

THE CHATHAM HOUSE LONDON CONFERENCE 2017

In The Balance: A Future World (Dis)Order

Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 October 2017
St Pancras Renaissance Hotel

Introduction

World order is fundamentally changing. The Trump Presidency has left a vacuum in global leadership; developments in the Middle East are intensifying the struggle between Gulf states and Iran ; Russia persists in reasserting its power while Europe remains preoccupied with its internal recovery; the North Korean threat has become thornier; and China seeks to balance its growing international ambitions and internal dilemmas. This is all taking place against a backdrop of accelerating technological advances and ever-expanding flows of information, bringing unprecedented change and uncertainty to how we work, compete and relate.

The 2017 Chatham House London Conference will focus on how world order is shifting under these pressures and how societies and leaders can best adapt. This is a vital moment to convene leading thinkers and actors from across the world to compare best practices and chart ways to work together to build a sustainably secure, prosperous and just world.

Monday 23 October

WELCOME
0830 – 0845

BRAIN STORM | WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND?
0850 – 0915

KEYNOTE | A VISION FOR GLOBAL BRITAIN
0915 – 1015

1015 – 1045 Refreshments

PLENARY SESSION ONE | AMERICA FIRST, AMERICA ALONE: THE END OF WORLD ORDER?

1045 – 1145

Under President Trump, the US has withdrawn from its historical role as the underwriter of the post-war liberal consensus. Instead, the current administration has chosen to define the world as an arena where players engage and compete for national advantage. This amounts to a strategic shift in world order – away from a ‘global community’, towards a national, ‘Me First’ brand of international affairs.

Does this Trump worldview mean the death of the post-war liberal consensus? Or should it be defended? Is there any value to a more adversarial, interests-based order?

PLENARY SESSION TWO | PEOPLE VS POLITICS: BUILDING AND BREAKING TRUST

1145 – 1245

Trust is fundamental for human progress – in governments, in institutions and between communities. Public trust enables citizens to engage with and build political communities beyond their tribe or class. But, recently, trust in political systems has eroded. This trend is not limited to the West – as attested by the scandals and political turmoil in Brazil, support for the Duterte presidency in the Philippines and the attempted coup and government response in Turkey. And in many countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, trust in the political process and accompanying institutions is intensely fragile.

Is this loss of trust cyclical, as the predominant systems of government age, or is this a more acute crisis? How do we build (or re-build) trust – and in what? Is this possible in a world of instant and often untrustworthy information?

1245 – 1345 Lunch

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS – GROUP 1

1345 – 1500

Session 1 | Beyond Oil: New economies in the Middle East and North Africa

While most attention to economic opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa has been directed at the oil and gas fuelled Gulf economies, the MENA region offers a much more diverse economic landscape. Beirut has become the tech capital of the Arab world, a hub for start-ups that are making their mark in the international market. Businesses in Iran are preparing the ground for increased trade with the West. Tunisia offers a wealth of natural, industrial and human resources that are beginning to attract foreign investment. And in Iraq, the liberation of areas from ISIS is paving the way for reviving the economy and diversification beyond oil.

Can these new economic opportunities be made sustainable – nationally, regionally or globally? Which are the brightest spots? Which are the most important obstacles to overcome?

Session 2 | Hacking Elections: Politics and Cyber Security

Foreign meddling in the politics of other countries, and elections in particular, is nothing new. However, digital technologies are changing the tools available to disruptors, and there is a view that Russia’s interference in the US and French presidential elections broke new ground. There are growing concerns over the integrity of polls in other countries – not just through hacking, but also influence campaigns designed to undermine public faith in the democratic process, spread disinformation and disseminate ‘fake’ news. Data mining and analysis, and the questionable use of personal data to create psychographics have also raised apposite questions about voter manipulation.

How can democracies pre-empt foreign interference and political hacks? How can governments ensure fair elections and protect their citizens from political manipulation? How can political architectures – and voters – become more resilient?

Session 3 | Fear the Future? What's Next for International Trade

Over the last few decades, the rise of globalization and international trade has boosted growth throughout the world and lifted hundreds of millions into an emerging if fragile middle class. However, foreign competition has devastated many communities across the developed world, leading to a significant backlash against trade and increasing support for protectionism. Policy-makers in the West are rethinking their trade, investment and industrial policies to address concerns about the future of jobs, living standards and communities. This will inevitably affect prospects for current and future trade agreements across the world.

What would the implications of a retreat from trade be on global growth? To what extent are emerging economies still dependent on an export- and investment-led growth model? Or will the entire trade debate be eclipsed by advances in automation and artificial intelligence over the next several years?

