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Book of Abstracts

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Political Economy, Technology and the Defence Industry / 255

Russian Countertrade as a Mechanism for Promoting Arms Sales and Diplomatic Influence

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Why and how does Russia engage in the arms trade? Scholars have largely focused on why Russia participates in the arms trade, often neglecting the equally crucial question of how it conducts this trade. Yet, understanding the mechanisms by which Russia promotes arms sales provides deeper insights into why it does so. While many portray Russia's arms trade as driven by economic or strategic motivations, few examine the specific tools it employs, particularly defense countertrade, which includes non-monetary barter, counter-purchase obligations, and industrial or technological investments (offsets). This paper fills that gap by offering an eight-decade perspective on Russian arms trade practices, drawing on data and case studies to uncover a more nuanced set of motives. Russia integrates economic and political objectives in its arms trade, seeking not only to outcompete Western suppliers but also to expand or regain influence in various regions, circumvent Western-imposed sanctions, secure access to valuable resources, and sustain its military capabilities. Although barter and technological cooperation have long been part of its trade practices, Russia has only recently adopted offset practices in a systematic way. By leveraging defense countertrade, Moscow aims to stabilize, and potentially grow, its arms exports as global conditions shift.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations, Security Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 262

The EU's Collective Defence Framework: A Law-in-Context Analysis of Article 42.7 TEU Amid the War in Ukraine

Author: Federica Fazio[1]

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Since the onset of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the European Union (EU) has acted with unity and cohesion, taking unprecedented steps, particularly in defence. Although the illegal and unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has re-emphasised the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as the backbone of Europe's territorial

defence, a legal basis exists for the EU to play a role in collective defence. In 2007, the Lisbon Treaty introduced into the EU's constitutional framework a collective defence obligation similar to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT). Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) commits EU Member States to assist one another in the event of armed aggression. Additionally, a solidarity obligation codified in Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) requires the EU and its Member States to support any Member State in the event of terrorist attacks. These norms have seemingly attracted little attention from legal scholars. With the war in Ukraine intensifying, concerns over Trump undermining NATO's mutual security guarantee and the increasing likelihood of military attacks on Europe, understanding how credible the EU's mutual defence commitment is, how it would be operationalised and how it interplays with the EU's solidarity commitment, as well as with NATO's own mutual defence commitment, is of the utmost importance. This paper conducts a law-in-context analysis of the EU's mutual assistance clause, drawing insights from European security scholarship and paying special attention to the historical, geopolitical, and strategic context in which the clause was adopted and has come to operate. To this end, the 1948 Brussels Treaty, 1954 Modified Brussels Treaty, 2004 Draft Constitutional Treaty, and 2007 Lisbon Treaty will be analysed. EU security strategies and EU-NATO Joint Declarations will also be examined.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

European security law

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

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Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 265

The Delegation of Defense and Security Responsibilities at Sea in Historical Perspective

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The maritime warfare and security environment of the 21st century is changing. The proliferation of non-traditional maritime security threats, such as piracy, maritime terrorism, and illegal fishing, combined with the emergence of gray-zone warfare at sea through irregular actors, attests to this change. As a result, the international norms surrounding the use of force at sea are evolving as well, as states are increasingly delegating defense and security capabilities, traditionally considered exclusively state or military terrain, to non-state, nonmilitary, and irregular actors. Current scholarship generally analyzes these examples in isolation and fails to consider the broader framework of the changing maritime warfare and security environment to identify the dynamics underpinning this development. Moreover, while current scholarship commonly assumes that these are novel phenomena, the historical record includes a long-standing tradition of non-state and irregular maritime warfare and security actors, including the privateers and mercantile companies of the early-modern period. As a result, these contemporary examples could be considered symptoms of a more significant 21st-century development, representing the historical dynamism surrounding the international norms of maritime warfare and security. My PhD research project aims to analyze this development by combining traditional historical methods based on written primary source material with international relations theory and expert interviews. As an example of applied history, the project aims to operationalize historical precedents to better inform current policymakers and military leadership about the maritime security challenges of the future.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

History and International Relations

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Yes

Private Actors, Armed Conflict and the State / 267

We Are Peers Now: States'Relations with Violent Non-State Actors That Became State/Sub-State Actors

Author: Ido Gadi Raz[1]

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The relationship between states and violent non-state actors (VNSAs) has been widely explored in International Relations and Security Studies over the past two and a half decades. Scholars have examined state-VNSA dynamics through frameworks of sponsorship, alliances, delegation, and proxy warfare, as well as through conflict and rivalry. However, a growing yet underexplored phenomenon is the transformation of some VNSAs into state or sub-state actors after gaining territorial control and governance capabilities. Cases such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon, and various rebel groups in Syria illustrate how VNSAs can transition into sovereign entities, thereby reshaping their international roles. This article investigates how such transformations affect their relationships with states. Do states that previously supported a VNSA continue their backing once it assumes statehood? Do adversarial states reconsider their stance toward the newly established state actor? Based on a within-case analysis of the Taliban in Afghanistan after the 2021 takeover and the existing literature on state-VNSA dynamics, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the evolving interactions between states and VNSAs that turned into state or sub-state actors. Furthermore, it identifies the mechanisms that drive change or continuity in these relationships.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations; Security Studies

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Yes

Weapons of Mass Destruction: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control / 268

Strategic Stability Without Arms Control

Author: Jamie Withorne[1]

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Arms control has increasingly been pronounced "dead."Indeed, recent empirics are grim. In 2023, Russia unilaterally suspended participation in New START, the last remaining bilateral arms control agreement since the Cold War. While the future of arms control is uncertain, Russia, China, and the United States have expressed nominal interest in maintaining strategic stability. However, strategic stability has largely only been considered in contexts with arms control, or as an outcome of technical military strategies and incentives. Is arms control necessary for strategic stability? I conduct a most-similar systems design analysis of the end of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) to distinguish confounding factors in strategic stability. By holding the end of arms control agreements constant, I measure variation in strategic stability and assess an understudied variable at play: political relationships. Examining the end of arms control agreements allows me to isolate the effects of political relationships on strategic stability in a post-Cold War context. Leveraging evidentiary tests, I identify important interaction effects and find arms control is sufficient but not necessary for strategic stability. Political relationships better explain strategic stability outcomes, suggesting strategic stability is possible without arms control. By critically evaluating the role of arms control in strategic stability, this article applies the concept of strategic stability to a case universe more representative of today's international geopolitical environment: a world without formal arms control policies.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science

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Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 272

Informal is the New Normal: Command and Control as the Choice for the Functional Source of Security Commitment

Author: Joseph Christian Agbagala[1]

[1] *Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich*

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Since the end of the Cold War, the decline in the formation of formal treaty-based alliances has coincided with a volatile security environment and the rise of network-enabled military capabilities. Developments such as the US push to prepare for network-centric warfare since the late 1990s, the growing interest in developing weapons systems through partnerships, such as the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security pact, and Switzerland and Singapore's decisions to procure F-35s, which feature improved situational awareness through advanced sensor-to-shooter connectivity, highlight a shift toward informal alliances. This shift reflects states' significant interest in leveraging technological advancements and establishing arrangements that offer flexibility and adaptability in achieving greater security without the rigid and costly commitments of formal treaties. This study develops a theoretical framework to explain why states choose informal alliances in such conditions. Drawing on institutionalist and functionalist theories of international relations, security studies, and command and control (C2) literature, I argue that the volatile security environment drives states to choose informal alliances because C2 establishes an organizational framework for security commitment that reduces the alliance risks and costs (opportunism, uncertainty, and risks of abandonment or entrapment) while facilitating political-strategic interoperability and operational adaptability between states which enables them to achieve greater security. The C2 framework introduces dimensions that allocate decision rights, designate interaction patterns, specify information distribution, and enable states to exploit and leverage technological opportunities

at both the political-strategic and operational levels of interoperability. These dimensions create a "relational-flexibility" framework that links actors' security commitment at the political-strategic level with the operational level, achieving functional security commitment without requiring binding formal treaties or institutionalized frameworks. This research aims to contribute to alliance studies by addressing gaps in the literature on informal security arrangements and the underexplored role of C2 in shaping alliance behavior, deterrence, and defense objectives.

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International Relations, Security Studies

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Yes

Political Economy, Technology and the Defence Industry / 274

Innovation and engineering at the front: the Ukrainian case of Unmanned Systems

Author: Emilie Berthelsen[1]

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This paper aims to answer who has been at the centre of the development of Unmanned Systems in Ukraine following February 2022, and how these actors have become organised into constellations that enhance military adaptability. With private actors being central as funders, producers and suppliers of drones, Ukraine demonstrates the contemporary role of the state and the military in guiding and facilitating defence technological innovation. Using a case study approach, it provides an in-depth look at the Ukrainian efforts and challenges of rapidly scaling and localising the production of drones during the war, paying special attention to the role of engineer-soldier collaboration in facilitating continuous development.

The Ukrainian example highlights that much of the innovative power is found in start-ups and industries outside the traditional defence-industrial pipeline, necessitating new solutions to bridge the gap. Realising the value of these actors, however, has relied on novel collaboration patterns. Initially, bottom-up initiatives by NGOs and volunteers dominated. While these demonstrated the operational potential of Unmanned Systems, the ad hoc nature hindered scaling.

