

Think
new things
Make
new connections

DITCHLEY'S WINTER PROJECT, 1 11 DECEMBER 2020

Key takeaways from the discussions held during week one are as follows:

Thursday and Friday 3-4 December - World Order: what can and should it mean today? (in honour of Dr Henry Kissinger)

Determining the end point of US strategic foreign policy. The first priority for US strategic foreign policy needs to be to determine the end goal, clarifying the US strategic view of its relationship with China. This means adopting not only a vision of where the US wants to be with China in four years' time but over an indefinite period of time.

AI is going to upend world order. The foreign policy establishment has not gotten to grips with this. AI will bring change in national security and will be used to shape the information space. There will be automatic and AI driven kinetic weapons: we need to take the AI situation more seriously than we currently are.

Stable tension. We are likely to face a scenario of fights over global platforms. China has announced that it intends to dominate across a range of global platforms by 2030. The Chinese leadership should be taken at its word.

China wants to be the global leader in many technologies, such as AI, software, quantum, semi conductors, high speed trains, driverless cars, financial – technologies that drive economic growth over the next thirty years. The West needs to renew its commitment to these global platforms in order to achieve a stable tension. This means aiming for stability, whilst recognising the reality of multiple tensions.

Wednesday 2 December - The US-UK Special Relationship on Shared Prosperity, Culture and Narratives

Maintaining a Special Relationship built on dynamism. The United States and the United Kingdom have cooperated on multiple endeavours since World War II, and ought to sustain the dynamism of this relationship as they address new rising issues in society. Much of the progress on economic issues between the US and UK is likely to take place outside of a large free trade agreement, building on the extensive networks between countries in

government, finance, technology, education and civic society. These networks need to be sustained.

Promoting a regional renaissance across both countries. The special relationship represents the opportunity to think new things at regional levels. A 'regional renaissance' was highlighted as an opportunity, one that could drive growth, prosperity and regenerate communities from Newcastle to Manchester in the UK, and from Detroit to Pittsburgh in the US. It may be worth revisiting and renewing the idea of twinning cities through not only cultural but also economic partnership.

New frameworks for central and local leadership. One of the main tensions that we have seen on leadership and power in the pandemic is the tension between centralisation and decentralisation. We will need to keep focused on achieving the right balance between centralisation and localisation or devolution of power with lessons to be learned between the US and the UK.

Tuesday 1 December - Whither the US?

Cause for celebration. The transfer of power in the US remains a sound and peaceful process.

Solidarity is critical to heal divisions in the US but also beyond. Domestically, the challenge ahead of the US is huge. Conditions for solidarity need to be rebuilt in order to connect with different parts of the States and to get stuff done. Although philosophical discussions are important, these must be accompanied by tangible, concrete policy decisions which meet the needs of real people in the places they live.

The incoming Biden administration is likely to take a more domestically focused approach to foreign policy. Given President-elect Biden's previous stances on foreign policy issues it was predicted that Biden's administration will take an America-focused approach more similar to President Trump's administration than to more expansionist predecessors.

The US should be taking far greater interest in Africa. Trump's administration was less involved in Africa deploying fewer diplomats and taking generally less interest. The US should not overlook Africa for a number of reasons, including its resources and China's presence in Africa.

The US will likely continue to work to limit China's ambitions, but it is likely to try to build on common interests to improve co-operation, for example in relation to climate change. The Biden administration has put a very high premium on this threat and to advance that agenda meaningfully will require collaboration with China. We may see a more moderated approach to competition with the PRC but not an end to contestation.