1500 – 1530 Refreshments

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS – GROUP 2

1530 – 1645

Session 4 | New Business Models: Disruption and Opportunity

Technological innovations and developing digital industries are driving new, disruptive business models. Governments and companies are hoping that these will deliver much needed productivity gains and innovative approaches to social and environmental sustainability. However, there is a danger that the societal costs of these new models will outweigh their benefits, and that 'jobless growth' will create increased inequality between regions and across income groups. Likewise, regulators may prove unable to keep up with the pace of change

How can policy-makers address the tension between the business benefits and social disruption of new business models? How can industrial strategies ensure that technology is sustainable for people, the planet and profit margins? How can institutions best adapt?

Session 5 | Agendas and Agency: Africa's Influence in an Uncertain International Order

In recent decades, sub-Saharan Africa has been spurred by strong economic growth, successful reform efforts and the consolidation of democratic principles in many parts of the continent. This had led to governments and organizations across the region taking increasing ownership over responses to the challenges the region faces as well as becoming more vocal on global issues. However, important questions remain about the agendas that individual African governments and the region as a whole will pursue. This is all the more acute in the face of current pressures on the regional and international order from populism, protectionism and the weakness of commodity prices.

What is the role of African actors in this shifting international order? How can they seek to influence change on a global level while ensuring they successfully navigate their own economic headwinds at home?

Session 6 | Lessons from Latin America: Conflict and Co-existence

From populism and authoritarianism through to socialism, Latin America has experienced an extreme range of political systems in its recent history. Uniquely, despite the incongruity between these systems, they have coexisted in close proximity. Is the development and co-existence of competing systems in a relatively small area a result of something inherent to the region, or does it presage where world order is headed globally?

What lessons can the rest of the world learn from Latin American politics? And how will politics in Latin America change in response to developments in the rest of the world?

KEYNOTE CONVERSATION | GLOBAL CITIES IN NATION-STATES: THE NEW URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE

1705 – 1805

According to the UN, 56% of the world's population lives in cities. By 2030 this is expected to increase to 60%, with 27% of people concentrated in cities with at least 1 million inhabitants. This has created useful economies of scale, with many cities leading on issues such as health, transport and response to climate change. However, cities are often criticized for acting like separate countries within their own nations, full of 'metropolitan elites' who are out of touch with rural living. Similarly, megacities are threatening to overwhelm development in smaller urban areas.

Are cities deepening national divisions? What are the consequences if people in London feel more connected to citizens of Tokyo, São Paulo or New York than those in Yorkshire? What does this mean for political leadership?

CONFERENCE DINNER & KEYNOTE

The National Gallery, London
1900 – 2230

Tuesday 24 October

OPEN BREAKFAST DISCUSSIONS

0830 – 0945

Each table will discuss a different topic, identified by a discussion leader. Participants will be given the option of either leading a discussion on a topic of their choosing or joining an already identified discussion.

PLENARY SESSION THREE | THE LIBERAL ECONOMIC ORDER: WILL THE CENTRE HOLD?

1005 – 1115

Deepening economic integration has been synonymous with the spread of a liberal world order, including increasing political and regulatory support for the rule of law and increased transparency. But will this always be the case? Liberal societies are straining under populist criticisms that this model rewards only a small group of political and economic elites, and are becoming less outward-looking as a result, while liberal voices in more illiberal societies are finding themselves increasingly under strain. In this more contested space China has begun to use its increasing global economic clout to promote a more statist approach to economic development through the Belt and Road Initiative, with the support of new development organizations like the AIIB and NDB. While the Chinese have remained champions of globalization, and assiduously conformed to international standards so far, will their increasing economic power soon require the global economic system to conform to standards the West is currently uncomfortable with?

What will the strengthening of politically illiberal economies mean for the already precarious position of liberal norms and standards? Will this ultimately undermine the era of greater international economic integration, or herald a less liberal form? What possible reforms might liberal democratic societies attempt to regain their place as the model for the world to follow?

1115 – 1145 Refreshments

KEYNOTE CONVERSATION | THE FUTURE OF WORLD ORDER: FOUR VIEWS

1145 – 1300

The future of world order is uncertain. What is shifting, and how? With the US looking inward, will another country take its place in the international order or will governance turn towards fluctuating and flexible bilateral agreements? Will the concept of a stable 'norm' of dominant countries become obsolete? Are we headed towards a world with more, less or a new order?

Four senior leaders, representing different global powers and spaces, will present their ideas on the future of world order from their perspectives.

1300 – 1400 Lunch

CLOSING KEYNOTE

1400 – 1500

BRAIN STORM | WORLD ORDER: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

1500 – 1530

1530 End of conference, refreshments

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