Gearing the bureaucratic infrastructure, including within the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the defence procurement agency, to sustain innovation required new defence industrial strategies and significant changes to processes and organisation, including the formation of the Unmanned Systems Force and industry-platforms like Brave1. This provides an example of large-scale and sustained military innovation in wartime. Studying these constellations of actors that have jointly contributed to the development and deployment of Unmanned Systems showcases concrete mechanisms for enhancing innovative capacity for defence purposes.

Based on this empirically grounded examination, I argue that in an unpredictable strategic environment, boosting military adaptability that leverages the potential for rapid development of software-based systems requires the establishment of conduits to ease access for private companies to military feedback and testing prior to tender-based procurement.

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Strategic Studies

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Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 275

Turkish defense industry as a factor in its foreign policy strategy

Author: Murad Muradov[1]

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Over the last few years, Turkish defense industry has made a tremendous progress, quickly pushing Ankara into the club of major arms exporters. Moreover, Turkiye managed to establish technological prominence in certain niches, most notably the production of UAVs: Bayraktar and Akinci became recognisable brands in the Middle East, post-Soviet countries and Eastern Europe. Most importantly, Turkiye successfully integrated arms exports into its foreign policy strategy. Turkish UAVs played a key role in Azerbaijan's victory in the 44-day war, which opened new markets for Ankara's defense industry. Central Asian countries, Ukraine, a number of countries in the Middle East and Africa started to purchase Turkish weapons.

This paper will explore the role of Turkey's arms exports in its foreign policy strategy. It will show how Ankara converts them into bilateral bonds that contribute to its growing influence in the region and beyond. The author focuses on the impact of this policy on the spectacular revival of the idea of Turkic union, which for many years had mostly been on paper, and how it fits the post-Soviet countries'strategic goal of reducing their dependence on Russia, including the field of arms supply and defence capacity. The research will specifically look at the nexus between key decision makers and major arms producers which enables this coordinated development, and show what new foreign policy opportunities for Ankara it helps to unlock.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political science, foreign policy analysis

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 277

Advancing authoritarian alignment? A systematic mapping of defense diplomacy between China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran

Author: Sabine Mokry[1]

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In late 2024, the heated debate about an emerging alliance between China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, which had started among U.S. think tankers, reached European policymakers and the public. At first sight, cooperation between these countries appears predominately bilateral and largely focused on support for Russia's war in Ukraine. However, systematic empirical research about emerging security ties between these four authoritarian powers is lacking. This paper maps defense cooperation among the four states to start filling this gap. It examines the extent to which these states engage in defense diplomacy activities, including official contacts between senior military and civilian defense officials, appointment of defense attaches, bilateral defense cooperation agreements, training of foreign military and civilian defense personnel, provision of expertise and advice, contacts and exchanges between military personnel and ship visits, placement of military/civilian personnel in partner countries'defense ministries and armed forces, deployment of training teams, provision of military equipment and other material aid as well as bilateral and multilateral training exercises. Robust links in defense diplomacy between the four countries would indicate growing security ties that might develop into a full-fledged alliance. If that was the case, severe consequences for escalating conflicts around Taiwan, on the Korean peninsula, or in the Middle East are to be expected.

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Political Science

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Yes

War and Strategy / 278

The Strategy of Subversion: National Security between Warfare and Diplomacy

Authors: Henrik Breitenbauch[1]; Niels Byrjalsen[2]

[1] *Royal Danish Defence College*
[2] *University of Copenhagen*

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As world politics has shifted towards strategic competition, states increasingly navigate an international terrain marked by intensified, protracted political conflict. Here, subversion appears as a central, but not fully understood form of statecraft. Great powers find themselves interlocked in a subversive-countersubversive dynamic characterized by the employment of a mixture of military and non-military means with an intensity above the level of peaceful relations, but below the level of war. This dynamic highlights the role and character of subversion relatively to diplomacy and warfare. Accordingly, this paper examines subversion as a critical and distinctive form of statecraft. First, we situate subversion in relation to concepts that tend to shape, but also constrain, thinking on the link between subversion, diplomacy and warfare: coercive diplomacy, irregular, hybrid and political warfare, and gray zone conflict. Second, we argue that subversion is best understood in juxtaposition to warfare (as the statecraft of war) and diplomacy (as the statecraft of peace). Mirroring these more overt and well-defined forms of statecraft, subversion has distinct purposes, it has its own measures and tools, it is organized in a particular way and involves certain actors, and it is based on a unique set of justifications. Third, using illustrative examples from the conflict between

the West and Russia and China, we analyze how the use of subversive and countersubversive strategies have significant consequences for the practice and logic of warfare and diplomacy. In a sense, subversion subverts other essential forms of statecraft. Fourth, we highlight the core challenges that subversion presents for the United States and Europe, respectively, especially as it pertains to the changing character and organization of defence and warfare. In conclusion, we discuss the implications of our theoretical exploration for emerging research on subversion, on conflictual statecraft, and on strategy in Western states.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science, International Relations

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Military Technology / 279

Does Preeminence in Emerging and Military Technologies Matter for International Status and Prestige? Experimental Study

Author: Zakir Rzazade[1]

[1] *Charles University*

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International relations literature on status and prestige demonstrates that states tend to seek technological capabilities and premier weapon systems to shape and improve their international status and prestige. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence on whether such efforts are worthwhile and serve the purpose of enhancing status and prestige. I attempt to address this question through a conjoint survey experiment conducted with a representative sample of 1,000 American nationals. I use artificial intelligence, uncrewed and autonomous systems, and aircraft carriers as attributes for emerging and military technologies, alongside other factors that are shown to be relevant to a state's status and prestige. Through a conjoint design, I aim to explore whether the level of advancement in AI and possession of such technologies improve status and prestige in international politics. Besides, I also intend to test several other hypotheses regarding the source of technology possession and also, based on attitudinal factors such as familiarity with AI, confidence in defense and military AI, and techno-skepticism. Moreover, my design differentiates status and prestige as distinct concepts, which allows a more nuanced understanding of each phenomenon and its interaction with technology. Findings will contribute to a better understanding of the role played by emerging and military technologies in status- and prestige-seeking efforts, informing the respective literature in IR and security studies.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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Yes, I have included all required information (see below).

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

280

Following the Algorithmic Path To Extremism: How Social Network Analysis Can Help To Target Extremist Content Online

Author: Clara Jammot[None]

Corresponding Author: clara.jammot@kcl.ac.uk

Recent events, including Meta's removal of third-party moderators, indicate the growing need for policymakers to engage with extremist content online as well as with the role that social media platforms play in its dissemination. A key issue, however, is the adaptability and fluidity of the online space, allowing extremist actors to circumvent moderation. This research aims to provide additional insight into how extremist content and social media platforms relate to each other, to better understand how extremist content moves through social media, and to provide new methods through which to track extremist content online. In doing so, Social Network Analysis (SNA) is introduced as one approach to identify key extremist nodes/accounts as well as recurring themes and patterns associated to extremist content, which can allow for more efficient targeting.
Drawing on early SNA findings concerning TikTok's 'For You Page', this research discusses how far-right and masculinist content evolve according to different user interests, algorithmic recommendation, and different political events, notably the presidential election of Donald Trump but also the delay of TikTok's ban. The data highlights how extremist content can increase without user consent and indicates a relatively stable level of extremist content irrespective of user interests.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Security, Science and Technology Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Cybersecurity and digital technologies in international security, strategy, and global power relations / 282

Regulatory Asymmetries in Cryptocurrency Governance: Implications for Sanctions Evasion

Author: Orfeas Anastasios Koidis[1]

[1] *Rijkuniversiteit Groningen*

Corresponding Author: o.a.koidis@rug.nl

The rise of cryptocurrencies has introduced new dynamics in the global financial and geopolitical landscape, shaping both economic opportunities and security challenges. Among these challenges, cryptocurrencies have become strategic instruments for circumventing sanctions, exploiting their decentralized nature and regulatory fragmentation. The absence of a cohesive, multilateral regulatory framework has led to significant asymmetries between sanctioning and sanctioned states, creating vulnerabilities that can be leveraged for geopolitical advantage. This paper investigates how regulatory environments in sanctioned states influence the use of cryptocurrencies for sanctions evasion, employing a comparative case study of two sanctioned and two sanctioning jurisdictions. It develops a framework that examines key variables such as the strictness of regulatory requirements, cryptocurrency adoption levels, documented cases of sanctions evasion, regulatory countermeasures, and the overall effectiveness of enforcement. Preliminary findings indicate that sanctioned states strategically exploit regulatory gaps to sustain financial connectivity while sanctioning states struggle with the extraterritorial enforcement of crypto-related sanctions. This research contributes to

broader debates on digital sovereignty, global governance, and cyber-enabled financial strategies, highlighting the need for enhanced multilateral coordination in regulating cryptocurrencies. Within the broader context of international security, this study underscores the role of regulation as a tool for power, shaping state capabilities and influence in the evolving digital economy. By highlighting these dynamics, the research seeks to inform policymakers, scholars, and practitioners about the complexities of cryptocurrency regulation and its impact on the effectiveness of international sanctions.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations, Political Science, Legal Studies

