

# China policy after Corona: is a shift needed?

Lt Gen H R McMaster, Rt Hon Lord Hague of  
Richmond, Hon Alexander Downer AC, Julianne  
Smith and Lord Wood of Anfield

Chaired by Dean Godson



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## Transcript



### Introduction

Continuing our series on policy responses to the Coronavirus outbreak, Policy Exchange hosted its second online webinar, '[China policy after Corona: is a shift needed?](#)' We were joined by Lt Gen H R McMaster, former US National Security Advisor to President Trump; Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond, former Foreign Secretary; Hon Alexander Downer AC, former Foreign Minister of Australia and Policy Exchange Chairman of Trustees; Julianne Smith, Director Asia Programme, German Marshall Fund of the US and former Deputy National Security Advisor to US Vice President Joe Biden' and Lord Wood of Anfield, former Foreign Policy Adviser to Gordon Brown.

The event was chaired by Dean Godson, Director of Policy Exchange. Watch it on YouTube [here](#).

### Event transcript

**DEAN GODSON:** Good afternoon, welcome to the latest in the series of Policy Exchange webinars on the world after coronavirus. I'm just going to let the virtual audience assemble for about thirty seconds, it takes time for everybody to come together but I'd just like to welcome you all here today – I was about to say this afternoon, but this is the most international panel we've ever been able to assemble on multiple time zones and of course, our distinguished UK participants, Lord Hague of Richmond, former Foreign Secretary and Lord Wood of Anfield, former Foreign Policy Advisor to Gordon Brown and Chief Policy Advisor to Ed Miliband, successively Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour party. Also, a great privilege to welcome from Adelaide our Chairman of Trustees, Alexander Downer, previously Australia's longest serving Foreign Minister and, of course, also a distinguished Australian High Commissioner to London. Also, from the other end of the world, moving in American terms further westwards, we welcome Julianne Smith who works for the German Marshall Fund of the United States but was also previously Deputy National Security Advisor and Acting National Security Advisor to then Vice-President Joe Biden and also a great pleasure to welcome from the west coast Lt General H. R. McMaster, previously known of course to all of you as National Security Advisor to President Trump, welcome back and thank you to all of you for your time.

All our panellists are going to speak for five minutes and then we're going to open it up to this virtual audience. We had a very good discussion last week on the economy and we had some leading key participants in the 2008 crash, Mervyn King and others. It worked extremely well, I know it will work brilliantly today and if you could just flag up on your icon in the middle of the bottom of the screen if you want to ask a question and I'm sure a huge number of people will want to ask questions so not everybody will be able to ask a question but we will try obviously to accommodate as many of you as we can so, as I say, put your virtual hand up on that icon in the middle of the bottom of the screen.



So, thank you again for coming here today so we can hear what you have to say on the great theme of where now for China policy after coronavirus.

**LORD HAGUE:** Well, thank you very much and hello to everybody listening to us this afternoon. Of course, there are some immediate implications about China policy of the Covid-19 crisis, it's very important for the consumption of and trading in wildlife in China and the rest of the world unless we want to see this repeated many times in the future, it is very important for data to be shared fully when a worldwide pandemic arises. These are obvious and immediate implications although they have to be acted on further but in my view this crisis reinforces the case for two major pillars to be established for Western policy towards China. The first arises from the fact that China isn't going to play by our rules and that means that we cannot possibly be strategically dependent on China in many respects, including in technology, but the other important pillar arises from the fact that we can't solve the global problems without China and global problems are some of our most pressing and obviously most existential and indeed the Covid-19 crisis is an example of such a dramatic world crisis.

So, we are kind of dependent on China but we can't be without a framework of cooperation with China, we have to make sure to be strategically independent, we'll have to have a way of working with China and so these to me are the two essential pillars of Western policy towards China and it seems to me that the United States at the moment is pursuing the first, making sure we are not strategically dependent, without the second, to have the framework of global cooperation and that many European countries are pursuing large parts of the second without the first. The result is that the West overall is uncoordinated, incoherent and ineffective on this subject.

