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The Future of International Military Missions and Peacekeeping in a Post-Unipolar World

Thursday 4 June 2026 15:00 (1h 30m)

The era of unipolarity, dominated by U.S. hegemony since the end of the Cold War, has given way to a multipolar international order characterized by the resurgence of powers like China, Russia, and regional actors such as India and Turkey. This panel examines the implications for international military missions and peacekeeping operations, which have traditionally relied on collective security frameworks like the United Nations and NATO. As great power competition intensifies, the consensus-driven model of peacekeeping faces unprecedented challenges, including veto paralysis in the UN Security Council, the proliferation of hybrid threats, and the erosion of norms against territorial aggression, as evidenced by conflicts in Ukraine and the South China Sea.

Key discussions will explore how multipolarity reshapes mission mandates: from traditional blue-helmet deployments to more robust, coalition-based interventions addressing non-state actors, cyber warfare, and climate-induced instability. Panelists will debate the role of emerging alliances, such as the Quad or AUKUS, in supplementing or supplanting UN efforts, while scrutinizing the risks of mission fragmentation and selective enforcement. Ethical dilemmas, including the protection of civilians amid proxy wars and the integration of private military contractors, will also be addressed.

Track Classification: Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and Human Rights Working Group