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Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 285

The Sources of a Changing European Security Architecture: the Symbolising, Hedging, Offsetting and Bridging Functions of New Security Guarantees in Europe

Author: Elie Perot[None]

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While NATO remains the primary alliance for collective defense in Europe, security guarantees have multiplied at the bilateral or minilateral level across the continent in recent years. In 2019, France and Germany signed the Treaty of Aachen, and in 2021, France and Greece formed a strategic partnership, both documents including a mutual defense clause between their respective parties. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, the US, UK, and other Western countries offered unilateral security guarantees, in various forms, to Finland and Sweden before their accession to NATO. Finally, Western countries have begun to provide security guarantees to Ukraine not only to help it during the current conflict but also to ensure peace afterwards, until Kyiv's eventual Euro-Atlantic integration. While some of these recent developments have already been analysed individually in the literature, they have not yet been considered as a whole, either empirically or theoretically. This article maps these developments and proposes four different sources for them, each contributing to varying degrees: symbolising political solidarity, hedging against US abandonment, offsetting deficiencies in existing security arrangements, and bridging the interim period before integration in an existing security framework. This article thus contributes to the literature on alliance formation, adding certain theoretical nuances to it, as well as to the analysis of a changing European security architecture.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political science, international relations

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Yes

288

Overlapping Ownership and Foreign Competition in Early-Stage Innovation: Evidence from Cross-Border Investment into Mature Venture Capital Markets

Author: Nicholas Bahrich[1]

[1] *ETH Zurich*

Corresponding Author: nicholas.bahrich@sipo.gess.ethz.ch

The United States has introduced outbound and inbound investment restrictions that prevent American and Chinese investors from funding competing startups developing emerging technologies in both countries. Amid these efforts, this paper investigates how overlapping ownership—where a single investor holds stakes in competing firms—influences cross-border investment decisions. This paper argues that overlapping ownership in competing startups can arise out of cross-border investment for two main reasons: (1) to secure strategic resources that are too costly to obtain domestically for existing portfolio firms, and (2) to gain insights into foreign technologies before funding similar developments domestically. In order to find evidence for these mechanisms, this paper empirically examines the case of Chinese venture capital (VC) investments into the United States between 2014 and 2021. It also considers alternative explanations, such as cross-border hedging or risk diversification, to assess how overlapping ownership affects competition between domestic and foreign startups. By exploring whether VC firms invest abroad to improve the competitive position of domestic startups they have already backed or those they intend to fund, this study contributes to debates on how overlapping ownership structures influence global technological competition.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Economics, Political Science

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Yes

Military Interventions / 289

Helping your friends in need? Military Interventions and the Reliability of Defense Cooperation Agreements

Author: Margit Bussmann[None]

Co-author: Maximilian Krebs

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Whether a state intervenes militarily in international crises and civil wars depends on the type of relations the two states maintain. Formal alliance and defense cooperation agreements are a costly signal of assistance but not in every case can a country count on its friends. The reliability of cooperation agreements is especially important for smaller states that are dependent on support from a powerful ally. However, many alliances are not honored. Military interventions by former colonial powers need to be reassessed in light of alliance reliability and post-colonial political and economic ties. Contradictory expectations emerge if the protective power maintain close ties to both belligerents, which is especially the case for major powers that pursue broader spheres of interest.
This paper will systematically investigate the patterns of French military interventions in Africa and ask why it intervened in some former colonies but not in others. In the past, France often responded to requests for military support when asked by a protégé, while at other times, it remained inactive

despite an existing defense cooperation agreement. There is variation of French interventions across countries but also for individual countries over time, such as in Chad where France intervened frequently but not in all critical situations. Relying on data from the Thorette report on French military operations abroad and the International Military Intervention dataset, we will assess the relative importance of defense cooperation agreements. Accounting for various opportunities that arise in the potential target state, such as military coups, rebellions, and international militarized disputes, we will investigate under what conditions the French government decided to send military support. A better understanding of whether France has been a reliable alliance partner or intervened selectively depending on its own geostrategic and economic interests will help explaining why it lost ground in Africa.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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No

European Transformations in the Organization of Security / 290

Belgium's Defence Policy After the Invasion of Ukraine: A Free Rider's Business-as-Usual Approach

Authors: Michelle Haas[None]; Tim Haesebrouck[1]

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Belgium is widely known as one of NATO's most persistent free riders, deprioritizing military investments for decades. Successive budget cuts have left its armed forces weakened and ill-prepared for major geopolitical shifts. Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine significantly disrupted the European security order, raising the question: to what extent did this external shock lead to a substantive shift in Belgium's defence policy? While Belgium swiftly condemned the invasion and aligned with NATO and EU-led initiatives structural constraints - underinvestment, a fragmented political system, and a political elite largely disengaged from defence matters - prevented a substantial policy shift.

This paper argues that, despite the external geopolitical shock, policy responses remained largely confined to a traditional reliance on multilateralism and minimal military spending. Although the war prompted minor adjustments, such as a stronger focus on NATO's Eastern flank over its previous attention to the Sahel, these changes were not transformative. Initial plans to reach the NATO norm of 2% GDP in defence spending by 2035 remained in place, with acceleration to 2029 occurring only after a new federal government took office in 2025. Geographic security and longstanding political inertia continue to limit meaningful adaptation to a shifting security landscape. By examining this case as an example of entrenched free riding, this paper contributes to broader debates on military burden sharing, the ability of smaller states to adapt to shifting geopolitical realities, and the resulting challenges for intra-European defence cooperation.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political science

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Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 291

Common Threat, Diverging Responses? Explaining European States' Military Spending After the War in Ukraine

Authors: Michelle Haas[None]; Tim Haesebrouck[1]

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Defence cooperation - whether through NATO, the EU, or bilateral and multilateral arrangements -plays a crucial role in national security across all European states. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 reinforced the importance of military preparedness. However, after three years of war, it is clear that European responses in terms of defence spending have varied significantly. While some countries have substantially increased their military budgets, others have shown only modest adjustments. This paper applies Coincidence Analysis (CNA) to explain these diverging trajectories in European defence spending following Russia's war in Ukraine. Integrating insights from the literature on military burden sharing and defence economics, we develop a theoretical framework that combines international-level factors, such as threat perception, with domestic-level drivers, including government ideology and fiscal constraints. Our findings indicate that the strongest increases in defence spending occurred in states facing an acute territorial threat from Russia, as well in those that face a significant - though not a territorial - threat, and had previously underinvested in defence. Countries with only moderate threat perceptions but low fiscal constraints and low defence budgets saw intermediate increases, while those facing moderate threats, high existing defence expenditures, or severe fiscal limitations made only minor adjustments. These results suggest the emergence of a three-speed Europe in defence, which can be expected to significantly impact future defence cooperation across the continent: (1) a small group of strong spenders, (2) a large middle group aligning their investments with economic capacity, and (3) a cluster of "free-riders" falling behind. Our study contributes to the broader debate on defence cooperation by illustrating how external threats interact with domestic political and economic factors in shaping national defence policies.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political science

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Military Technology / 296

Cyberpunk Warfare Expediencies? Understanding the Renovation of old Military Technologies in 21st century conflict and the Russo-Ukraine War.

Author: Brendan Flynn[1]

[1] *University of Galway/Ollscoil na Gaillimhe*

Corresponding Author: brendan.flynn@universityofgalway.ie

This paper explores the dynamics between old and new military technologies which are in general, either poorly understood, commonly ignored and theoretically under-examined. Instead in much of the general literature about contemporary warfare there is a typical privileging of either high technology weapons systems (AI; hypersonic missiles; drones). Alternatively, academic attention has been sometimes directed towards low-tech, primitive, often improvised weapons or tactics, typically deployed by non-state actors: IEDS, car bombs, suicide attacks.

Yet an intermediate category of technology exists which involves "renovation" of old and new technologies. These are combined to produce effectively hybrid low/high tech platforms. This is not merely the utilisation of old weapons alongside new ones (anachronistic usage).Nor is it impromptu, often low-tech, battlefield adaptations or 'Field Mods"(Kollars, 2014). What is involved here is rather a more substantive modification of old weapons by augmenting them with newer technologies-an approach sometimes described as 'cyberpunk warfare'(Matisek, et al, 2024).

The research question posed here is firstly to ask how commonplace is the phenomenon of renovated military technologies, and whether such innovations are judged by combatants as important or merely curious expediencies? This paper also interrogates what exactly are diverse actors motivations in modifying old weapons and military technologies? Theoretically, this paper stresses technological longevities over novelty, and the importance of (bottom up/field level) technological adaptation, modification, and learning.

