

Health for Health's Sake, Winning for God's Sake: US medical assistance and smart power strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan

Locations	Room 417, Muirhead Tower
Date(s)	Monday 25th November 2013 (17:30-19:00)
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The ICCS Seminar Series continues with a talk from Dr Simon Rushton, Faculty Research Fellow in Department of Politics at the University of Sheffield. Military medics have long provided medical aid to local populations during armed conflict. In recent years, however, the US (and its allies) have made unprecedented attempts to integrate health assistance into a 'smart power' strategy as a means of 'winning hearts and minds' and furthering other politico-military goals. This paper, co-authored with Colin McInnes, considers both the health and wider strategic benefits of such a strategy, as well as some of the ethical challenges raised. Based on the record of such activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, we argue for extreme caution in future attempts to leverage health for strategic ends on four key grounds: there is considerable doubt over the quality of health services provided in such circumstances; individual military medics are put in an invidious position in attempting to reconcile strategic goals and medical ethics; there are legitimate concerns over the wider effects of politicizing health aid; and there is little proof that the claimed strategic benefits actually materialize in practice. For more information on the Institute for Conflict Cooperation and Security, visit their [website](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/index.aspx) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/index.aspx>).

