



IIPS
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Transnational Border Threats

Speaker Colonel Christopher Langton, Head of the Defence Analysis Department at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, UK

Report by Hisao Maeda
(Senior Research Fellow, IIPS)

On March 18, 2004, Colonel Christopher Langton, Head of the Defence Analysis Department at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, gave a presentation that discussed where transnational border threats exist, countermeasures to these threats, and their influence on national defense policy.

The list of threats that go beyond borders includes refugees, drugs, small arms, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and crime, which have all been inadvertently supported by lower barriers on international borders and growing globalization and liberalization. The growing use of computers and containers as a means of communication has complicated the problem.



As an example of the response to these threats, Colonel Langton discussed the problem of pirates and the measures taken against this threat, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the Automatic Identification System (AIS), and the Container Security Initiative (CSI). Stating that only 2% of all containers are inspected, Colonel Langton showed that these are complex problems that cannot be easily resolved.



In describing the influence on national defense policies, Colonel Langton said that while there is a growing awareness of the gap between conventional defense concepts and the response to transnational border threats, the possibility of other drastic changes in the defense environment cannot be ignored. In addition, application and integration of a new defense system is no simple matter, particularly when nations today are troubled by limited resources and



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budgetary problems. The asymmetrical environment, exemplified by the laying of mines using ordinary ships, may mean that technological innovation will not necessarily lead to a solution of these very difficult problems. He then touched upon the subject of the Private Military Corporation (PMC) and how their efficiency and mobility may make them one potential solution to these problems.

The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session with the audience that covered the relationship between the PSI and international law, the problems associated with shipping nuclear materials, the international regulation of PMCs, and environmental threats like the recent outbreak of the bird flu.