While it is argued that renovated weapons are nothing new and observable in many other conflicts, the ongoing Russo-Ukraine war is used to explore discrete case studies. These include the modernisation of old 1950s recoilless rifles by both sides; use of so-called "Franken-SAMs"by Ukrainian adaptation of 1980s air-to-air missiles into ground based air defence systems; and Russia's modernisation of dumb free fall aerial bombs, into precision glide bombs.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 297

The defence diplomacy of Greece and its contribution to the enhancement of national security: A case study of the Greek-French Strategic Partnership for Defence & Security Cooperation

Author: Georgios Koukakis[1]

[1] *University of the Aegean*

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As a small state, Greece has always been trying to enhance its national security by participating in several bilateral and/or multilateral cooperative schemes, in order to facilitate the countering of the numerous international and regional threats of the security environment. To this end, the Greek government –in the context of its participation in the European Union as one of its oldest member states–has been implementing a multifaceted defence diplomacy that aims not only at strengthening its military capabilities, but enhancing the European solidarity in the security & defence sector as well. One of the most impactful outcomes of the contemporary Greek defence diplomacy is the 'Agreement between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the French Republic on the establishment of a Strategic Partnership for Defence and Security Cooperation'that

was signed on September 28, 2020. The importance of the aforementioned Strategic Partnership lies in many factors, such as the fact that: (i) the agreement's article 2 (mutual defence clause) provides for the mutual defence assistance between Greece and France, (ii) Greece has already purchased a number of 'Rafale' fighting aircrafts from France, and (iii) Greece has signed an agreement to acquire three 'Belharra' frigate warships form France, the first of which is scheduled to be delivered in mid-2025. The paper examines the content of this agreement, and how its implementation has affected the national security of Greece, in the context of the long standing aggressive Turkish foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations (Security Studies)

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Cybersecurity and digital technologies in international security, strategy, and global power relations / 298

Competitive Cyber Statecraft of the Middle-Ground: A Neoclassical Realist Model

Author: Arthur Laudrain[1]

Co-author: Joe Devanny [1]

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As cyberspace becomes a central arena for geopolitical competition, middle-ground countries — those neither strictly aligned with Western nor Eastern spheres of influence —play a growing role in shaping cyber governance (Gartzke and Lindsay, 2015; Nye, 2022). Traditional neorealist frameworks, which emphasize balancing and bandwagoning, fail to explain the diversity of cyber sovereignty approaches among these states. This paper applies neoclassical realism (NCR) to analyze how elite perceptions, economic dependencies, and security considerations mediate systemic pressures, leading to varied models of cyber statecraft (Rose, 1998; Kitchen and Tirosh, 2021).

The study identifies four distinct cyber sovereignty approaches: strategic alignment, where middle-ground and other smaller states integrate into dominant digital ecosystems for economic benefits (e.g., Ireland, Luxembourg); sovereignty assertion, where states impose digital restrictions based on nationalist or security concerns (e.g., India, Indonesia); selective engagement, where states participate in norm-setting while hedging between major blocs (e.g., ASEAN, South Africa); and pragmatism, where states adopt fluid digital partnerships to maximize flexibility (e.g., Brazil, UAE) (Mueller, 2017; Segal, 2018).

By examining the domestic political drivers behind these choices, this paper challenges the liberal assumption that states will internalize global cyber norms through multilateral institutions (Drezner, 2004; DeNardis, 2020). Instead, it argues that economic fragmentation and regional coalitions are shaping the future of cyber governance, with middle-ground states acting as key decision-makers rather than passive rule-takers (Gopinath et al., 2025), contributing to de-centering international relations (IR) (Zambrano Márquez, 2020).

The policy implications suggest that major powers and international organizations must engage middle-ground countries as strategic cyber actors rather than treating them as peripheral players. Supporting regional digital coalitions and offering flexible, case-sensitive partnerships will be critical

to ensuring a stable, multipolar cyber order. As cyberspace governance fragments, understanding the agency of middle-ground states is essential to shaping the future of international cyber politics.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Military Interventions / 301

The Resistance Operating Concept's Deterrent to Impress: Distinct Causal Theories of Success.

Author: Martijn Rouvroije[1]

[1] *Netherlands Defence Academy - Faculty of Military Sciences*

Corresponding Author: mrouvroije@gmail.com

The Resistance Operating Concept (ROC) brings Second World War and Cold War stay-behind resistance operations back into consideration for strategic and operational planners. The ROC describes national stay-behind civilian resistance organization during partial or total occupation by a belligerent actor. Current events in Eastern Europe have triggered military interest in preparing for such stay-behind armed resistance. However, the conceptual underpinning for this renewed embracement of resistance operations lacks in both depth and width. First, the ROC assumes a linear progression from planning and preparation through the execution of resistance activities over the course of a belligerent military invasion. Such a singular linear course of action falsely implies a one-sided pathway to success. This does not take the geographical space nor the severity of suppression of the population in the occupied territories, i.e. the occupation environment, into account. Moreover, such an approach conveys an impression that stay-behind resistance activities could achieve success in isolation of other elements of national resistance (through means other than guerrilla-like stay-behind units). Hence, this paper delves into distinct phases defined as: preparation for resistance, resistance to invasion, resistance to occupation, and support to liberation, each with a specific (potential) contribution to successful resistance. It does so by employing the concept of causal theory of threat to possible occupation environments and then by applying the concept of causal theory of success to stay-behind resistance's phases. Military planners could achieve a more precise understanding of stay-behind operations vis-à-vis conventional military operations through such an approach. Such an understanding of resistance's causal pathway to success could also aid in garnering the necessary popular, and military, support that stay-behind resistance organizations require in order to present a credible deterrent force during its preparation phase and a reliable force able to resist the potential belligerent when push comes to shove.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

War Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Private Actors, Armed Conflict and the State / 303

Private military companies as proxy forces in international politics with special reference to the Russian Wagner Group/African Corps and its operations in Africa

Author: Theo Neethling[1]

[1] *University of the Free State*

Corresponding Author: neethlingtg@ufs.ac.za

Since the Cold War's end, private military companies (PMCs) have increasingly served as third parties in proxy wars, with states and non-state actors relying on them for military operations. These actors have become a key feature of external involvement in contemporary conflicts. Notable PMCs include Blackwater in Iraq, Executive Outcomes in Angola and Sierra Leone, and the Russian Wagner Group.

Max Weber defined the modern state as a community that claims a monopoly on legitimate force. The rise of PMCs challenges this, undermining state sovereignty when governments outsource security and warfare—fundamental aspects of statehood. This shift reflects broader international trends where PMCs play an increasing role in global conflict dynamics, deviating from the traditional notion that states ensure security. Scholars argue that national sovereignty, as established after the Peace of Westphalia (1648), is in decline. Weaker states, with limited institutional capacity, struggle to control violence, making PMCs both a symptom and a cause of fragile governance.

The Wagner Group, closely tied to Russia, has influenced numerous African countries since 2014, advancing Russian interests while providing plausible deniability for the Kremlin. This avoids public fallout from military losses or human rights abuses abroad. The death of its leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, in August 2023, following his rebellion against Putin, raised critical questions about Wagner's future. As a key Russian foreign policy tool, Wagner played major roles in Syria, Yemen, Ukraine, and Africa.

Now rebranded as the Africa Corps, Wagner remains active in Africa. This article examines its influence in Libya, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Mali, exploring what the future holds for this PMC as it adapts to shifting geopolitical dynamics.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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Yes, I have included all required information (see below).

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Military Interventions / 304

The "Transparent Battlefield" and its Implications for Western Movement and Maneuver Warfighting

Author: Friso Stevens[1]

[1] *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*

Corresponding Author: friso.stevens@gmail.com

Ever since the Gulf War, the Western way of war has been firmly anchored in network-centric combined arms operations and executing them with a Clausewitzian concentration of forces to disarm the enemy. For this dislocating attack to effect psychological shock and operational and tactical surprise, speed and agility in movement are essential. The undiminished belief in unrivaled AirLand supremacy in Western defense establishment circles notwithstanding, the Ukraine War suggests significant impediments to maneuver warfare, with Luttwak going as far as declaring it impossible. The key obstacle to breaking through is what has come to be called the "transparency of the battlefield."Because the enemy can see, track, and lock on to a (moving) ground target in real-time, amassing a large enough force to overwhelm him—which takes time, space, and organization that can be detected—has proven challenging. With geospatial data from satellites, advanced radar systems, and precision surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles, a stalemate has ensued where a lot of the friction and attrition of one's own fighting capacity occurs without even beginning to approach the frontline. One can think of first-person view loitering munitions and long-range precision fire in shoot-and-scoot counter-battery duels. This article answers three questions. First, how have technological innovations making the battlefield "transparent"impacted Western movement and maneuver warfighting? Second, has the defensive regained dominance in the tactical offense/defense balance? Third, if this is the case, what implications does this have for the European force structure (and procurement) and warfighting doctrine –should Europe move to attrition warfare premised on the strategic defensive?

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Security Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Cybersecurity and digital technologies in international security, strategy, and global power relations / 305

Online military influencers in a social media age

Author: Anders Puck Nielsen[1]

[1] *Royal Danish Defence College*

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The invention of social media is one of the most significant technological developments of the last decades. It has transformed the way our society works by facilitating methods of communication that allow broader participation in public debate. This has given rise to the phenomenon of online influencers who establish themselves as authoritative voices within a specific field outside of existing media structures or traditional societal institutions.
This development is also visible in the media ecology covering military operations, and it forces military organizations to change their approach to public relations. Indeed, to some extent, military organizations must embrace social media themselves and mimic the behavior of social media influencers to get their message across in a fierce competition for public attention.
The paper explores the phenomenon of 'military influencers'through a mapping of the different types of social media accounts that that have gained influence during the war in Ukraine. The starting point is an analysis of the references from the daily reports from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), which has become one of the most quoted sources in mainstream reporting on the Russo-Ukrainian war. Being referenced by ISW is, therefore, a good indicator that a particular online voice has an impact on public discourse. ISW has referenced many thousands of sources, most of which come from different social media platforms. Digital methods are leveraged in the study to categorize

these sources based on military affiliation, level of independence, nationality, social media platform, etc.

