policy change in a particular area or raise awareness of a crucial emerging issue. These are defined by research, collaboration and advocacy, and are policy-orientated. In the first year, we will run two such projects: one on political psychology and another on sustainable security.

The **psychology of security** project draws on the lessons of psychology, anthropology and political science in order to better understand failures in defence, security and foreign affairs policy-making and develop strategies to avoid such failures in future. The project currently has three key elements:

Reviewing the latest social science research in order to better understand the psychological and social factors that may impede effective policy-making.

Raising awareness of these impeding factors (through articles, briefings and other media) and developing strategies policymakers might use to overcome them.

Forming links with individuals and organisations carrying out similar work in this area, leading to the eventual creation of a practitioner network.

The **achieving sustainable security** project is concerned with identifying and exploring the integrated security trends that will likely lead to widespread future instability and developing preventative responses to those threats. The project currently has three key elements:

Briefing British armed forces personnel on future security trends and regional sustainable security through Ministry of Defence short university courses.

Publishing accessible articles in a range of magazines and websites on preventative responses to security threats.

Working with the sustainable security programme at Oxford Research Group as a member of their international advisory board, an associate editor of SustainableSecurity.org and an honorary Sustainable Security Consultant.

Publications

Information alone is not enough: the way it is presented is crucial to its perceived credibility and thus potential impact. Furthermore, citizens do not just need to know what is happening, they need support to develop the tools to use that understanding effectively. That means placing information in context as accurately and clearly as possible, so that non-experts are able to quickly appreciate its implications.

As such, Open Briefing publishes a number of policy-orientated publications, which are informed by rigorous research and subject to peer review. We also append short pieces of comment and analysis to many of the individual items filed by the Open Briefing intelligence desks.

These analyses and briefings aim to be **comprehensive, contextual** and **condensed.** In other words, they cover the different elements of and perspectives on an issue and provide the background to and circumstances of an event, while at the same time remaining concise and succinct. They are guided by the long-standing and near-universal concerns of progressive civil society: promoting human rights, maintaining human security and protecting the environment. In addition to being useful contributions in their own rights, these publications will help build and maintain Open Briefing's reputation.

The first of these, **As the dust settles: Avoiding the mistakes of Oslo and Utøya in future media coverage of suspected terrorist attacks,** was published on 5 August 2011 by our political violence and dissent desk. This briefing explored what led to failures in the media reporting immediately after the Norway attacks that meant that Islamic extremists were wrongly blamed and proposed ways of avoiding these failures in future.

“With its rational, thorough and transparent approach, Open Briefing has the potential to become an important corrective to often speculative media coverage.”
Magnus Nome, Editor-in-Chief, Teddy TV

We have also published two articles as part of our special projects, one in the *New Internationalist* (July/August 2011) and one in *The Cornishman* (April 2011). Our next publication, **All in the mind? The psychology of defence, security and foreign affairs,** will be published as part of our psychology of security project. This briefing paper will examine the information processing biases and social pressures that influence policymakers' use of intelligence and other information in the context of international relations.

Dossiers

Open Briefing will publish occasional online dossiers, which will provide comprehensive real-time overviews of unfolding events of immediate interest. We will do this by collating user-generated content from websites and social networks, and publishing this with relevant news feeds and short profiles of key people, groups and countries involved.

The utility of such citizen journalism and social media is being clearly demonstrated during the protests across the Middle East and North Africa. Twitter and the like are proving essential to both the protesters themselves and the Western media outlets and governments whose usual capabilities have, at times, been rendered impotent by the speed of events and the repressive responses of the threatened regimes.

"If information is power, Open Briefing has the potential to equip campaigners with the information they need to expose wrong-doing and to identify alternative solutions."
Gemma Mortensen, Executive Director, Crisis Action

Outreach

Open Briefing looks beyond the policy wonks of the Westminster bubble or Washington beltway in order to reach out to wider civil society and concerned citizens. As part of this, we believe users should be able to access our material how they want, when they want. So we have developed numerous ways for people to keep up-to-date with world events and read our comment and analysis, wherever they are. All the outputs from the above activities are freely available on our website and our material can also be accessed through:

- **The Weekly Briefing** e-bulletin
- Several **RSS feeds**
- **Social networks** on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn
- A **mobile app** for smart phones
- A **web app** for browsers

However, this is not limited to a one-way flow of information. Visitors to our website can comment on and share all the items filed by our desks, and maintain online discussions about the issues raised with members of Open Briefing and other visitors to our site. Members of our Facebook page can also upload photographs, videos and other relevant content and share links and material with other visitors.

Section III

The organisation

Structure

Open Briefing Ltd is a registered **non-profit company limited by guarantee** (No. 07649656). It is be run as a social enterprise, applying business strategies to achieve financial stability in support of its core aims. It will apply for charitable status at a later date.

Open Briefing uses a virtual office with a registered address in London. This model encourages the development of a decentralised organisation, which takes advantage of the internet, cloud computing and other new communications technologies to carry out activities in a more cost-effective and environmentally friendly way. Being a **virtual think tank** allows for far lower overheads and administration costs, and frees the organisation from a specific locality. It means Open Briefing can start small and develop organically, while being able to adapt rapidly to future challenges.