Another minute or two on each of these two pillars. Why is it so important not to be strategically dependent on China? Well, that's because clearly it has different politics, a different system, a different view of personal freedom and privacy, of political democracy, of business competition. For a while I think we assumed earlier in this century that China would turn into a version of us, would become a great, a vast form of liberal democracy. Well, that hasn't happened, it isn't going to happen in the foreseeable future so we can't be dependent on technology from China into the future and the UK has been caught in a very difficult position on Huawei as a result of that but we can't have supply chains that are dependent forever on China, that is exemplified by this current crisis, and we have we have to a lot of future technology and resources. All the argument is about Huawei but I was thinking about battery technology in the future. In the UK, we are preparing for an age of electric transportation but which country is getting ahead with battery technology? China. Which country has state-owned enterprises which have been buying up the production of the necessary rare earth like cobalt and lithium in the world? China. So, their economic and environmental policy isn't in line with the security policy.

A final word about why we need the other pillar of global cooperation. We can't solve any of the world's problems without China, the biggest of those problems is climate change and China produces 27% of the world's carbon emissions. There is no hope of dealing with this issue without China. Of course this requires the United States to take responsibility and leadership in this area as well in order for the two greatest emitters to come together on this but really Western policy should be based not only on being strategically independent of China but on trying to advance global agreements on climate change, working together on other issues, on antibiotic resistance that we have been obviously reminded of by the current crisis and then trying to champion together better arms control agreements, better work together on helping developing countries and even in the longer term future, agreeing to make greater technological advances available to the whole world so that we do not have to be in an arms race about them. Now, that might be an unrealistic vision at the moment but it's something we can at least begin and at least attempt.



So, I hope when G7 Foreign Ministers or any other group of Foreign Ministers from Western countries meet together, they ought to focus their attention on these two pillars of policy towards China. Thank you.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you, William, thank you for that presentation, very gratefully received. Julianne Smith from Washington.

**JULIANNE SMITH:** Thank you very much. Just to follow up from those remarks, I would certainly agree with everything that was just said. I do think that before the coronavirus hit the global stage, the transatlantic relationship on China had been essentially distilled down to a single issue. We were focused very heavily on this debate about 5G and I want to just say two things about that.

One, I think that it is far too limiting in terms of the scope, there is so much more that we could be talking about as transatlantic partners on this issue but I also was worried, before corona hit, that the transatlantic partners, our friends in Europe in particular, felt like the 5G issue was something that had only been identified as an issue that President Trump was concerned with and my message to our friends in Europe and across England today is that there is enormous bipartisan consensus on this question of 5G. Democrats and Republicans across Washington have collectively moved to the right, you'd be surprised how much bipartisanship there is on this issue across this town.

Of course, we can argue about our views on things like decoupling and a whole range of issues as they relate to China, but on this particular question I think Democrats and Republicans believe that there are a lot of broad geopolitical consequences of moving forward, with working with Huawei and not relying on a different set of suppliers. I think there are broader questions there about the value set that this debate represents and I think collectively the Republicans and Democrats would like to find some sort of Western solution to this so we can not only work on this issue but then widen the aperture to this whole array of issues that we are just listing.

We have so much to talk about with our European friends about the investments that China is making in critical infrastructure across the European continent, about the investments that they are making in ports, about the way in which they are creating a narrative around the assistance that they are providing across Europe now, about the ways in which they use disinformation, their predatory trade practices, the values debates that they're putting forward, the investments that they are making in emerging technology and how they want to be the country that sets global norms and standards. I think we've got to do a 180 on that and ensure that we not only bring Europe and the United States together to address everything that I just listed but that we also bring in other democratic nations around the world including our friends in Japan or India or Australia so that we can work collectively to preserve the values that we hold dear and put ourselves in the drivers seat to set the norms that will guide us in the future, particularly on some of these questions tied to emerging technology.