The paper gives a unique overview of the different types of military influencers using data from an ongoing war. In doing so, the study adds to our understanding of the impact of social media on military organizations and provides insights of value to practitioners engaged in military cyber and media operations.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Digital methods, military leadership, media studies

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Political Economy, Technology and the Defence Industry / 311

Examining the Factors Behind the EU's Defence Innovation System

Author: Cezary Wereszko[1]

[1] *University of Nottingham*

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The European Union's defence innovation ambitions have evolved significantly since the early 2000s, driven by an increasing need for technological sovereignty amid the resurgence of great power competition. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 further accelerated interest in defence R&D, drawing greater attention from both the public and private sectors within the EU. Taking the supranational perspective, rather than that of individual member states, this paper offers an inquiry into the current state of the European Union's defence innovation system by examining the different factors shaping its development. External pressures, including the war in Ukraine and the assertive US foreign policy, act as catalytic factors, creating potential for superior defence innovation outcomes. A strong human capital base underpinned by academia and a network of technology hubs also contributes to the development of the defence innovation system. At the other end of the spectrum are the institutional factors. However, institutional constraints, including a complex regulatory environment and rigid public procurement processes, pose challenges to both public and private investment in defence R&D, limiting the EU's ability to fully leverage its defence innovation potential.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Politics and International Relations

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

European Transformations in the Organization of Security / 315

PARADIGM PARADOX: HOW EMERGING CYBERSECURITY COM-MUNITIES MODERATE EU GOVERNANCE

Author: Hannah-Sophie Weber[1]

[1] *University of Oxford*

Corresponding Author: hannah.weber@politics.ox.ac.uk

While interaction between public and private actors is daily fare in European Union (EU) cyber-security governance, two contrary paradigms pervade discursive rhetoric. On the one hand, a co-regulatory, inclusive allure of multistakeholderism. On the other hand, state-centric and autarkic ideas of digital sovereignty. Surprisingly little is known about links between –often informal – public-private interaction and high-level rhetoric. Given this: What explains public-private alignment behind contrary paradigms?

This paper makes the case that overlooked everyday struggles over authority pre-empt better understanding of ordering processes around digital infrastructure. Integrating practice-theoretical thinking with cybersecurity scholarship, the paper introduces the framework of emerging cybersecurity community (ECC). The ECC framework enables a new understanding of the puzzling disconnect between the aligned everyday practices of interaction, and the contrary governance paradigms – sovereignist and multistakeholderist. The complementary theories congruence analysis helps juxtapose the Brussels effect with norm entrepreneurship theorising. Surfacing explanatory shortcomings of these alternative accounts for either hybrid public or private influence illustrate ECC's utility for integrating both. The framework systematises cluttered understandings of interests, institutionalisation, and technopolitical interdependencies. Zooming in on the domain of EU cybersecurity governance offers a context-sensitive window for this paper as a point of departure for filling a broader gap in extant literature on public-private interaction across governance domains.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science/ International Relations

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

European Transformations in the Organization of Security / 316

Geopolitical Europe: The European Union as a signaling actor in the Russia-Ukraine war

Author: Nicolas Blarel[1]

Co-author: Niels Van Willigen [1]

[1] *Leiden University*

Corresponding Authors: willigen@fsw.leidenuniv.nl, n.r.j.b.blarel@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 posed a significant challenge to European foreign policy. The war forced the EU to react and resulted according to some in a geopolitical shift in EU foreign policy. Several institutions and high-ranking officials, including the President of the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Policy, argued that the EU should become a geopolitical actor that knows how to execute hard power. This paper explores one element of the supposed geopolitical turn in EU foreign policy. It analyzes the EU's signaling (strategic

communication) to Russia, the USA and NATO and aims to answer the question to what extent the signaling actually represents a geopolitical turn depending on the audience it is talking to.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Weapons of Mass Destruction: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control / 317

The Soviet Union/Russia and the spread of the bomb

Author: Lydia Wachs[1]

[1] *Stockholm University*

Corresponding Author: lydia.wachs@su.se

What explains the variation in the Soviet Union's/Russia's commitment to nuclear nonproliferation? While many scholars have examined the US role in the nonproliferation regime, relatively little scholarly research has systematically considered Moscow's nonproliferation and nuclear assistance policy. By fusing insights from previous nonproliferation theories with literature about Moscow's understanding of international relations, I develop a novel theoretical framework to explain the variation in Moscow's commitment to curbing proliferation. It hypothesizes that Moscow's varying nuclear assistance and safeguards policy toward different states—and thus the variation in its nonproliferation commitment—is best explained by policy-makers' views and approaches toward differently aligned states: while officials in Moscow feared that adversaries and allies would develop nuclear weapons, they were less concerned about proliferation risks of non-aligned states. I test the theory's propositions by using statistical analysis and an updated dataset on Soviet/Russian nuclear cooperation agreements signed between 1955 and 2020 as well as a new score of recipient states' embeddedness in the nonproliferation regime. Against the backdrop of intensifying great power competition and an assertive Russia whose commitment to nonproliferation is not a foregone conclusion, this article enhances scholarly understanding of Moscow's role in the nonproliferation regime and the nuclear order.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International relations, security studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Weapons of Mass Destruction: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control / 319

Changing Pathways to the Bomb

Author: Eliza Gheorghe[1]

[1] *Bilkent University*

Corresponding Author: gheorghe.eliza@gmail.com

Previous research on whether the nuclear nonproliferation regime (NPR) works has focused on whether it deters states from seeking nuclear weapons, with mixed results. We investigate an alternative mechanism: by suppressing the global market for nuclear technology, the NPR forces would-be proliferants to build sensitive nuclear facilities on their own and in secret. This should affect both what kind of facilities a state tries to build and how long it takes to complete them, because each state must essentially re-invent the technology for itself. We analyze a newly completed dataset of nuclear facilities and compare it to data on conventional power plants, which are not subject to any nonproliferation regime. We find that the NPR has dramatically increased the time required to build nuclear facilities, relative to what would have occurred in its absence. In aggregate, the regime has prevented thousands of nuclear-state-years, arguably proving that it is enormously effective.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Military Technology / 320

What's Got You So Worried? The Replicator Initiative and US Techno-Anxieties in an Age of Great Power Competition

Author: Tom Watts[1]

[1] *Royal Holloway, University of London (Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow)*

Corresponding Author: thomas.watts@rhul.ac.uk

Focusing on the case of the Replicator Initiative, first announced in September 2023, this paper (re)examines the drivers behind the Pentagon's push to accelerate the development and deployment of AI systems in support of its focus on great power competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Despite experimenting with AI associated technologies since the 1950s, it has only been since the institutionalization of great power competition as the focus of American defense planning during the first Trump administration that "attributable" autonomous systems have been prioritized in the Pentagon's military innovation efforts. This paper generates new insights into this apparent puzzle by drawing from the International Relations (IR) literatures on military innovation, emotions, and ontological security. This provides a framework for developing the study of techno-anxiety as a constitutive feature of American foreign and security policy - one that is mirrored by, but analytically distinct from, the techno-opportunism highlighted in many existing accounts. Through this intervention, this study traces how American military anxieties about AI extend beyond fears of "killer robots" to encompass a broader set of geopolitical and affective concerns about the future—specifically, apprehensions about the unknowable effects of technological development on the combat effectiveness of the American military, the durability of the rules-based international order, and existing understandings of American national identity. These findings suggest that the Replicator Initiative is not merely intended to deter a potential PRC military attack on Taiwan by 2027. It is also rooted in a deep unease about what the rapid pace of technological change could mean for America's place in the world and perception of self.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 321

Central and Eastern Europe in EU Defence Cooperation: An Analysis of Participation in Permanent Structured Cooperation and European Defence Fund Projects

Author: Elisabeta Dinu[1]

[1] *Hertie School*

Corresponding Author: elisabetacristinadinu@outlook.com

The need to enhance European cooperation in defence and security has become increasingly urgent since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Participation in EU common security initiatives remains a pressing issue for Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. With their pivotal position, distinct historical experiences and perspectives on Russia and the war in Ukraine, and complex domestic politics, these countries face unique challenges in integrating into the European defence cooperation framework, including specific obstacles affecting their defence policies and markets.

Countries with established defence industries in the region —Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czechia, and Poland —face particular challenges. Recent studies suggest their engagement in EU defence cooperation has declined since 2022. Is this truly the case? If so, what factors have driven the decline in engagement with EU-level defence cooperation since 2022? This paper examines these questions by analysing their involvement in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects and European Defence Fund (EDF) projects. While PESCO projects offer insight primarily into governmental participation, EDF projects reflect private-sector engagement in cooperative defence initiatives.