A **STEEPLE analysis** (considering Social, Technological, Economical, Environmental, Political, Legal and Ethical factors), **SWOT analysis** (evaluating Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and **risk assessment** (assessing the likelihood and impact of potential threats) have been carried out, and various organisational policies developed in response. Please see Appendix III for the business continuity plan; the equal opportunities, environmental, and ethical policies; and the website copyright notice and disclaimer.

Financial management is supported by Community Accounting Services Kernow, who provide reduced cost specialist accounting services and advice to charities, CICs and non-profits, and banking is provided by the Co-operative Bank.

As a fully functioning think tank Open Briefing will be more than just a website, and so facilities such as meeting rooms or occasional desk space will be essential. Furthermore, as the organisation develops it may wish to seek joint funding for projects or staff/interns. As such, Open Briefing has made agreements with congruous **institutional partners** in centres of decision-making (see Appendix IV for the memorandum of understanding template). The current partners are:

- **Oxford Research Group,** London (www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk)
- **Foreign Policy in Focus,** Washington DC (www.fpif.org)
- **International Security Information Service,** Europe, Brussels (www.isis-europe.org)

As the project develops, Open Briefing will seek to develop links with non-Western institutional partners in, for example, Brasilia, Moscow, New Delhi and Beijing (the capitals of the so-called BRIC countries), as well as including more partners in Europe, particularly in Paris, Berlin and Madrid.

Open Briefing's relationships with its institutional partners, funders and members of the advisory board form the basis of a wider ongoing engagement with civil society groups, in order to ensure Open Briefing is meeting their diverse and changing needs. This will be complemented by engagement with the online community, through members of the social networks and comments posted on the website.

Staff and advisory board

The founder and **Executive Director** of Open Briefing is **Chris Abbott,** a freelance writer and consultant on national and international security issues. Chris is an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Social and International Studies at the University of Bradford and Honorary Sustainable Security Consultant to Oxford Research Group (ORG), a leading global security think tank of which he was Deputy Director until 2009. Throughout 2008, he was also an Honorary Research Fellow in the Centre for Governance and International Affairs at the University of Bristol. Chris is perhaps best known as one of the founders of the sustainable security framework, which he is developing with others at ORG, and is recognised as a leading expert on climate security.

He is the author of *21 Speeches that Shaped Our World: The People and Ideas that Changed the Way We Think* (Rider, 2010) and lead author of *Beyond Terror: The Truth About the Real Threats to Our World* (Rider, 2007). Both books have received worldwide acclaim, with Desmond Tutu praising *Beyond Terror* as "radical in the proper sense" and Brian Eno saying it was "the single most important contribution to understanding and coping with the future that I have ever read". Chris is also the author of numerous influential reports and articles and his work has been translated into a dozen languages, including Russian, Chinese and Arabic.

Chris gained invaluable experience in organisational and programme management while working as both the Deputy Director and Sustainable Security Programme Director at Oxford Research Group, during which time he was also chair of the Business Development Committee and a member of the organisation's Programme Management Group. This experience has been supplemented by training courses in business start-up (with Outset Cornwall), project management (with the Projects Company), media skills (with ngo.media) and leadership (with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust). He has also been receiving one-to-one support from the Cornwall School for Social Entrepreneurs. Please see Appendix V for Chris's CV and Appendix VI for a list of his publications. More information and a full biography can be found at **www.chrisabbott.info.**

❝ Chris Abbott is a rising star of the peace and security field. Within a short time he has established himself as a distinctive and influential voice, capable of deep analysis, and the vision to drive this analysis home where it counts." **John Sloboda, Oxford Research Group and Iraq Body Count**

The Executive Director is supported by an honorary **advisory board** of civil society experts with a wealth of experience in environmental and security policy-making circles. The board will advise on the setting up and funding of the organisation and online presence, provide ongoing strategic advice, and provide feedback for evaluation purposes. The founding members are:

- **Hamit Dardagan,** co-founder, Iraq Body Count
- **Ian Davis,** founding director, NATO Watch
- **Isabel Hilton,** founder and editor, China Dialogue
- **James Kemp,** project manager, Oxfam
- **Nick Mabey,** Chief Executive and founder director, E3G
- **Paul Rogers,** International Security Editor, openDemocracy
- **John Sloboda,** co-director, Every Casualty programme, Oxford Research Group

Please see Appendix VII for short biographies of the advisory board members. Additional staffing resource during this pilot stage will come from freelancers, voluntary interns and associate analysts.

Section IV

Finance

Budget

The pilot project is split into two stages: a four-month start-up stage, during which the organisation and infrastructure have been established, followed by twelve months of operation, at the end of which will be a period of evaluation and development. These stages are reflected in the two budgets outlined in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Note that the year one budget commits us to **spending 70% of our income directly on outputs and activities,** with only 30% needed for administration and overheads (including further fundraising).

Table 1. Summary of four month start-up budget, June-September 2011.

Item	Days	Total
Set up of organisation		**£2,855**
Executive Director	14	£2,100
Company formation		£75
Graphic designer		£530
Accountant	1	£150
Build website and set up social networks		**£3,610**
Executive Director	7	£1,050
Web developer	6	£2,100
Graphic designer		£440
Domain registration		£20
Media briefing		**£600**
Executive Director	4	£600
Promotion/media work for launch		**£450**
Executive Director	3	£450
Overheads		**£305**
IT, office supplies and printing		£135
Internet subscriptions		£15
Registered office		£155
Total		**£7,820**

> There is no shortage of interesting comment being published. The problem is finding the useful material in the daily deluge. What is needed are trusted mediators, to select, contextualise, and make it easily accessible in one place. Open Briefing has the potential to add very considerable value for hard-pressed progressive organisations and individuals at very modest cost."
> **John Sloboda, Oxford Research Group and Iraq Body Count**

Table 2. Summary of year one operating budget, October 2011 – September 2012.

