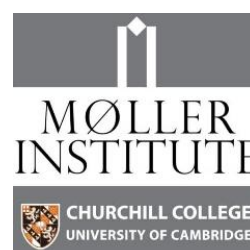

GEOPOLITICAL RISK

LEARNING FROM THE PAST
SHAPING THE FUTURE

A Conference hosted by the Churchill Archives Centre
and the Møller Institute at Churchill College, Cambridge, UK

9th – 11th March 2026



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At Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri on 5 March 1946, in an address entitled **'The Sinews of Peace'**, Winston Churchill warned of an 'iron curtain' descending across the continent and called for a strengthening of the Western alliance against Soviet expansionism. His remarks, in one of his most celebrated speeches, were delivered at a time of heightened international tension, in the aftermath of the Second World War and in the shadow of the atomic bomb.



*"Last time I saw it all coming and
cried aloud to my own fellow-
countrymen and the world, but no
one paid any attention."*

Winston S. Churchill
5 March 1946

Eighty years on, the global outlook seems equally challenging as the leaders of today grapple with the rise of totalitarianism, the resurgence of nationalism, the pace of new technology, and the risks posed by a rapidly changing world.

What can we learn from the past and how? What are the main geopolitical risks facing the world today, where do they come from and how are they best identified, prioritized and managed?

This conference is hosted at Churchill College, University of Cambridge, by the Churchill Archives Centre and the Møller Institute. It will be of interest to aspiring leaders, and it brings together historians with practitioners and analysts. It will provide context and create a better framework for understanding and harnessing the complex links between past, present and future. There will be opportunity to tour the Churchill Archives Centre and view some of our most celebrated documents and artefacts, and the conference includes a formal dinner in the Dining Hall of Churchill College, hosted by the Master of Churchill College, Professor Sharon Peacock.

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Conference Programme

Day 1: Monday 9 March	
Morning	Delegates arrive in Cambridge
12:30	Opening Luncheon
13:30	Welcome Address: the Rt. Hon the Lord Soames of Fletching Nicholas Soames was Minister of State for the Armed Forces from 1994 to 1997 in the government of John Major. His main political interests are defence, international relations, rural affairs and industry. He is a grandson of former prime minister Winston Churchill.
14:00	Panel 1: How do we learn from History? Professor Beatrice Heuser is an historian and political scientist. She held the chair of International Relations at the University of Glasgow until autumn 2024. Professor Chandrika Kaul is a Modern British, Imperial, and Media Historian, who is a Professor at the University of St Andrews. Her publications cover topics including modern communications; British media and politics; the British Monarchy; the British popular press; the BBC; Imperial propaganda; the First and Second World Wars; Modern South Asia, modern India; India under the British Raj; Indian media and politics; M.K. Gandhi; and Decolonisation. Professor David Reynolds is Emeritus Professor of International History at Cambridge University and a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. His books include <i>In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War</i> , which was awarded the Wolfson Prize. Professor Patrick Salmon is a historian of diplomatic history with a focus on Scandinavia. He is a chief historian at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and a visiting professor at Newcastle University. In 2001, he was a fellow at the Norwegian Nobel Institute. He is a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. Professor Brendan Simms is a Professor of the history of international relations in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge. He is the Director of the Centre for Geopolitics at the University of Cambridge.
15:30	Break

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16:00 **Panel 2: Geopolitical Risk and Challenges Today**

Michael Chertoff is an attorney and federal prosecutor who was the second United States Secretary of Homeland Security to serve under President George W. Bush. Afterwards, co-founded the Chertoff Group, a risk-management and security consulting company.

General Lord Dannatt is a retired senior British Army officer and member of the House of Lords. He was Chief of the General Staff (head of the British Army) from 2006 to 2009.

Admiral Michael McConnell is an Intelligence, national-and-cyber security executive and former Director of US National Intelligence. He spent more than 25 years in the US Navy.

Rear Admiral Christopher John Parry was responsible for determining the future strategic context for operations and leading the conceptual development of all three armed forces out to 2030. Nowadays he runs his own strategic forecasting company, advising governments, leading commercial companies and banks about strategic issues, high-level leadership and systemic risk. With blue chip companies, he helps generate competitive advantage through the forecasting of future geopolitical developments, emerging trends and investment opportunities.

Suzanne Raine served in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 1995-2019, including postings in Poland, Iraq (2003) and Pakistan (2006-9). She worked primarily on national security issues and specialised in counter-terrorism, holding a number of senior domestic appointments including Head of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre from 2015-2017. She is Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge.

18:00 **Drinks Reception**

19:00 **Dinner at the Møller Institute**

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Day 2: Tuesday 10 March

Morning **Activities to include:** Tours of the Churchill Archives Centre, small discussion groups, and time to visit Cambridge

12:30 **Luncheon**

13:30 **Panel 3: Anticipating Future Risks and Challenges**

Dame Diane Coyle is a British economist. Since March 2018, she has been the Bennett Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, co-directing the Bennett Institute.

Mr Christopher Ling is a senior tech and cybersecurity leader and government contractor. He is CEO of Ericsson Federal Technologies Group, a new entity dedicated to delivering 5G-driven digital transformation across multiple agencies in the U.S. federal government, created by the Swedish multinational company, Ericsson

Mr. Ofir Zigelman is Director of Product Management, Expansion Strategy at Amazon Web Services (AWS), Amazon's cloud and AI unit, and a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Geopolitics, University of Cambridge, where he researches AI and world order. He previously served as a Senior Intelligence Officer in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office.

15.00 **Break**

15:30 **Panel 4: Analysing, Managing and Quantifying Risk**

Professor Sharon Peacock is a British microbiologist who is Professor of Public Health and Microbiology in the Department of Medicine at the University of Cambridge, and Master of Churchill College, Cambridge. In 2020, she led the development of the COG-UK consortium, which provided genomic sequencing of the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the pandemic response.

Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter is a British statistician and a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge. From 2007 to 2018 he was Winton Professor of the Public Understanding of Risk in the Statistical Laboratory at the University of Cambridge.

Laurie Thraves is the Head of the British Cabinet Office's National Situation Centre. The National Situation Centre was established in 2021 to provide data, open source intelligence and analysis to the government's crisis management COBR committee. It has supported the government's responses to national security and civil contingency crises including Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the Middle East and North Africa and extreme weather and flooding.

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16:30 **Break**

17:00 **Keynote Speaker : tbc**

19:00 Drinks Reception

19:30 **Conference Dinner at Churchill College, Cambridge**
Hosted by the Master, Professor Sharon Peacock

Day 3: Wednesday 11 March

09:30 **Discussion Session** to reflect on themes and experience of conference.

10:30 **Tea/Coffee**

11:00 **Keynote Speaker: The Rt Hon the Lord Roberts of Belgravia**

Andrew Roberts is an English popular historian and journalist. He is the Roger and Martha Mertz Visiting Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and a Lehrman Institute Distinguished Lecturer at the New York Historical Society. He is also a Trustee of the Margaret Thatcher Archive Trust.

12:30 **Luncheon and depart**

Draft programme as of October 16, 2025: may be subject to amendments of both timing and content.