So, a couple of messages here today. One, we obviously have a lot of short-term concerns about how the coronavirus will affect all of us around the world and how we need to work with China in the future on a vaccine and distribute that vaccine globally but beyond that, we need to pull in Western nations together to address the more unsavoury side of our collective relationship with China and again, get at the heart of some of these challenges that are associated with China's rise. So, with that I'll leave it and turn the floor over to some of the other speakers, thank you.

**DEAN GODSON:** Brilliant, thank you for that Julianne, thank you for that really arresting presentation. Alexander Downer, from the home team as it were, here at Policy Exchange, welcome.

**ALEXANDER DOWNER:** Well, thanks very much Dean, I hope you can all hear me quite clearly. I've said for a long time that the most important geopolitical issue in the world today is managing the rise of China and I really agree with those comments about the importance of Western countries which



does include Japan, South Korea and Australia, not just the transatlantic countries, working together and developing a much more coherent set of policies to manage the whole issue of the relationship with China.

This coronavirus crisis is a huge blow to China's prestige, not necessarily amongst policy makers or, you might say, the elites but amongst the general public and I can tell that's big in Australia and talking to people in the UK, how ordinary people feel very strongly about this, the huge damage that's been done to us all as a result of something that began in China. So, at one level China has lost a great deal of prestige, of international prestige and the risks coming from this is that the tensions which already existed, which we've heard about in relation to 5G, Huawei and so on, cybersecurity and the like, the South China Sea – those tensions are likely to rise and not fall as a result of the coronavirus crisis because the publics of those countries are understandably going to blame China once we get into the blame game a little bit down the track, for what has happened to all of us.

So, we need to think about what we're going to do about this. I think there are two things that we need to do: one is we really need to get to the heart of how this happened and this is important to China and to China's standing in the world and to our capacity to collaborate effectively with China. There has to be a proper international investigation into how all of this happened: there is talk about wet markets, there is talk about the Wuhan Institute of Virology and whether this has come out of that institute but whatever the cause of this outbreak of the coronavirus crisis, whatever the cause, we need to investigate and understand what it is so that it doesn't happen again. I think this has to be done internationally, I don't think we can just leave it to the WHO, it has some problems of credibility as a result of public statements that it's been making in recent times and the way it addressed the issue right from the beginning in December/January. I think this is something that needs to be managed at a broader global level, including with the WHO but possibly even with the United Nations Security Council, there has to be a proper body set up that, with the Chinese, will investigate exactly how this happened, what the causes are, so that this doesn't recur because remember, when SARS erupted at the end of 2002, early 2003, that came from China as well, another coronavirus. So, we don't want to see this happening anymore, we need to understand how it has happened, there needs to be a proper coordinated international approach to getting to the heart of this, working not against the Chinese but working with the Chinese. It's not a case for cover up any longer here.

I think the second thing is that this reminds us all that we have to address our supply chain issues. William Hague made the very important point about battery technology and the dependence we have on China for lithium and cobalt, for the sort of basic ingredients for battery technology but also for pharmaceuticals that we need. To what extent do we have the capacity to manage these things ourselves and to what extent are we dependent, not just on other countries but dependent on China? So, we have to reconsider the whole of our supply chains in reaction to this, to make sure that in the future they are a great deal more secure than they have been.

I suppose the last point I'd make is this isn't the occasion for an outbreak, if we can contain it, of Sinophobia because as I said right at the beginning, this relationship with China is the most important geopolitical issue of our time. We have to work with China but we have to make sure we have a better and more coordinated Western approach to how we do manage that relationship with China and our approach lacks leadership, it lacks coherence and we have to start putting that approach together and I think really starting off with an investigation into how this all happened. Demanding how this all took place is a crucially important component of how we start not only to address the issue of coronavirus but how we start to piece together a better and more coordinated relationship with China for the long term.

**DEAN GODSON:** Great stuff, Alexander. Lord Wood of Anfield, welcome back.



**LORD WOOD:** Thank you very much, Dean. Let me start, I want to mention four things that are going to change about the world it seems to me and have relevance to our relationship with China as a result of the Covid crisis and then one thing that is going to stay the same.