Item	Days	Total
Activities	**152**	**£19,440**
Intelligence desks	**48**	**£7,200**
Executive Director	48	£7,200
Special projects	**32**	**£3,120**
Executive Director	20	£3,000
Intern	12	£120
Publications	**44**	**£4,920**
Executive Director	32	£4,800
Intern	12	£120
Dossiers	**12**	**£1,800**
Executive Director	12	£1,800
Outreach	**16**	**£2,400**
Executive Director	16	£2,400
Administration	**45**	**£6,750**
Management and administration	**12**	**£1,800**
Executive Director	12	£1,800
Fundraising and finance	**27**	**£4,050**
Executive Director	24	£3,600
Accountant	3	£450
Evaluation and development	**6**	**£900**
Executive Director	6	£900
Overheads	**-**	**£1,935**
Office contribution for intern	-	£150
Travel expenses	-	£345
IT, office supplies and printing	-	£600
Internet subscriptions	-	£325
Website hosting	-	£160
Registered office	-	£355
Total	**197**	**£28,125**

Funding

The **Marmot Charitable Trust** awarded Open Briefing a grant of **£9,600** in June 2011. This covers the start-up costs and the first month of operating costs and leaves **£26,345** of the first years budget to raise from charitable trusts and private donors.

To this end, applications for core funding are pending with the Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation and the Network for Social Change, with applications to the Andrew Wainwright Reform Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to be submitted at the next suitable funding rounds; and an application for project funding is pending with the Network for Social Change, with an application to The Funding Network to be submitted at the next suitable funding round. In addition, the Executive Director has been awarded an EU start-up grant of £1,060 for IT equipment and software (funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the South West Regional Development Agency).

While trusts and foundations are a vital part of funding peace and security work in the UK, a novel decentralised model is emerging that is ideal for new organisations: crowd funding. Open Briefing has embraced this approach and in July 2011 launched its **10x10x10 StartUp** campaign. This asks those who would like to support Open Briefing to commit to donating £10 a month for at least ten months, and to ask ten of their friends to consider doing the same. It is estimated that Open Briefing can raise £500 in this way during the first year (together with occasional one-off donations).

Please note that over the long-term Open Briefing intends to move away from grant funding and aims to secure a significant proportion of its income from other sources (see pp. 14-15).

Cash flow forecast

The work plan and above budget and funding assumptions give the following cash flow forecast for the first twelve months of operation.

Table 3. Year one cash flow forecast.

	October	November	December	January	February	March
Income	£3,505	£5	£14,025	£25	£25	£8,545
Expenditure	£2,199	£2,199	£2,199	£2,199	£2,199	£2,199
Surplus/ (deficit)	£1,306	(£2,194)	£11,826	(£2,174)	(£2,174)	£6,346
Opening balance	£1,780	£3,086	£893	£12,719	£10,545	£8,371
Closing balance	£3,086	£893	£12,719	£10,545	£8,371	£14,718
	April	**May**	**June**	**July**	**August**	**September**
Income	£45	£45	£65	£65	£65	£85
Expenditure	£2,389	£2,239	£2,689	£2,239	£2,689	£2,689
Surplus/ (deficit)	(£2,344)	(£2,194)	(£2,624)	(£2,174)	(£2,624)	(£2,624)
Opening balance	£14,718	£12,374	£10,180	£7,556	£5,383	£2,759
Closing balance	£12,374	£10,180	£7,556	£5,383	£2,759	£155

This forecast shows an achievable income-expenditure plan for 2011-12, based on realistic grant and income expectations. It identifies potentially limited funds at the end of November 2011 and September 2012, but this can be mitigated by the measures outlined in our Business Continuity Plan (see Appendix III) and through funding applications to be submitted later in the year. It also indicates that Open Briefing should be able to maintain a positive bank balance throughout the pilot project.

Section V

Sustainability

Promotion

Graphic design company **oh my! It's... sasquatch!** developed the brand identity for Open Briefing across our website, business stationery and publications. Our **marketing campaign** builds on this brand identity and the differentiating factors identified on pp. 2-3. It is divided into two stages: organisation launch and ongoing promotion.

A week before Open Briefing was launched a press release was sent out to a pre-compiled list of contacts that included national newspapers, foreign policy magazines and websites, politics blogs, peace and security NGOs, and local media in Cornwall, as well as personal contacts. On the launch day the institutional partners were be asked to place announcement on their websites and in their newsletters. The advisory board members were also asked to place an advert on any websites they are affiliated with and forward an announcement on to their contact lists.

Traditional advertising is expensive, so ongoing promotion of Open Briefing will rely on existing connections, with the institutional partners asked to consider jointly publishing reports and the advisory board members asked to list Open Briefing as an affiliation in their biographies. The Executive Director will have an important role to play through networking at seminars, conferences and meetings and giving talks and interviews or writing articles on issues of relevance to Open Briefing. Open Briefing will also become an organisational member of a range of relevant NGO networks and business associations; for example, Open Briefing is already a partner organisation of NATO Watch.

