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Towards a critical security politics

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The UK's approach to security and the 'war on terror' has been critiqued for privileging force, surveillance and militarism, but no substantive, alternative approach has emerged in academia, parliament or civil society which could challenge current policy. Some NGOs and parliamentarians have challenged this post-9/11 security orthodoxy. Yet these attempts lack academic rigour and are often developed in response to a specific government policy. The type of systematic thinking and empirical grounding that academic analysis can bring is often missing from the work of those at the coalface of policy development.

If this is a failure of politics, then it is equally a failure of the academy. The project of critical security studies has succeeded in deconstructing and critiquing the security architectures of the liberal state. Yet, it has often failed to engage – conceptually, disciplinarily, and practically – with questions of security policy. With the aim of more practically engaging with policy-making, this roundtable will develop potential directions for bringing the insights of critical security studies to the political arena. What would a critical security studies approach to security policy look like? How can and should those critical of the current security orthodoxy respond to – and reshape – contemporary security debates?

Track Classification: Critical Studies on Terrorism Working Group