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Type: **Panel**

## Debating the American Empire post-Bush

*Thursday, 18 June 2020 17:00 (1h 30m)*

This panel addresses a significant gap in recent conceptual debates on American foreign policy: meaningful engagement with the concept of Empire. During George W. Bush's presidency, International Relations scholars drew extensively from this frame to debate the character, hierarchical structure, and geographies of American power. Thereafter, as attention shifted toward the consequences of American decline and the erosion of the Liberal International Order, the concept has fallen out of mainstream use. With a few notable exceptions, it has been subsumed by debates on hegemony and unipolarity. This is a problematic omission given Empire's continuing relevance to debates on American foreign policy.

This panel draws from the concept to explain three discrete areas of contemporary American foreign policy. It examines: (1) how a focus on the particular post-war geographies of American imperialism provides an alternative explanation for the contemporary reliance on military assistance as a key tool of US military intervention; (2) how the particular characteristics of the American empire operating fragmented into many sovereign territorialities is undermined by its own open door strategy, requiring coercion to contain both economic and geopolitical rivals; and (3) how the increased "inclusion" of female American soldiers has been enabled by processes of domestic and international "exclusion" which reveal the American empire's "faces of domination".

Taken as a whole, this panel makes a coherent contribution to this conference's overreaching theme of the future of International Studies by reengaging with a core part of the discipline's past. It also promotes a greater dialogue between scholars studying contemporary areas of the American imperialism and the wider discipline.

We would be very receptive to the addition of extra papers to this panel. One of our other speakers has had to pull out due to being unable to make the conference.

**Track Classification:** US Foreign Policy Working Group