Open Briefing will also look to access start-up grants that cover marketing and promotion in order to pay for a Google Adwords campaign and advertisements in relevant magazines and newspapers.

Evaluation

Evaluating the impact of projects of this nature can be difficult. However, progress against the outlined objectives will be constantly monitored in relation to the following quantitative data:

- The number of subscribers and website visitors
- The number of other websites linking to Open Briefing
- The number of media mentions and other references to Open Briefing
- The number of people sharing Open Briefing content
- The level of donations and funding received

At the end of the pilot stage a formal evaluation will be carried out based on the above data and additional qualitative information from:

- Written feedback from the advisory board members
- A survey of subscribers, website visitors and forum members
- Testimonials from opinion formers and decision-makers

A key goal of the evaluation of the pilot project will be to clearly identify the different constituencies that value and utilise Open Briefing and develop ways of structuring the outputs to meet their different requirements. For example, it is likely that a key audience will be traditional press and media and outputs will have to be shaped to meet their specific needs. Another key audience is likely to be campaigners, and it may be that Open Briefing can act as a catalyst: issuing alerts to mobilise campaign organisations around potential security threats identified by our analysis.

A further goal of the evaluation will be ensuring that sufficient quality control is being achieved so that Open Briefing's outputs and activities remain useful and effective.

Development

If the pilot project is successful with only the limited financial and human resources outlined in the budget above, then it really will have proved its potential. Funding for the **second stage** would then allow development of the website to include streaming audio and video for presentations, online meetings and press conferences, as well as a greater real world presence at meetings, roundtables and conferences. A series of 90-second video analyses of key events would also be launched on YouTube (with related audio podcasts released through iTunes or similar).

Funding for the **third stage** would enable Open Briefing to expand and recruit staff to undertake a range of research and advocacy projects around key issues identified during the first two stages, as well as expand and develop the institutional partner network. The focus would also shift to developing the more complex but profitable income streams outlined below. It is envisaged that the second and third stages will be completed over a three year period and Open Briefing intends to secure core funding from one or more trusts to cover this period.

Modern organisational success should be measured against a triple bottom line: financial, social and environmental. While businesses usually focus exclusively on financial profit, Open Briefing seeks instead to create social and environmental benefits. Donors to Open Briefing are therefore actually investors hoping to see positive returns for people and planet, not economic gain. That does not mean Open Briefing cannot seek to make a profit, simply that any financial surplus each year will be invested back into the organisation and its activities.

Over the long-term Open Briefing intends to be at least partly self-financing as a successful **social enterprise.** This will ensure Open Briefing's sustainability and reduce the demand on the limited funding available for peace and security initiatives. **We aim to be generating at least 20% of our income in this manner within four years, with a view to increasing this to at least 50% over time.** This means incorporating a sustainable business model within our strategic plan from the very beginning. For it to be sustainable, the model must be based on a realistic plan for generating a significant proportion of our income from non-grant sources without diverting too many essential human and other resources away from our core research and advocacy activities.

Achieving this will involve developing multiple and diverse income streams from products and services related to Open Briefing's activities. With that in mind, thirteen income sources have been identified for development over the three stages so far envisaged. These are summarised in Table 4 over the page. At this point, too many variables make it impossible to attach realistic income projections to each of these sources, though a clearer picture will emerge during the pilot project.

This business plan has been reviewed and assessed as **viable and sustainable** by a SFEDI accredited business adviser. SFEDI is the government recognised UK standards setting body for business support and enterprise.

Table 4. Summary of the incomes streams to be developed by Open Briefing.

Stage	Non-grant income target	Income stream to be developed	Primary target sector(s)		
			Public	Private	Third
One Year 1	1.5%	Start-up grants			X
		Core grant funding			X
		Individual donations			X
Two Years 2-4	20%	Website revenue		X	
		Project grant funding	X		X
		Books and other publications			X
		Smart phone app		X	X
		Membership fees or subscriptions		X	X
Three Years 5+	50%	Issue monitoring services			X
		Training and workshops	X	X	
		Commercial licences for RC(C)		X	
		Consultancy and research	X	X	X
		Advisory work	X	X	

Appendices

Further information

Appendix I

Issue desks

Resource security and climate change

The resource security and climate change desk monitors a host of resource and environmental issues and their implications for national and international security.

Of particular concern are the three vital and interrelated resources of food, water and energy, which are essential to both human and state security. Insecurity in these resources is being exacerbate by climate change, the issue which is the primary concern of this desk.

It is essential to understand the role such issues may play in igniting or sustaining conflict and disorder, including civil unrest, intercommunal violence and international instability. A greater appreciation of the processes that could lead from resource scarcity and environmental changes to socio-economic impacts and security risks is essential to the development of effective mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Political violence and dissent

The political violence and dissent desk monitors the underlying causes of dissent, the different expressions of resistance, and government attempts at suppression.

This covers a huge range of issues and degrees of violence, including the democratic right to protest, far-right extremism, revolutions and the Arab Spring, insurgencies, and al-Qaeda and the 'war on terror'. In all this, a particular concern is the feedback loop often present whereby draconian or violent government responses feed back into the underlying causes of dissent and exacerbate an already fractious situation.

Furthermore, political violence and dissent is not generated in a vacuum: it is a response borne out of frustration and anger at a perceived or actual injustice. Even when it finds its most extreme expression in terrorism, there remain underlying causes – often relating to nationalism and occupation – that need to be understood if the violence is to be brought to an end.

