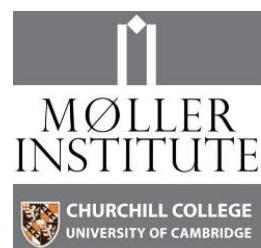

GEOPOLITICAL RISK

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

SUNDAY 8 MARCH

from 14:30 **Check-in open** for residential delegates (Møller Institute)

CONFERENCE 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 was appointed a Life Peer in 2022, and he is a member of the International Relations and Defence Committee of the House of Lords. He is a grandson of the former Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill.

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14:00 **Panel 1: How do we learn from History?**

Professor Beatrice Heuser is a historian and political scientist, whose research interests are centred on war. Her expertise lies mainly in Europe and the “West”, especially Britain, France, Germany, and the USA, but also touches on Russia. She held the chair of International Relations at the University of Glasgow until autumn 2024.

Chandrika Kaul is Professor of Modern History at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Her research interests focus on British imperialism and decolonisation, the monarchy, media, and popular culture. She has published widely in these areas as well as being passionate about public history contributing frequently to national and international media. Her new monograph is on the *BBC and India* (OUP, 2026, forthcoming).

Professor David Reynolds is Emeritus Professor of International History at Cambridge University and a Fellow of the British Academy. His fourteen books include *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (Wolfson Prize) and *The Long Shadow: The Great War and the 20th Century* (Hessell-Tiltman Prize).

Professor Patrick Salmon is a historian of diplomatic history with a focus on Scandinavia. He is Chief Historian at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development 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.

15:30 **Break**

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

Secretary Michael Chertoff is an attorney and federal prosecutor, whose was chief of the criminal division of Justice Department during and after the September 11th attack. He then served as United States Secretary of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush. Afterwards, he 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 (professional 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 29 years in the US Navy and subsequently served as Director of the US National Security Agency.

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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CONFERENCE DAY 2: TUESDAY 10 MARCH

Morning Activities to include:

Tours of the Churchill Archives Centre,
Small discussion groups
Time to visit Cambridge

12:30 Luncheon

13:30 Panel 3: Anticipating Future Risks and Challenges

Dame Diane Coyle is a British economist whose research focuses on productivity, the digital economy and AI policy, and economic measurement. She is the Bennett Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, where she is also the Research Director at the Bennett School of Public Policy.

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.

Professor Brendan Simms is Professor of the History of International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge, where he is also founder and Director of the Centre for Geopolitics.

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

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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.

16:30

Break

17:00

Keynote Speaker: His Excellency Anders Fogh Rasmussen

ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN has been at the centre of European and global politics for more than three decades—as Secretary General of NATO, Prime Minister of Denmark, Danish Minister of Economic Affairs, and a leading Danish parliamentarian. He is the Founding Chairman of Rasmussen Global, where he advises companies and democratic governments around the world.

Anders began his political career in 1978, becoming Denmark's youngest member of parliament at the age of 25. He was named Minister of Economic Affairs in 1990 and became Prime Minister of Denmark in 2001. In 2009, Anders was appointed Secretary General of NATO—the world's preeminent military alliance.

In June 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked Anders to co-chair an international taskforce on security guarantees for Ukraine. The resulting Kyiv Security Compact, co-authored with President Zelenskyy's Chief of Staff Andriy Yermak, became the basis for a web of security guarantees negotiated between Ukraine and NATO allies that was formalized in a new Ukraine Compact at the 2024 NATO Summit in Washington. In May 2024, the Rasmussen-Yermak taskforce released a report which outlined a series of recommendations on Ukraine's path to NATO membership.

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- 19:00** Drinks Reception
- 19:30** **Conference Dinner at Churchill College, Cambridge**
Hosted by the Master, Professor Sharon Peacock

CONFERENCE DAY 3: WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH

- 09:30** **Discussion Session** to reflect on themes and experience of conference.
- 10:30** **Tea/Coffee**
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- 11:00** **Keynote Speaker: The Rt Hon The Lord Roberts of Belgravia**
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ANDREW ROBERTS is an English popular historian and journalist. He is the Bonnie and Tom McCloskey Distinguished Visiting 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 departures**

Programme correct as of 4 November, 2025: may be subject to amendments.