

Reprising the Relationship between War and Technology

Monday, 21 June 2021 16:00 (1h 30m)

Three decades have now passed since the canonical 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA) debates of the early 1990s. Grounded in the historical idea of a "military revolution", concepts like Network Centric Warfare promised a technologically-driven paradigm-shift in the conduct, character – and perhaps even nature – of war. With hindsight, however, many of these highest aspirations failed to materialise. Even so, in the intervening years, military-technical innovation has remained a central feature of soldierly activity and scholarly interest; prominent even during the supposedly people-centric wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, the prospect of renewed inter-state competition, on the one hand, and the increasing potency of non-state actors, on the other, has brought questions of technological change and military effectiveness to the fore once again. This panel seeks to reprise traditional understandings of technology and security, by exploring the myriad interconnections between martial praxis and material artefacts. In so doing, it will examine the impact of emerging innovations on warfare, alongside the role of politics and society in generating technical change, to address the underlying conceptual relationships between technology and war.

Track Classification: War Studies Working Group