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***Military-University partnerships: the role of science and engineering
in setting the security agenda***

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Abstract

National governments spend significant sums and scarce resources in the name of 'defence'. The global military burden stood at US\$956 billion in 2003 and the two major military spenders, the USA and UK allocate large sums to military R&D. In 2003 the UK military sector spent £2.7 billion on military R&D. The economic standing and the output from the expertise residing in the science and engineering bases, largely determines the military advantage of both nations. Such military power also engenders social and economic inequalities across the world. This paper explores, using recent research, the complex network of mutually supportive strands which underpin the UK's military posture - a predominantly high technology, weapons-based one. We describe how such an agenda is framed by the military sector's perceptions of security, and how this view marginalises broader, more inclusive notions of national security. Case studies of US and UK science and engineering programmes are used to describe the recent military-university partnerships which, it is contended, drive a high technology, weapons-dominated system and a disproportionate approach to the security of the UK. The paper contests the current security agenda in the UK and shows how the expertise of the science, engineering and technology communities could be used instead to address the various global drivers of conflict and the looming environmental crises, and thus create a sustainable peace and strengthen sustainable goals.