Conference Paper
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Between Scylla and Charybdis: Is there a Middle Path for Middle Powers in the
Indo-Pacific Region?

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Paper Title: The Consequences of 'Weaponized Interdependence' for Middle Powers

Synopsis: Control over information and communications technology (ICT) supply chains and digital platforms gives states an outsized ability to protect their national interests and project power abroad. These supply chains and platforms are of transnational scale and networked in nature. But they also tend to exhibit monopolistic, centralizing tendencies, meaning that power is not evenly distributed. States with a strong science and technology base and / or with first-mover advantages in key 'upstream' technologies or platforms can lock in enduring, self-perpetuating benefits, positioning themselves to weaponize supply chains and networks to advance their interests. This dynamic creates a dilemma for middle powers: if they cannot influence supply chains and platforms, they may not only jeopardise their economic prosperity, but become strategically vulnerable to coercion and political interference. This paper will motivate the existence of this dilemma and suggest options for how middle powers can seek to mitigate its effects.