The first thing is I think this is an Easternising moment. I think the recovery from the crisis will be led from China and I think their role in the economic recovery in particular is going to make them more, not less, crucial for us all. Secondly, I think this is a Sinophobic moment, I think there is a risk at least of anti-Chinese sentiment becoming a mainstream feature of UK and US and probably wider Western societies. Thirdly, it's a moment that is heightening dependence on technology. When you think of the character of the crisis and the lives we are going to have to lead in the next two to three years, maybe longer, it is going to make individual commercial and government reliance on technology much more acute, and therefore the security concerns around those issues, more sensitive. Fourthly, it's a hyper-interdependence moment. The crisis is, if you like, the great parable of interdependence but the recovery from it is going to require way more cooperation between major powers, not less.

Those are the four things that I think are changing but here's the constant though. What you might think of as China's soft expansionist strategy is going to remain strong and if you believe, as I do, UK intelligence sources that have been briefing publicly the last few days, it is going to get stronger still. This is attempts to control foreign opinion, the control of Chinese citizens abroad, attempts to use technology for Chinese national interest purposes, economic assistance with greater conditionality. All of that comes on top of, as William Hague said very eloquently, behaviour over the Covid crisis, not just from the virus origins of course but on the transparency about victims and death numbers, which I think we all regret deeply. Then you also have issues like the Uighurs and domestic oppression to which Western governments – and to be fair, President Trump has spoken up about this but our own government I think has been very quiet here in the UK.

I think all this has to change so the two lessons of all this have been for me, and which very much parallel what William Hague was saying, is firstly we have to have a much more hard-headed approach on issues where security interests dictate that we stand up more robustly. We have to be much more vocal on issues like domestic oppression, on security interests like Huawei where I agree with William very much. We have to stop ourselves being intimidated by anxiety about possible economic revenge from Beijing, in standing up on these issues and I'd also very much endorse the recommendations of the Hoover report of last year, on the steps we need to take to protect the integrity of domestic institutions, civil society institutions, educational institutions, that have partnerships with China and take on Chinese liaisons.

All that is good but, and this is the second point, we must be really careful not to let that self-interested robust approach bleed into an excessive, indiscriminate hawkishness. To quote another letter from the Washington Post, the AT experts last year writing in the Washington post wrote that 'China is not an economic enemy or an existential national security threat that must be confronted in every sphere.' China-West relations are not zero sum in the way some people think and we shouldn't force other countries to confront the zero sum relationship between the West or the US and China, it's not a zero sum choice that they would recognise, it's not clear that Chinese economic offers are going to be resisted if we force that offer.

So, it is three quick lessons from the economic sphere we need to learn, I think. One is we have to have a very hard-headed approach to Chinese financing of Western debt, the security dimensions of corporate investment in the west and trade, terms of trade. I'd like to see the west use the WTO to complain about Chinese practices much more rather than bypassing the WTO. Secondly, there is an emerging catastrophe in the developing world after Covid, particularly with debt and we will need China's help and we will need to work with China in order to cope with that escalating nightmare of the indebtedness of the developing world, there is no alternative but to work constructively with



China given their role, particularly in Africa, on that one. Lastly, again a point from the Washington Post letter – and I'll finish on this – we have to try and seek to engage China in multilateral institutions much more. One of the things that scares me most coming out of this crisis is how not fit for purpose our international institutions are at the moment we need them most but we need to work, not just with China in existing international institutions, but encourage the new kinds of international institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the new Development Bank. We need to be constructive about China's engagement in those kind of multilateral fora as well.

So, for me the key is hard-headedness on the one hand but combined with trying to bend the character of interdependence with China and the institutions that will enable that to happen in ways that produce stability and prosperity for both of us.