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study first employs social network analysis to map participation in PESCO and EDF projects, coding involvement across all PESCO waves and awarded EDF projects from all funded calls for proposals to date. It then examines variations across Member States over time, focusing on the five CEE countries' roles within EU defence cooperation networks. Social network analysis provides insights into patterns of relationships, each country's role in the network, and key network properties, including clusters or sub-networks. This quantitative analysis is complemented by qualitative case studies of Romania and Bulgaria, which draw on policy documents, secondary sources, and interviews with policymakers and experts to uncover deeper patterns and drivers of participation in PESCO and EDF cooperation projects.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Public Policy

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Cybersecurity and digital technologies in international security, strategy, and global power relations / 322

Infrastructural frontlines of (dis)information: data territoriality in the Russian war against Ukraine

Author: Louis PETINIAUD[1]

[1] *GEODE - French Institute of Geopolitics, Paris 8 University*

Corresponding Author: l.petiniaud@gmail.com

The Russia-Ukraine war has critically underscored the importance of cyberspace in modern conflicts, with cyberattacks, information operations, and infrastructure attacks playing a key role since 2014. Beyond the battlefield, both Ukraine and Russia have pursued ambitious digital sovereignty policies that seek to protect their respective "information spaces." Rooted in the strategic imperative of controlling information flows to secure their territory, these policies are designed to shape and transform the underlying network architectures of the Internet following strongly territorialized conceptions of data and information sovereignty. Since 2022, these policies have intensified, actively reshaping the geographies of data and information, particularly in and around the occupied territories of Ukraine.

This paper investigates how multiple actors are increasingly using digital infrastructures to create and maintain new forms of information control, leading to the emergence of complex data geographies. By employing a mixed-methods approach—including OSINT techniques to track internet data, infrastructure mapping, and fieldwork interviews with key stakeholders—this research highlights how an entanglement of opposite policies contributes to the borderization of data, thus shaping the conditions under which parts of the Internet can or cannot be accessed in occupied territories. By mapping the fragmentation of the digital space alongside contemporary and moving frontlines, this paper underscores how Ukraine's efforts to maintain connectivity in occupied territories and Russia's attempts to integrate these areas into its digital governance frameworks impacts the cognitive environment of the population, illustrating the strategic importance of data territorialization in contemporary warfare.

Bridging perspectives from political geography, geopolitics, and Science and Technology Studies (STS), this paper argues that the war in Ukraine illustrates a broader trend in which political actors increasingly reshape the fundamental architecture of cyberspace, including its logical infrastructure. It contributes to discussions on geographies of the digital, digital sovereignty, and the role of infrastructures in modern strategic competition.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Geography, Geopolitics

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Private Actors, Armed Conflict and the State / 323

Big tech at war: The infrastructural politics of public-private relations

Author: Tobias Liebetrau[1]

[1] *University of Copenhagen*

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This article examines the role of big tech companies in international politics through an infrastructural lens, focusing on their involvement in the Ukraine-Russia war. We situate the article in IR literature examining the public and the private not as a distinction but as public-private relations, and we draw inspiration from the infrastructural turn in social science to develop an approach that can capture the complex dynamics of state-big tech relations specifically and public-private relations broadly. The infrastructural perspective offers a way to understand how big tech companies shape international politics, moving beyond debates about state decline or corporate dominance on the one hand, and infrastructure as an external driver of change that allows for a neat separation of states and big tech and politics and technology on the other. Our analysis demonstrates three ways in which the infrastructural politics of big tech-state relations is expressed in the war in Ukraine, showing how sovereignty, geopolitical decision-making, and national security knowledge are contingent upon infrastructural arrangements entangling big tech companies and states. The analysis points to how infrastructural politics is at the core of expressing and realizing what makes both states and big tech companies, offering new avenues for understanding and examining public-private relations in international politics.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science and International Relations

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

Yes, I have included all required information (see below).

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 324

Sweden and the League of Nations: The partisan contestation of national identity and collective security

Author: Zigne Edström[1]

[1] *Stockholm University*

Corresponding Author: zigne.edstrom@ekohist.su.se

When the Swedish Social Democratic Party shifted its stance on NATO membership in the spring of 2022, broad parliamentary consensus to divert from Sweden's tradition of non-alignment to pursue collective security was achieved. A century earlier Sweden had contemplated similar trade-offs before joining the world's first international organisation based on the principles of conflict mediation, disarmament, and collective action. Yet, neither in 2022 nor in 1920 such decisions were taken without opposition. This paper explores Sweden's engagements in the League of Nations, and places its recent divergence from the traditional non-alignment policy in a historical perspective. While the options before the First World War had been between national neutrality or military alliance, the question was to what extent Sweden should have trust in collective security. Special attention is therefore given to Sweden's participation in the LoN in times of crisis and conflict, including critics' responses to these engagements. An emphasis is placed on how the small and post-neutral state made sense of the dilemma between its traditional security practices and the new internationalist ideals. Drawing on a wide range of archival sources, the paper illustrates how contestation often took place across dimensions of partisan affiliation and ideological discourse, generating both shared and competing understandings of Sweden's role and identity in institutionalised international cooperation on issues of security and defence.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations, International History

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 325

Reassessing European Security: The drivers of NATO's response to hybrid threats since 2014

Author: Laura Lisboa[None]

Corresponding Author: marialaura.lisboa@sciencespo.fr

Russia's actions against Ukraine in 2014 led to a reassessment of the European security environment by the West. NATO reinforced its military presence in Eastern Europe and developed measures to counter hybrid threats, which were strengthened after 2022. Although hybrid threats are not new per se, their use over the past decade has posed new strategic challenges to the West. This paper aims to identify the structural and normative drivers behind NATO's approach to hybrid threats through policy analysis and International Relations theory.

We first map early European responses to hybrid threats and trace NATO's evolving approach. The term 'hybrid threats' often refers to activities that undermine stability without escalating to direct military conflict. Its widespread use, however, tells us little about the underlying drivers of these responses, which remain underexplored.

From a structural standpoint, we assess whether changes in the balance of power and the unexpected use of hybrid threats to achieve political goals made them more central to European security concerns. Drawing on liberal and realist perspectives, we also explore how growing interdependence changes international conflict, increases vulnerability to hybrid threats, and reveals the limits of traditional military responses.

From a normative perspective, we analyze how the evolution of domestic and international norms drove responses to hybrid threats. Addressing conventional and hybrid threats in European states requires enhanced multinational coordination and society-wide security efforts. Hybrid threats, in particular, challenge the logic of proportionality in direct responses and deterrence strategies and prompt a reevaluation of norms such as non-interference or the balance between sovereignty and collective security. Finally, we examine how the erosion of democratic norms within European states has made them more susceptible to hybrid threats, and how NATO's strategies have evolved to prevent adversaries from exploiting internal divisions and undermining democratic processes without triggering direct military confrontation.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science - International Relations

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Military Interventions / 326

Negotiation of front ends and back ends in NATO military advisory missions

Authors: Anders Klitmøller[1]; Anne Obling[1]

[1] *The Royal Danish Defence College*

Corresponding Authors: ankl@fak.dk, anneroelsgaard@gmail.com

In this paper, we explore the development of Western military missions, examining the shift from 'winding down large-scale boots-on-the-ground multinational missions'to a lighter military footprint, characterised by more distant security force assistance (SFA). Specifically, we focus on advisory and capacity-building activities in Iraq, concentrating on the day-to-day work conducted in NATO Mission Iraq (NMI). Drawing on a field study that includes interviews with mission participants, documents, and observational data, we investigate the activities of NATO personnel in NMI, illustrating how a diverse range of individuals collaborate on complex tasks within a limited timeframe, presenting various organisational and strategic challenges. Using Anselm Strauss's negotiated order perspective, we analyse how the mission's nature entails ongoing negotiations centred around mission objectives and end state (including purpose complexity and host nation development), mission progress and success measurement (including assessing 'what'and determining for 'whom'), as well as broader professional role competencies (such as military skills, subject-matter expertise, and English language proficiency). This paper contributes to current literature on military missions and civil-military relations by addressing the structural and contextual conditions that influence negotiations among participants in the NATO workforce. It represents an endeavour to comprehend the challenges faced by successful military advisory missions, considering NATO's unique character and the limits of military expertise.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Organization theory/Organizational sociology

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

War and Strategy / 332

Reanimating Grand Strategy in Volatile Times

Author: Alexander Evans[1]

[1] *London School of Economics*

Corresponding Author: a.i.evans@lse.ac.uk

Europe –and much of the traditional liberal democratic world –has not had to think much about war for the last 30 years. Russia's invasion of Ukraine changed this, while Sino-American competition and an America-first agenda only intensifies it. Where war was part of the collective policy framework or cultural imaginary it was wars of choice, not wars of necessity. International security, not national (or European) defence. The last 30 years was an intermission –a punctation mark of relative peace against a backdrop of the persistent and recurring war.
This paper steps back to ask what implications this has for a particular form of European body politic: imaginative policy planning, training and grand strategic thinking. This tradition lived on in War Colleges but less so in academia or within government. European policy debates anchored on butter, not guns, and even now the immediate crisis is one of war and peace (in Ukraine), deterrence (of Russia), defence planning (for NATO and the EU) and fiscal realism (to fund rising defence budgets). Short-term crisis response overwhelms long-term imagination.

