



Contribution ID: 332

Type: **Paper Abstract (Closed Panels)**

## Reanimating Grand Strategy in Volatile Times

*Thursday 26 June 2025 11:30 (20 minutes)*

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 punctuation 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

**Author:** Prof. EVANS, Alexander (London School of Economics)

**Presenter:** Prof. EVANS, Alexander (London School of Economics)

**Session Classification:** War and Strategy

**Track Classification:** Closed Panels: War and Strategy