Nuclear issues

The nuclear issues desk monitors developments in the Siamese twins of nuclear energy and nuclear power.

Although the Non-proliferation Treaty allows for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the inherent dilemma is that a country cannot have one without at least the potential to develop the other: nuclear energy and nuclear weapons are two sides of the same coin. The recent reconnaissance in the development of nuclear energy as a response to climate change therefore presents serious security risks in addition to the obvious environmental and economic ones.

In contrast, there have been some limited successes on the nuclear weapons front: they have not been used for over 65 years; their spread beyond the original five nuclear-weapon states has been restricted, with some states voluntarily renouncing their weapons programmes; and just over half the Earth's land area is covered by nuclear-weapons-free zones. However, the biggest stumbling block remains: the hypocrisy of the nuclear- weapon states demanding that other countries refrain from developing nuclear programmes while refusing to engage in meaningful disarmament themselves.

UK national security

The UK national security desk monitors those issues that impact directly on the defence and security of the United Kingdom, as well as wider issues of concern to European security.

This encompasses a range of risks identified by the UK government National Security Risk Assessment and National Security Strategy, including domestic and international terrorism, cyber attacks and cyber crime, natural hazards and disasters, and international military crises.

It is also important to examine the wider issues of what "national security" means in an interconnected world, how state security relates to human security, and what underlying assumptions the government has about how best to achieve security.

Appendix II
RC(C) Evaluation System

All items filed by Open Briefing include an RC(C) rating. The RC(C) Evaluation System is a simple alphanumeric notation system for coding the **reliability** of a source, R, the **credibility** of the information, C, and the **confidence** in that assessment, (C).

RC(C) is being developed by Open Briefing from the NATO system used in military and national security intelligence (similar systems are used by police forces and militaries around the world). The NATO system is a so-called 6x6 system, made up of an alpha code (A-F) and a numeric code (1-6) indicating reliability and credibility respectively.

Reliability
A – Completely reliable
B – Usually reliable
C – Fairly reliable
D – Not usually reliable
E – Unreliable
F – Reliability cannot be judged

Credibility
1 – Confirmed by other sources
2 – Probably true
3 – Possibly true
4 – Doubtful
5 – Improbable
6 – Truth cannot be judged

An item coded B2 would indicate that the source is usually reliable and the information is probably true, whereas E5 would indicate an unreliable source with improbable information.

RC(C) replicates and builds upon this two-character alphanumeric coding system. However, such a subjective system has its limitations. RC(C) therefore also includes a third variable that uses a bracketed alpha code (H, M, L) to indicate confidence in the assessment.

Confidence
H – High confidence in assessment
M – Moderate confidence in assessment
L – Low confidence in assessment

Thus an item coded B2(M) would indicate a moderate level of confidence that the source is usually reliable and the information is probably true. There are 108 possible ratings in this system, with the highest being A1(H) and the lowest E5(H). (The lowest is not F6(L) as might be expected, as this coding in fact indicates a low level of confidence that the reliability and truth cannot be judged.)

An item is coded by an assessor following a strict set of criteria for each of the three elements of the rating (with there being 38 different criterion in total). So, for an item to receive the RC(C) rating B2(M), for example, an assessor would have to judge that it fulfilled all the following criteria:

Reliability: B. Usually reliable
- Source *usually* provides credible (1, 2, 3) information
- Source has *rarely* proved to be wrong
- Source is judged by assessor as *normally* reliable

Credibility: 2. Probably true
- Information *has been* confirmed by at least one other reliable (A, B, C) source
- Information *has not been* refuted by any other highly reliable (A, B) sources
- Information is judged by assessor as *likely* to be true

Confidence: (M) Moderate confidence in assessment
- Criteria for *either* reliability or credibility have been confidently met
- Assessor is at least *reasonably confident* in the overall rating

An evaluation of the reliability of the system itself will be carried out at the end of the pilot project. This will include randomly assigning already assessed items from our database to multiple assessors for blind re-evaluation. It is hoped that the range (that is, the difference between the lowest and highest values) of ratings for each of the three elements will be 1, indicating a strong level of agreement between assessors.

The next step in the development of RC(C) will be to explore further ways of reducing the uncertainty in these assessments, including incorporating web-based crowdsourcing and peer review into the process.

The RC(C) system is licensed under a Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 3.0 licence to allow the non-commercial use of the system by others. Open Briefing will likely trade mark the system and at a later stage develop professional licences for commercial uses of RC(C) once it has developed further.

Appendix III
Company policies

Business continuity plan

A STEEPLE analysis and SWOT analysis helped inform a risk assessment that identified three areas of potential threat to Open Briefing's ongoing activities: the loss of IT equipment or data, the loss or illness of key staff, and reduced income and funding gaps. The following procedures are being developed to mitigate each of these three risks.

The loss of IT equipment or data. Open Briefing's considerable online presence and high reliance on IT means a loss of equipment or data presents a serious risk to the organisation. To mitigate this risk, Open Briefing will use a remote back-up and sync service, which maintains a 30 day version history of files backed-up off-site. A system for automatically backing-up the website and social media data will also be developed. Open Briefing staff will use computers with surge protected power supplies, up-to-date operating systems, firewalls and regularly updated anti-virus software. The organisational budget includes an IT line to cover repairs or replacement of computer equipment as necessary. Any temporary failures in internet connection can be overcome through the use of mobile broadband.

