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Shadow orders: clandestine non-state power in the international system

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The Old War Office, centrally located on Whitehall, London, was recently repurposed as a luxury hotel, the 'OWO', complete with a Spy Bar featuring a replica of James Bond's Aston Martin DB5 automobile. In its heyday, the building had hosted the offices of T.E Lawrence 'of Arabia', Lord Kitchener and Winston Churchill before becoming the headquarters of Defence Intelligence. It is perhaps apt that this is also where the first seeds of this thesis were sown. Deep within the building and surrounded by Chesterfield sofas and somewhat outdated colonial-era artwork, I was one amongst many supporting global counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations which, by the early 2010s, had reached their Zenith. This contrast between tradition and modern warfare struck a note: the adversaries and the world were evolving.

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Biography

Julien Bastrup-Birk's expertise spans across transnational threats, organised crime, illicit finance and hybrid warfare. He has previously worked for various UK departments, including in senior policy, advisory and strategy roles. After gaining experience in the UK's Ministry of Defence, Julien led policy teams in the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) before serving as Head of Transnational Threats in the UK's Stabilisation Unit and then as Head of Strategy in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) new Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation (OCSM). His advisory work has included the position of lead consultant with the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), where he authored the UNODC's new Organised Crime Strategy Toolkit (translated into 15 languages) and assisted national strategy-making processes in the Balkans, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. Julien has also worked as a regular consultant for NATO's Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) and has continued to advise the UK government in the capacity of FCDO Deployable Civilian Expert (DCE).

Prior to his PhD research, Julien obtained a first-class honours degree in Politics and International Relations from the University of Reading (2005) and a master's degree in War Studies from King's College, London (2006). His PhD track also benefited from leading a master's module on Intelligence Studies at the Liverpool Centre for Advanced Policing Studies (Liverpool John Moores University, 2023-2024) and delivering guest lectures at King's College, London (Future of War module, 2022). Julien is an Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and has deployed on tours of duty, field missions and diplomatic duties in over 30 countries around the world.