

Navigating polycrisis: UK foreign policy between national, human and planetary security challenges

Friday, 23 June 2023 16:45 (1h 30m)

In March 2023, the UK's Integrated Review Refresh set out a vision for engagement with 'a world defined by danger, disorder and division'. The UK's investments in confronting Russia, and competing with China via military presence in the Indo-Pacific and the AUKUS nuclear alliance carry rapid-escalation risks and require evidence-backed strategic thinking, resources and capacities that are in short supply. Such reprioritisation of geopolitical contestation sits uncomfortably with the immediate, overlapping and/or existential challenges of meeting vast human and planetary security challenges, even as UK investments in international development and cooperation are shrinking. These include the squeeze on human societies amid climate emergency, economic volatility, political polarisation, and a global decline in respect for democratic and human rights. Noting that a new UK government may have scope to recalibrate the UK's overseas agenda, this panel offers space for leading scholars to debate how the UK can strike a balance between managing global geopolitical competition and aggression, helping to address instability on and beyond Europe's fringes (while absorbing the lessons of past experience), and promoting cooperation to address looming structural problems and human security crises.

Track Classification: BISA