

Call for Papers

Conflict Delegation and Proxy Wars in International Security

The **Military Academy at ETH Zurich**, in cooperation with the **Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Reading**, and the **Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya**, invites papers/proposals for a virtual conference on **conflict delegation** and **proxy wars**. This event will be held online on **September 23, 2021**.

Conflict delegation to proxies is a longstanding practice in the history of war and one of the most salient features in contemporary conflict. As demonstrated by the complicated relationships between global powers, regional actors, and local armed non-state groups in places such as Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Ukraine, conflict delegation and proxy wars pose serious challenges to researchers, policy makers, and security practitioners alike. They encompass a wide range of – often interrelated – issues such as external support to insurgents and state-sponsored terrorism, the outsourcing of security tasks to domestic militias or mercenaries, and the ways in which governments seek to externalize their defence burden through a combination of air power, special operations forces, private military corporations, and local partner forces.

Recent scholarship has advanced our understanding of the phenomenon, including novel and more nuanced conceptualizations, more robust data gathering efforts, and a shift towards examining the nature, dynamics, and problems behind delegation to proxies. We seek to build on these efforts by providing a forum to discuss emerging ideas, novel insights, and to outline potential avenues for future research.

We invite scholars and practitioners to submit proposals on topics including (but not limited to):

- The return of great power competition and proxy conflict.
- The diversity of actors in conflict delegation such as insurgents, militias, mercenaries etc.
- The variation in how governments use proxy wars as a tool of statecraft (COIN, CT, etc.).
- The role of technology, cyber space, and artificial intelligence in current and future proxy wars.
- The problems of control, command, and resolve in proxy wars, as well as lessons learned.
- The effects of delegation on conflict processes (war termination, rebel governance, etc.).
- The links between proxy, hybrid, and frozen conflicts.
- The overlap between conflict delegation, covert action, and plausible deniability in int'l law.
- The role of proxy warfare in military doctrine, strategy, and armed forces development.

Proposals (in a single PDF file) should include:

- A 300-word abstract outlining the puzzle and contribution (theoretical, methodological, empirical etc.), as well as its key arguments and findings, demonstrating its relevance to the conference's overall theme.
- A short author bio, including affiliation and contact details.

We particularly encourage submissions by early career researchers, PhD students, and defence and security practitioners.

Deadline for proposal submission: **June 18, 2021**; notification of acceptance: **July 2, 2021**.

This event is jointly organized by [Michel Wyss \(Military Academy at ETH Zurich\)](#), [Vladimir Rauta \(University of Reading\)](#), and [Assaf Moghadam \(IDC Herzliya\)](#).

Please send proposals (as well as other inquiries) to: michel.wyss@milak.ethz.ch