**DEAN GODSON:** Brilliant, thank you. General McMaster, welcome back here, thank you for your friendship through the years to us. We remember with pleasure your appearance on our platform in Washington with Sir Mark Sedwell, the only time the two holders of the National Security Advisor jobs in both the US and the UK have appeared together ever on a public platform. Welcome back and we look forward to hearing what you have to say.

**GENERAL McMASTER:** Well, Dean, what a pleasure it is to be with you and thank you for the tremendous work the Policy Exchange does, work that I've drawn on throughout my whole career, especially in that last job. It is really great analysis that you provide us with and thank you for the privilege of being with such a distinguished panel to talk about a very, very important topic today.

I just first of all would like to say I'm so glad to see the Prime Minister is recovering, it's a great relief to all of us in the United States, those of us who know him personally and all of us who have a special place in our heart for the US/UK relationship so I know that the UK is going through a difficult time, as we are, and our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.

I just want to say that I thought Edward Lucas got it exactly right yesterday in the Times, it is time for us to end our self-delusion about the Chinese Communist Party and I really appreciate Julianne's comments on this. There is tremendous bipartisan consensus in the United States, I believe mainly because we recognised that the assumptions that underpinned our approach towards China, at least since the end of the Cold War, were flawed, were wrong and that is in particular the assumption that China, after having been welcomed into the international community, welcomed into the international economic water especially with membership in the WTO, would play by the rules and as China prospered it would liberalise its economy and then ultimately liberalise its foreign governance. Well, China actually isn't playing by the rules and has not liberalised its economy, in fact it has doubled down on unfair trading economic practices associated with its statist economy and far from liberalising its form of governance, the Chinese Communist Party is perfecting this Orwellian surveillance police state internally and becoming more and more aggressive externally.

Why, why did we get this wrong? We got it wrong because I think we failed to give adequate attention to the ideology and the emotions and the aspirations that drive and constrain the Chinese Communist Party's behaviour and I think when we talk about the problems that we have with China, we should distinguish between China writ large in the Chinese people and the policies of the Chinese Communist Party and so we ought to consider what is driving that party. I think what we all might agree is that this is an authoritarian dictatorship that is trying to extend and tighten its exclusive grip on power and almost everything it does is driven by its desire to prevent any sort of opposition to the party and to prevent the Chinese people in having a say in how they're governed.

So, we have to see the party in this light because it drives not only their internal policies such as internment of at least a million people in concentration camps in Xinjiang, it drives their internal



policies in connection with the social credit score and the surveillance state, the prevention of any kind of transparency, the building of the Great Firewall, the expulsion of Western reporters as well as their sophisticated propaganda campaign aimed at their own people as well but their party's desire to maintain their exclusive grip on how it drives their external policies as well. That manifests itself in the narrative of the China Dream and national rejuvenation and it leads to aggressive policies in terms of economic aggression against our free and open societies and free market economies and it leads to military aggression in connection with China's land grab, so to speak, in the South China Sea and trying to dominate, have a dominant military position across the Indo-Pacific region.

It has everything to do with also what China has done in connection with trying to take over really, take over global infrastructure associated with global logistics and supply chains, communications capabilities. Why does China want to dominate in 5G hardware? So that they can control the data that will be essential to the future data economy and I think what we have to do is we have to recognise what is driving the party and then not try to continue with this self-delusion that the party is going to somehow liberalise and play by the rules. I think that the way that they mishandled this Covid crisis just highlights for us the nature of the Chinese Communist Party in order to elicit from us understanding of what motivates them and the nature of their strategy.

I think we ought to think of their strategy as 3 C's. The first is co-option, this is co-opting us based on the war of access to their market, co-opting weak nations with the debt trap as you see under the One Road initiative and then what's co-opted, to use our dream of what a co-operative relationship could be with China to coerce us and that is such that we adhere to the policies of the Chinese Communist Party and we help them cover up their most egregious actions. This occurs in connection with the UK, the EU and other countries but it also occurs with our companies. Just ask the National Basketball Association or Marriott for that matter. The expectation of the Chinese Communist Party is that we will adhere to their policies and aid and abet them.