The loss or illness of key staff. The Executive Director will, at first, be the sole driving force of the organisation, and his illness or incapacity could render the organisation impotent. To mitigate this risk, the Executive Director will maintain a Policies and Procedures Manual, which – together with the regularly updated Business Plan – will contain all of the information needed to enable an individual appointed by the advisory board to take over and run the organisation in the event of the Executive Director being unable to do so. Copies of these documents will be sent to the advisory board, with one member asked to be responsible for continuity in the Executive Director's absence.

Reduced income and funding gaps. Any organisation reliant on grants faces the potential of reduced income and funding gaps. To mitigate this risk, Open Briefing will work towards achieving multiple and diverse income streams, with careful record keeping and financial monitoring identifying any likely funding difficulties ahead of time. Open Briefing will maintain the minimum of financial and contractual commitments, allowing activities and spending to contract in response to any funding shortages. The Executive Director will also commit to working unpaid if necessary in order to maintain a level of operations during any funding gaps. Over time, a financial reserve can be built up in order to further insulate the organisation from temporary financial difficulties.

Equal opportunities policy

Open Briefing is committed to carrying out its activities in a manner that does not exclude anyone on the basis race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, national origin, age or disability, and pledges to abide by all relevant legislation.

Open Briefing recognises and is working towards addressing the gender and racial imbalance in its advisory board. It has also adopted the Interns' Network Best Practice Guidelines and as part of its wider intern policy will seek to address the financial constraints that might limit some people's ability to undertake unpaid internships.

Open Briefing also recognises that as an organisation with a considerable online presence it may need to address issues arising from the digital divide, as well as consider design issues that might affect visually impaired users of its website.

Environmental policy

Open Briefing recognises that its activities have an impact on the environment and, as such, is committed to working in an environmentally responsible manner.

Efforts are focussed on three key areas: waste, energy and travel. First, efficient recycling procedures have been developed and recycled and recyclable materials are used wherever possible, while every effort is made to keep printing and paper use low. Second, procedures are in place to keep energy use down and the Open Briefing office space relies on renewable energy and biomass heating. Third, staff travel and commuting are kept to a minimum and are predominantly by public transport.

For all other areas, our purchasing and contracting policy gives preference to Fairtrade, organic and other products and services that cause the least harm to people and planet.

Ethical policy

Open Briefing is committed to an ethical approach in all its activities and procedures. Specifically, it does not knowingly make use of suppliers or services that invest in or have any links to unethical industries, including the arms trade and extractive industries.

As individuals, we strive to reflect the ethical values of the organisation in the manner in which we work. We apply the principles of trust, openness and dialogue in all our dealings, both among ourselves and with others with whom we work.

Open Briefing guards its independence and believes in the principle of speaking truth to power. We therefore avoid sources of funding that may jeopardise the independence or integrity of the organisation.

Appendix IV
Memorandum of understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding sets out the agreement reached between Open Briefing (OB) and _____ (_____).

1. This is an informal agreement and implies no legal or financial arrangements and cannot be considered a contract.

2. _____ agrees to consider favourably and in a timely manner requests from OB for occasional desk or meeting space in its _____ office, provided the request is made with appropriate notice and subject to space being available in the _____ office.

3. _____ agrees to consider favourably proposals from OB for sharing an intern(s) and allowing any shared intern to use their usual _____ facilities while undertaking OB work. OB will in turn make a nominal contribution towards office costs. This is subject to space and IT equipment being available in the _____ office.

4. OB and _____ agree to consider proposals from each other for joint project or staff funding.

5. OB and _____ agree to review and consider republishing or otherwise promoting each others' content on their respective websites.

6. OB and _____ may display each others' logos on their respective websites and describes each other as "institutional partners". No other link may be made or implied without prior agreement.

7. The primary point of contact at OB for matters relating to this agreement is Chris Abbott and for _____ is _____.

8. This agreement will be reviewed by both parties after 12 months.

Date: _____

Appendix V

Curriculum vitae

Education

September 2000 – September 2001
M.Litt Social Anthropology (pass with distinction) – University of St Andrews
Awarded a distinction for the dissertation The Authentic Indian: Rethinking Colonialism, Indigenous Identity and Social Change in Contemporary Amazonia.

September 1996 – August 1999
BSc. (Hons.) Psychology (2:1) – Royal Holloway, University of London
Final year included a dissertation and research project. Received the Laurels Award in June 1999 for services to the Students' Union as Expedition Leader of the university's Yasuni National Park Expedition.

Employment

July 2009 – date
Freelance Writer and Consultant
Contracted as a freelance researcher, writer, editor or speaker for a wide range clients, from the British Ministry of Defence and Australian Federal Police to Greenpeace International. Example commissions include copyediting a report on climate risk management for E3G; writing articles on the policing of protests, the psychology of international relations, and the security implications of climate change for Jane's Information Group; and giving a number of lectures and workshops on global security issues to members of the armed forces for the University of Bradford and Ministry of Defence.

September 2008 – June 2009
Deputy Director and Sustainable Security Programme Director – Oxford Research Group
A demanding dual role in one of Europe's leading foreign affairs and international security think tanks. Key responsibilities in the Deputy Director role included taking a lead in the management and strategic development of the organisation and acting as a link between the staff body and the Programme Management Group and the Board of Trustees. Also responsible for managing the organisation's intern programme. The Programme Director role included continued responsibility for leading the organisations Moving Towards Sustainable Security programme and the other tasks outlined below.

