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Foreign Interference and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy

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The problem of foreign interference (or the related concepts, such as foreign influence, or hybrid warfare) has gained increased attention by both practitioners and analysts of foreign policy. Malign activities by external actors –typically Russia and China –are seen as a potential source of influence not only in domestic affairs, but also, and perhaps primarily, as constraints on foreign policy. Yet, the concept of foreign interference itself is malleable and open to contestation and abuse. Therefore, this panel will start with a paper that discusses the existing conceptualizations and provide a working definition. This will be followed up by three other papers bringing together a range of case studies unified by their focus on the ‘second image’ of foreign policy-making –domestic politics. It will compare the United Kingdom, Taiwan, Czechia and Lithuania, as countries which are all coping with the problem. Using different theoretical perspectives, the panel will evaluate how foreign interference manifest in different layers of foreign policy-making, including the formation of governmental discourse, the bureaucracy-led writing of official strategies, and the influence on public opinion. In all of these context, foreign interference –in its different forms and extents –as a factor that needs to be addressed.

Track Classification: Foreign Policy Working Group