Europe may have the Munich Security Conference and the EU Institute for Security Studies, but 'strategic studies' has a thin presence –including in the United Kingdom. What existing institutional framework exists for Grand Strategy, Policy Planning and 'big picture' strategic thinking about war, deterrence and hybrid conflict? To what extent is Europe equipped with the same intellectual inputs as exist from the U.S. Naval War College or statecraft programmes at the University of Texas? Where are the shared intellectual fora that bring together practitioners and thinkers in Europe? Where are the platforms for longer-term ideas to be set out, discussed and debated? This paper will assess current capability and explore options for renewal –including through new institutionalisation and networking.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Public Policy / International Relations

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 333

Do Principles Become Agents? Security Assistance between cooptation and orchestration

Author: Jean Marie Reure[1]

[1] *University of Genoa*

Corresponding Author: jean-marie.reure@edu.unige.it

Under which circumstances is security assistance effective? This article aims to build a theoretical framework to help scholars and practitioners evaluate the effectiveness of security assistance (SA). Security Assistance consists in outsourcing the conduct of stability operations to local partners, increasing their military capacity and professionalism. While existing literature has highlighted SA's diverse and adaptive nature, it lacks an empirically grounded definition of success. By integrating the governor's dilemma theory with SA literature, this article introduces the concepts of agent control and competence as benchmarks for successful SA. Thus, instead of measuring the extent to which providers achieve their foreign policy goals, this framework assesses SA effectiveness based on the role recipients play as policy intermediaries. This approach facilitates case-specific observations, also allowing for broader generalizations across cases. It constitutes an attempt to provide the practice of SA with a coherent set of concepts concerning the aim, the scope, and the limitations inherent to the relationship between providers and recipients. Therefore, first, the article reviews existing SA and policy evaluation literature. Second, it introduces the competence-control framework and suggests operational measures for control and competence. Third, it discusses preliminary findings along with current limitations and challenges.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

IR, Strategic Studies

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 335

Small State Defense Cooperation and Security Strategies in a Changing Global Order

Author: Revecca Pedi[1]

[1] *University of Macedonia*

Corresponding Author: rpedi@uom.edu.gr

This paper examines how small states adapt their defense strategies in a shifting global order shaped by intensifying great power competition, emerging regionalisms, and evolving security dynamics. It argues that small states enhance their defense posture through a mix of hard and soft balancing, shelter-seeking, and diversified security partnerships. Using Greece as a case study, the paper explores how it navigates regional tensions with Turkey while balancing ties with key allies such as the EU, the U.S., and France. Through defense agreements, strategic investments, and regional minilateral initiatives, Greece illustrates how small states can leverage multiple partnerships to bolster security and status. Despite growing security pressures, small states also gain agency through networked cooperation and strategic diversification. The findings contribute to the broader discussion on small state security, demonstrating how adaptive defense strategies can mitigate vulnerabilities in an unpredictable international environment.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 336

Building integrity: emergence of a norm of fighting corruption in defense sector

Author: Islam Jusufi[1]

[1] *Independent Researcher, Skopje, North Macedonia*

Corresponding Author: islam.jusufi@gmail.com

This article studies the politics of fighting corruption, with particular attention to 'building integrity', which has emerged as a new concept in the field. NATO and its member states in particular, have since early 2000s have invested substantially in integrity mechanisms and practices in order to reduce the risk of corruption and to embed integrity principles in the defence establishments of the NATO itself, in member states and in partner countries. Applying the concept of 'building integrity', this article seeks to reveal how this policy has been pursued, while facing the reality of the persistence of the corruption. While influential studies point to existence of corruption, this article seeks to further the understanding of the fight against corruption with the assessment of the emergence and rise of the concept of 'building integrity' to a norm of defence policy. By applying a social constructivist perspective this article investigates whether and how 'building integrity' has functioned as a channel of diffusion of norms pertaining to fight against corruption within NATO and in its partner countries. The article suggests that 'building integrity' provided with an opportunity for norm diffusion in the field of fight against corruption within the defence establishments.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Military Technology / 339

The Erosion of Traditional Deterrence: Space as a Case Study in Military Transformation

Author: Raoul Cardellini Leipertz[1]

[1] *LUMSA University*

Corresponding Author: raoul.cardellini@gmail.com

This paper will examine the evolving interplay between legacy military technologies and emerging innovations, arguing that the transformation of the battlefield has reached a critical tipping point at which traditional doctrines are no longer adequate, and will do so by using space as a case study. As Cold War-era systems—constructed on static deterrence models—confront cutting-edge dual-use innovations such as autonomous satellite constellations, and cyber-enabled space operations, the security environment in space is undergoing a profound reconfiguration. Drawing on empirical analyses of state practises and legal frameworks from authoritative sources including the Woomera Manual, the MILAMOS Project, and the Tallinn Manual on Cyber Operations, this study provides a comprehensive assessment of how these new technologies disrupt conventional military effectiveness and strategic stability.

The paper will first delineate the characteristics of legacy versus modern technologies, highlighting how historical systems have shaped deterrence through predictable and well-understood doctrines. In contrast, recent innovations introduce heightened unpredictability, diffuse the locus of control, and expand the pool of actors—encompassing non-state and commercial entities—thereby complicating attribution and response strategies. This analysis will expose critical vulnerabilities in current international legal regimes, which were originally devised for a markedly different technological era. The paper will propose a multi-pronged framework to bridge the gap between traditional and modern military capabilities, focusing on revising operational doctrines to incorporate real-time data analytics and adaptive response measures; and developing updated legal interpretations that reconcile existing treaty obligations with the realities of dual-use technologies.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Law

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

Yes, I have included all required information (see below).

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Weapons of Mass Destruction: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control / 340

The Universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons : Lessons from the CWC and BWC and the Role of Customary International Law

Author: Agata Bidas[1]

[1] *University of Vienna*

Corresponding Author: agata.bidas@gmail.com

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) represents a critical step toward global nuclear disarmament, yet its universal adoption faces significant challenges, particularly due to resistance from nuclear-armed states. This paper examines the potential for expanding the TPNW's adoption by drawing insights from the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), focusing on how customary international law can influence this process.

Through a comparative legal analysis, the paper explores the historical evolution of the CWC and BWC, analyzing how these treaties transitioned from limited regional agreements to near-universal legal instruments. It assesses the role of treaty design, enforcement mechanisms, and state practice in fostering compliance and legitimacy. By examining legal precedents and state responses to these treaties, the paper evaluates whether the TPNW could follow a similar trajectory.

Methodologically, this research relies on a doctrinal analysis of treaty text and state practice, complemented by a review of customary international law principles and relevant case studies. It compares enforcement, verification, and accountability provisions in the CWC and BWC with those in the TPNW to identify legal and institutional gaps that may hinder broader adoption. Additionally, the paper considers state discourse in international forums and legal scholarship to assess emerging norms surrounding nuclear disarmament.

The central question of this research is: Can customary international law and evolving state practice contribute to the universalization of the TPNW? The paper proposes a legal framework based on lessons from the CWC and BWC, suggesting that strengthening customary norms around nuclear non-proliferation could enhance the TPNW's legal influence and broaden its global acceptance.

By integrating historical precedent with legal analysis, this research offers new insights into how the TPNW could gain wider recognition and legitimacy in the international legal order.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

international law

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

European Transformations in the Organization of Security / 342

'Total Defence'and Transformations in the Making of European Security

Authors: Joakim Berndtsson[1]; Andreas Kruck[2]; Moritz Weiss[2]

[1] *University of Gothenburg*

[2] *LMU Munich*

Corresponding Authors: andreas.kruck@gsi.uni-muenchen.de, joakim.berndtsson@globalstudies.gu.se, moritz.weiss@gsi.lmu.de

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, it has become abundantly clear that territorial aggression and large-scale international war are back in Europe. The conventional narrative in research on European security policymaking holds that this provides an impetus for the (re-)building of centralized coercive capacities within "positive" security states. With the return of territorial aggression, the idea of the state as *the* key provider of national security seems to be back. At the same time, European states –first of all Nordic and Baltic vanguards, but also Continental European countries –have reinvigorated "Total Defence" (TD) or "comprehensive security" concepts. TD reflects a "whole-of-government and whole-of-society" concept of security policymaking that aims at extensive cross-sectoral collaboration. Against the backdrop of these seemingly contradictory trends, we ask: How do evolving threats shape European ways of organizing national security and how do the resulting organizing concepts impact on the authority foundations and policy instruments of European security states? Bringing together research on TD and types of security states, we argue that contemporary territorial and hybrid threats drive the (re-)emergence of TD as an organizing concept for the making of security in Europe. TD in turn entails decentralized and pluralist notions of epistemic authority and regulation-based policy instruments to orchestrate diverse public and private experts. Thus, contemporary security threats and ensuing TD concepts contribute to regulatory security statehood and network-based security governance. Our key contributions are to specify the links between 1) types of security threats and the (re-)emergence of TD and 2) between TD and the evolving authority foundations and policy instruments of European security states. We thereby challenge the conventional narrative of centralized state capacity-building in a reshuffled European security landscape on theoretical grounds and by referring to ample illustrative evidence from the Nordic, Baltic and Continental European countries.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science, International Relations