September 2006 – August 2008
Programme Coordinator and Researcher – Oxford Research Group
This senior role focused on directing ORG's sustainable security programme. This included developing and managing an integrated programme of work over seven countries and producing funding proposals and monitoring project budgets. Also undertook research and analysis of key security and foreign policy issues and produced in-depth reports, briefing papers and articles. In addition, responsible for ethical and environmental oversight; playing a key role in the development of the organisation as a member of the Programme Management Group; and supervising interns, office staff and external contractors.

April 2004 – August 2006
Research Officer – Oxford Research Group
After an initial period as an intern (October 2003 – March 2004), promoted and given responsibility for developing the new global security programme. This included preparing project proposals, managing the website and producing the monthly newsletter. Also responsible for publication strategy – including proofreading, editing and managing the design and printing of all publications – and writing associated press releases.

October 2003 – January 2004
Research and Campaigns Assistant – Philippine Indigenous Peoples Links
Part-time internship with this indigenous peoples' rights organisation. The role focussed on research, campaigns and communication. Responsible for researching abuse of indigenous peoples in the Philippines and preparing in-depth reports on mining companies, as well as writing a Corporate Research Guide for campaigners. Also responsible for the preparation and distribution of urgent action bulletins and press clippings to partner NGOs.

September 2002 – March 2003
Fundraising Coordinator and Regional Training Coordinator – Support Aid Solutions
Responsible for the recruitment, training, coordination and supervision of all fundraising teams across Oxfordshire, to ensure that monthly fundraising targets were met. Working largely from home, without supervision, this role required good communication skills and excellent teamwork. In December 2002, given the additional role of Regional Training Coordinator with responsibility for training all new fundraisers in the south/southwest region.

Training courses

- **Business Start-up Programme** | Outset Cornwall (April – June 2011).
- **APM Introductory Certificate in Project Management** | The Projects Company (July 2008).
- **Presentation Skills** | Maynard Leigh Associates (February 2008).
- **Introduction to Arabic** | Arabiyya Ltd. (January – March 2008).
- **Basic Media Training** | ngo.media (September 2007).
- **JRCT Peace Leadership Programme** | Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (August 2007).
- **Terrorism: Causes, Trends and Responses** | University of Bradford / MoD (January 2006).

Affiliations

- Honorary Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Social and International Studies (Department of Peace Studies) at the University of Bradford.
- Honorary Sustainable Security Consultant to Oxford Research Group and founder and Associate Editor of SustainableSecurity.org.
- Honorary Research Fellow in the Centre for Governance and International Affairs at the University of Bristol (2008).
- Member of the Futures Analysts' Network, the World Security Network and the Peace and Collaborative Development Network; associate member of the Asset Protection Network; and recent member of the British International Studies Association and the Foreign Affairs & Global Risks Network.

Appendix VI
List of publications

Books

Abbott, C. (2010). **21 speeches that shaped our world: the people and ideas that changed the way we think.** London: Rider.

Abbott, C. Rogers, P. and Sloboda, J. (2007). **Beyond terror: the truth about the real threats to our world.** London: Rider.

Reports and briefing papers

Abbott. C. (2011). **As the Dust Settles: Avoiding the Mistakes of Oslo and Utøya in Future Media Coverage of Suspected Terrorist Attacks.** London: Open Briefing.

Graham-Brown, S. and Abbott, C., eds. (2009). **Securing peace. Preventing conflict and building peace: the UK's role in a changing world.** London: NGO Peace and Security Liaison Group.

Abbott, C. and Phipps, T. (2009). **Beyond dependence and legacy: sustainable security in Sub-Saharan Africa.** London/Pretoria: Oxford Research Group and Institute for Security Studies.

Abbott, C. and Marsden, S. (2009). **From within and without: sustainable security in the Middle East and North Africa.** London/Alexandria: Oxford Research Group and Institute for Peace Studies.

Abbott, C. and Marsden, S. (2008). **Tigers and dragons: sustainable security in Asia and Australasia.** London/Singapore: Oxford Research Group and Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

Abbott, C. (2008). **An uncertain future: law enforcement, national security and climate change.** London: Oxford Research Group.

Abbott, C. (2007). **Mission accomplished? A way forward for the UK in Iraq.** London: Oxford Research Group.

Abbott, C. Rogers, P. and Sloboda, J. (2006). **Global responses to global threats: sustainable security for the 21st century.** Oxford: Oxford Research Group.

Abbott, C. (2005). **Rights and responsibilities: resolving the dilemma of humanitarian intervention.** Oxford: Oxford Research Group.

Sloboda, J. Kemp, J. and Abbott, C. (2004). **Putting people first: the way forward for the UK armed services.** Oxford: Oxford Research Group.

Articles

Abbott, C. **Viewed through an ism.** *New Internationalist*, July/August 2011.

Abbott, C. **Boiling point.** *Jane's Police Review*, 29 April 2011.

Abbott, C. **Resilient communities are the ones that will last.** *The Cornishman*, 28 April 2011.

Abbott, C. and Gilmour, A. **Mind games: avoiding groupthink in international relations.** *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 2010.

Abbott, C. **Nuclear cat and mouse.** *Global Dashboard*, 29 September 2009.

Abbott, C. **Changing climate.** *Jane's Police Review*, 10 July 2009.

