

Call for Conference Proposals

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Role of Think Tanks and Technical Experts in the Foreign and Security Policy

Friday, 22 April 2016

Sala Colonne, LUISS, Viale Pola, Rome

ORGANISED BY:

Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
LSE IDEAS
LUISS School Of Government
CMMC / Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis

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This international conference is part of celebrations for the 50th anniversary of Rome's Istituto Affari Internazionali. IAI has become Italy's preeminent think tank, analysing and shaping foreign and security policy in Italy since the end of World War II. Its staff and scholars have been called upon by governments to provide expert insight and policy solutions in various fields.

Taking IAI's role as a starting point, we wish to look more carefully at the think tank model and its role:

- as promoter of a specific foreign and defense policy culture (the philosophy behind the creation of IAI) aimed at spreading greater awareness and knowledge about international relations and defence;
- as a participant in international networks which represent a form of "parallel diplomacy" and offer the chance to play a direct role in steering government action;
- in educating and training elites

The IAI case study allows us to illustrate both the culture promoting model (brainchild of Altiero Spinelli and backed from the start by financial and political players in Italy and the U.S.) and the technical expertise model which plays a direct role in advising and shaping government policy. Starting from the analysis of think tanks, we can broaden our overview to include the role of experts in foreign and security policy in an attempt to pinpoint the common factors and specific characteristics connected with the role of experts.

Research Questions :

Here are some of the “research questions” we want to tackle in this conference:

- Think tanks are relatively new players. Are there points in common in the way US, UK, French, Italian think tanks behave/try to influence foreign and defense policy?
- The evolution of the international context, characterized by growing integration and multilateralism, requires technical experts to play a greater role in shaping government policy. Think tanks can offer technical assistance to decision makers (political parties, administrations, government). How have think tanks evolved to keep up with these changes? In particular, as regards foreign and security policy, has greater European integration resulted in a growing role for technical experts? Is it possible to imagine a non-zero-sum governance game which creates new opportunities for power management within and around European institutions, a need for expertise not fulfilled by the national political and administrative bodies? Starting from the think tank example, is it possible to differentiate between a "national" and a "European" model in the development and offer of technical expertise?
- Since 1994, in Italy the "technical expert" component in government has played an ever increasing role through "technical" governments and ministers. Is there a specific role of "technical experts" in foreign and defence policy? What is the role of think tanks and technical experts in determining foreign and defence policy through external action (not from within institutions) ?

Please e-mail your proposals to the organizers before December 31, 2015. Proposals should be short texts about 15 lines long (500 words) accompanied by a CV which includes your most recent publications and should be sent to the following e-mail address: darnis@unice.fr