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Military Technology / 343

Emerging and Disruptive Technologies in Turkish Counter-Terrorism

Authors: Aybike Yalcin-Ispir[None]; Giray Sadik[None]

Corresponding Authors: girayuga@gmail.com, yalcinaybike@gmail.com

Türkiye has become a significant defense exporter due to developments in its defense industry. These improvements have had also an impact on Turkish counter-terrorism. Türkiye has been battling terrorism for many years, and its strategy has evolved over time. The deployment of emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) -as used by NATO- has significantly increased the technological aspect of the fight against terrorism. The national production of the crucial technologies has provided Türkiye with a substantial advantage in the fight against terrorism. For example, in addition to other systems like Akıncı, Hürkuş, and Anka, Türkiye actively uses its Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance in the fight against PKK. This study examines how Türkiye's counter-terrorism strategy has adapted to keep pace with technological developments. According to preliminary research, Türkiye's investments and developments in its EDT ecosystem have strenghtened its counter-terrorism in two ways. First, the reliance on outsourcing was reduced with the introduction of the new national defense systems. Second, these domestic capabilities have allowed for the development of customized technical solutions that address specific requirements.From nanotechnology to artificial intelligence, much is yet to come in the EDT ecosystem, according to Türkiye's technology-related strategic documents.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Security Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Political Economy, Technology and the Defence Industry / 345

Dynamics of Defense Indigenization: state-private relations in India's quest for self-reliance

Author: Yagnyashri Kodaru[None]

Corresponding Author: y.kodaru@gsi.uni-muenchen.de

In an era of hostile geopolitics, states of all stripes are striving to fortify domestic defense industries and secure defense supply lines. Despite increasing scholarly attention on national strategies of self-reliance—especially in rising powers in the global south—the concept and its associated policy of 'defense indigenization'(DI) remains little understood on a conceptual and empirical level. Notably, authors have studied broad variations in DI policies across states, while neglecting shifts in the roles of state and private actors over time. This fails to account for the complex and puzzling mix of protectionist and open-market liberalization policies that underlie many national DI strategies, warranting a deeper analysis of ongoing reconfigurations in the competencies of key defense industrial players. Using a case study of the Indian defense industry, this paper provides a unique conceptualization of DI that challenges current statist analyses and explores evolving state-private dynamics in contemporary DI approaches.

Since 2014, under the Modi government, India has seemingly undergone renewed efforts at indigenization, central to which is the further liberalization of its otherwise state-led defense industry. In a systematic mapping of major weapons production, I track historical developments in DI policy and assess whether the "Make in India"campaign represents a critical juncture in state-private defense industrial relations. The findings suggest that India is on the cusp of major defense industrial transformations in its path to self-reliance, constituting an expanded role for the private sector despite persistent institutional and structural constraints. This empirical mapping can offer valuable insights into the political and industrial drivers of DI in rising powers in the Global South. The paper holds serious policy implications for India and other rising powers'strategic positioning in the global order, contributing to broader debates in political economy and defense/security studies.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations

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Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 347

Beyond Exit: Examining Protégés' Intra-Alliance Bargaining Strategies

Author: Maximilian Krebs[1]

[1] *University of Greifswald*

Corresponding Author: maximilian.krebs@uni-greifswald.de

Military alliances are often seen as hierarchical security institutions where powerful patrons use 'sticks'(e.g., threats of abandonment) and 'carrots'(e.g., reassurance) to shape the policies of their protégés. However, alliance dynamics are not one-sided. Institutionalized alliances provide protégés with opportunities to bargain for better terms, rather than merely accepting their patron's preferences or leaving the alliance. Weaker states employ intra-alliance bargaining strategies, such as voicing criticism of the alliance patron, abstaining from military exercises, delaying cooperation, or even evicting allied troops, to extract concessions from their patron.

This research investigates the bargaining strategies of alliance protégés vis-à-vis their patrons. It develops a typology of bargaining strategies available to protégés and presents data on their use. Second, the study examines under what conditions these bargaining attempts are effective. Drawing on the case of Armenia's within the Collective Security Treaty Organization - including its absence from CSTO activities and threats to withdraw - this study explores when states choose bargaining over exit and what makes such bargaining effective. By identifying when and how protégés can successfully bargain with their alliance patrons, this research contributes to a better understanding of intra-alliance dynamics and provides insights for policymakers to build enduring security institutions.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

Political Science / International Relations

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

Private Actors, Armed Conflict and the State / 348

From Revolt to Rule: Insurgency as Proto-State Formation

Author: Marnix Provoost[None]

Corresponding Author: m_provoost@hotmail.com

State formation is a continuous process, marked by the centralisation and monopolisation of power to establish authority over a population within a defined territory. This paper argues that insurgency is a centrifugal force challenging this centralisation. However, insurgents are not merely destructive but, driven by an idea of an alternative political order, are establishing a new form of formal or informal governance, though at the expense of the established state's authority and monopolies on using force, collecting taxes, and enacting laws. In its nature, an insurgency is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, itself analogous to state formation, similar in its evolution through the establishment of political authority by monopolising the use of force and generating revenue. Thus, the state and insurgents compete on three key axes of monopolisation: on legislation, on the use of force, and on taxation, each forming a critical pillar of governance and authority. These features distinguish the inherent use of force in insurgency from violence associated with mutiny, rebellion, criminals and terrorist organisations.

This paper addresses theoretical gaps between insurgency and state formation by using the latter as a framework to analyse the former. Using complexity theory, it presents a model illustrating how distinct non-state groups and social structures may evolve from coexistence through cooperation to convergence into a proto-state, influenced by specific internal and external contextual factors that may contribute to insurgent success or failure. It posits that successful insurgencies often are a symbiosis of non-state groups or social structures possessing political-administrative, financial-economic, and force-exerting capabilities, enabling the formation of a proto-state. An insurgency's nature lies in this process of integration, while its character is shaped by contextual factors. Additionally, the paper argues that securing and re-allocating revenue is a critical aspect in establishing insurgent governance and legitimacy, but often neglected the traditional political-military focus.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

War Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

Yes

War and Strategy / 349

Assisting to Win? Military Assistance and Coercion in War

Author: Kersti Larsdotter[1]

[1] *Swedish Defense University*

Corresponding Author: kersti.larsdotter@fhs.se

Coercion is a central strategy for states in an increasingly competitive and hostile international environment, and there are several military means or tools they can use to coerce an opponent into submission, such as, air power, invasions and land grabs, or even nuclear threats. Military assistance, i.e. the training, equipping and advising of foreign state and non-state armed forces to enhance their capability to fight wars, is usually not understood as one of these tools. Instead, research on military assistance tends to focus on the utility of military assistance for the receiving actor, for example, if it contributes to peace, or if it increases the strength of armed forces in the receiving state. Despite the quite extensive use of military assistance in contemporary international relations, we know precariously little about the strategic utility of military assistance for the sponsor state. Do the strengthening of friendly foreign state and non-state armed forces contribute to the coercive power of the sponsor state? Is it a waste of resources? Or could it in fact, contribute to a higher level of threats against the sponsor state?

By understanding military assistance as a tool in the strategic toolbox, we can begin to tease out the strategic logic and scrutinize the utility of military assistance for increasing the coercive power as well as security of the sponsor state. In this paper, I will develop the logic of military assistance as a coercive tool and use a plausibility probe to study these dynamics through empirical case studies. In addition to the conceptual elaborations, the paper will demonstrate the general logic of military assistance as a coercive tool as well as the particular mechanisms of its individual subtypes in a number of short empirical case studies.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

War Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?:

No

Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance / 352

Can European Defence Cooperation Build European Deterrence?

Author: Fotini Bellou[1]

[1] *University of Macedonia*

Corresponding Author: fbellou@uom.edu.gr

Is the European Union capable of developing a credible European deterrence? This question is more pressing than ever, particularly in light of the second Trump administration and its inclination toward unilateralism. As the war in Ukraine approaches its third year, the EU's efforts in defence cooperation have intensified—but have they been effective in meeting the evolving security demands? The return of high-intensity, technologically advanced conventional warfare to the European continent has underscored the urgency of collective defence preparedness. Even before February 2022, EU member states had embarked on efforts to deepen interstate defence cooperation and, to some extent, defence integration. However, these initiatives have been cautiously readjusted to address the new strategic realities. Russia's war against Ukraine has not only tested European security but has also brought direct threats to neighboring EU states. In response, EU member states have acknowledged—at least on paper—the necessity of multi-domain defence capabilities, culminating in a commitment in November 2023 to enhance their collective military readiness. Yet, has this shift translated into tangible progress toward European deterrence? Have EU states adequately responded to both the new defence imperatives and Ukraine's calls for support? This paper assesses the EU's progress by examining shifts in its strategic culture, actual responses to the war in Ukraine, and changes in defence priorities and military spending. It suggests that while EU member states have taken steps to enhance defence cooperation and provide moderate military assistance to Ukraine, these efforts have yet to translate into a more ambitious strategy with a meaningful deterrent impact. There's a need for a fundamental transformation in European defence thinking and capability-building—one that extends beyond the current trajectory. If deterrence is the ultimate goal, merely strengthening cooperation will not suffice; a more profound shift in strategic culture and operational readiness is essential.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?:

International Relations/International Security

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?:

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No