Abbott, C. **Trapped and beaten by police at climate camp**. *openDemocracy*, 9 April 2009.

Abbott, C. and Marsden, S. **Toward sustainable security.** *China Dialogue*, 21 January 2009.

Abbott, C. **How the UK will weather climate change.** *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, 5 December 2008.

Abbott, C. Paskal, C. and Phipps, T. (2008). **A climate of change for emergency services.** *Crisis Response Journal*, 5 (1), 30-32.

Abbott, C. **A storm brewing.** *Jane's Police Review*, 18 July 2008.

Abbott, C. **Un nuevo concepto de la seguridad**. *El Periódico*, 10 June 2008.

Abbott, C. **Military-based policies have failed in Iraq**. *Open House*, 28 March 2008.

Abbott, C. **A new security paradigm**. *Cosmopolis*, January 2008.

Abbott, C. **How to withdraw from Iraq.** *New Internationalist*, December 2007.

Abbott, C. **Beyond terrorism: towards sustainable security**. *openDemocracy*, 17 April 2007.

Abbott, C. **Sustainable security**. *New Internationalist*, August 2006.

Abbott, C. **Climate change: the real threat to security.** *China Dialogue*, 23 June 2006.

Abbott, C. (2005). **Rights and responsibilities: the dilemma of humanitarian intervention.** Global Dialogue, 7 (1), 1-15.

Sloboda, J. and Abbott, C. **The 'Blair doctrine' and after.** *openDemocracy*, 22 April 2004.

Appendix VII
Advisory board

Hamit Dardagan is the co-founder and principal researcher at Iraq Body Count (IBC), where he has taken the lead on the development of IBC's analytic tools and outputs. He is also the co-director of the Every Casualty programme at Oxford Research Group, an organisation for which he has been the Consultant on Civilian Casualties in War since 2007. Hamit was previously the chair of Kalayaan, a human rights campaign for overseas domestic workers in the UK.

Ian Davis is the founding director of NATO Watch, a not-for-profit virtual think tank which examines the role of NATO in public life. He is also an independent human security and arms control consultant, writer and activist. Between 2001 and 2007 he was the Executive Director of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) and before that Programme Manager at Saferworld. Ian is an adviser to the United Nations Association-UK, Saferworld and ISIS Europe.

Isabel Hilton is the founder and editor of China Dialogue, the world's first English-Chinese bilingual website devoted to the environment. She is an international journalist and broadcaster and has worked for Scottish Television, the *Daily Express*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Independent*, the *New Yorker* and the BBC. Since 2001 she has been a presenter of the BBC Radio 3 cultural programme, Night Waves. Isabel has authored and co-authored several books.

James Kemp is a project manager at Oxfam. Until recently he was a project manager in the technical department at Nominet and a trustee of the Nominet Trust, a British charity that supports initiatives that contribute to a safe and accessible internet used to improve lives and communities. Prior to that James worked as a fundraiser, researcher and project coordinator for Oxford Research Group between 2001 and 2007.

Nick Mabey is the Chief Executive and a founder director of E3G, a non-profit international organisation dedicated to accelerating the transition to sustainable development. In addition to his management role, Nick leads E3G's work on climate security and European climate change policy. He was previously a senior advisor in the UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Before he joined government Nick was Head of Economics and Development at WWF-UK.

Paul Rogers is Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford and Global Security Consultant to Oxford Research Group. He has worked in the field of international security, arms control and political violence for over thirty years. He is the International Security Editor of openDemocracy and has written or edited 26 books and published over 100 papers. Paul is also a regular commentator on global security issues in the national and international media.

John Sloboda is co-director of the Every Casualty programme at Oxford Research Group and co-founder of Iraq Body Count. From 2004 until 2009 he was the Executive Director of Oxford Research Group. He is also Emeritus Professor of Psychology at the University of Keele and an Honorary Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway, University of London. In July 2004, John was elected to the Fellowship of the British Academy.

Open Briefing

What makes us different?

Open Briefing is the world's first civil society intelligence agency; an accessible platform for insight and analysis on key defence, security and foreign policy issues.

We provide open source intelligence assessments and independent security briefings, so that a better informed civil society can properly engage with peace and security debates and influence positive policy developments in these areas.

Open Briefing is different in seven key ways:

Open Briefing applies an adapted intelligence cycle to drive activities. Our work is shaped by a process of planning, collection, processing, analysis, dissemination, and feedback.

Open Briefing emphasises the evaluation of sources. All items filed by us are assessed using our unique RC(C) Evaluation System for evaluating reliability, credibility and confidence.

Open Briefing focuses on atypical sources. We focus on information and analysis not being covered by the mainstream media so that our users have a much clearer picture of what is happening in the world.
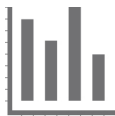
Open Briefing promotes a fact-based worldview. Too much policy development is underpinned by ideology-led worldviews; our work is guided by rigorous research in order to promote evidence-based policies.

Open Briefing recognises the role human psychology plays in defence, security and foreign policy. We never underestimate the role of personality, interpersonal relationships, social pressures and cognitive biases when we undertake an analysis of trends or events.

Open Briefing incorporates social media into everything it does. We use new communication technologies to complement traditional dissemination strategies and allow users to access our material how they want, when they want.

Open Briefing is committed to full disclosure, transparency and accountability. We never accept funding from individuals or groups who might jeopardise the independence or integrity of the organisation.