

Adjusting to inter-state competition: How middle powers are carving out a defence role for themselves

Wednesday, 5 June 2024 10:45 (1h 30m)

The War in Ukraine is symptomatic of an overarching trend that has emerged since the second decade of the twenty-first century: the return of state-based threats, the intensification of inter-state competition, the increasing sophistication of weapon systems, and the concomitant dawn of new warfighting domains. Whilst it is tempting to apply the analytical framework of great power competition, middle powers are equally adjusting to these new realities and their decisions are bound to exert influence on the international system. Following up on that, this panel aims to discuss some of the dilemmas and major strategic decisions that Western middle powers are facing when formulating their defence policies: their acquisition strategies and industrial defence policies, their role within the Western alliance, the modernisation of their armed forces, and their presence in outer space as a new battleground. These dimensions are analysed through multi-theoretical perspectives, including military innovation studies, strategic culture, middle power theory, and organisation theory.

Track Classification: War Studies Working Group