The third C in this strategy and approach I think is concealment. The party portrays its actions as just little ... *[break in recording]* ... practices, well I think it's time for us to end this and so what I think we have to recognise is these three strategies, sub-strategies that the party is pursuing – Made in China 2025, again a dominant position in the emerging global economy and to gain a differential advantage over the United States, the UK, NATO, Japan, militarily, is going to continue and we're going to see I think an intensified campaign of industrial espionage as we've already seen. I mean what APT10 did in terms of cyber-espionage is unprecedented and is continuing now, that degree of industrial espionage.

Then, also, the policies under the One Belt, One Road initiative. As countries emerge from this economic and health crisis, they are going to be more vulnerable to the Chinese Communist Party's debt trap and we have to be wary about that as well. Then what we're bound to see, we're bound to see continuation of their announced strategy of military/civilian fusion and so how can it be that any free and open society would let a Chinese company – which must act as an arm of the Chinese Communist Party – into your communications infrastructure? I just don't see how it makes sense. Do we expect the Chinese Communist Party to treat us better than they treat their own citizens? I think that's an unrealistic expectation.

I think what I would add to Lord Haig's comments, insightful and important comments, is that I would add a third pillar and that would be competition. We have to recognise that we're in a competition and that ought to drive, as Julianne mentioned, a much broader I think international co-operation. I would just differ with one word – I don't think that is going to happen in international organisations unless we compete, right. The WTO is not going to solve our problems with China, just like the WHO didn't solve this problem of Covid-19. There is no prize for membership in these organisations because China is actually infiltrating and subverting those organisations to try to bend them towards



the policies of the Chinese Communist Party and so I think competition is what I would add to the discussion.

I think for all of us, we just have to recognise that this is going to take tremendous co-operation between us because I think what we are in now is a decoupling competition. I think there's a broad recognition that the Chinese Communist Party is not going to change its behaviour and therefore we have to minimise our exposure, as Lord Haig says our dependencies on the Chinese Communist Party, and you can already see the Chinese Communist Party with this faux assistance internationally towards 98 countries, its actions in Italy in particular, in trying to draw a parallel between the EU's unresponsiveness and China's assistance to Italy, even when the EU's assistance dwarfed the Chinese assistance to Italy, that we are in this decoupling competition right now. Unless we get some backbone ourselves and recognise that we have to compete and recognise that this is a competition between free and open societies and a closed authoritarian system imposed on the Chinese people by the Chinese Communist Party, or remain at a disadvantage.

I think its great to talk about co-operation with China, but we have to recognise that that is the Chinese Communist Party's number one talking point and it is associated with this effort to conceal their actions as normal behaviour. I think these letters that have been signed by US scholars and policy people are unfortunate because they provide additional cover for the party when we ought to be pulling back the curtain on its activities and no longer allowing it to conceal its egregious behaviour, egregious behaviour aimed at its own people and aimed at our citizens as well.

A real privilege to be with you, Dean, and thank you for the opportunity.

## Question and answer

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you, General, thank you for that outstanding presentation. So, we are going to throw it open to the floor, we have got lots of questions as I anticipated beforehand. The only thing that I'd ask, I'm going to be calling upon people, if you can state your name and organisation just for those of us who may not know whom you're representing and also for the sake of our subsequent broadcast needs here at Policy Exchange. If I can ask for the first question please from Tom Tugendhat, name and organisation please.

**TOM TUGENDHAT:** Dean, hello, it's Tom here. My camera doesn't seem to be working but I shall carry on anyway. Dean, we've heard a lot of comments there which I thought were absolutely brilliant and very insightful and I am particularly grateful that General McMaster was on at the end there but one of the things that Alexander Downer raised that I thought was particularly important was talking about wider coalitions of the willing, as it were, around the world. One country that I haven't yet heard mentioned is India because of course as we're putting ourselves under greater pressure by seeking to decouple from China, looking at how we can cooperate with India in order to make sure we have at least the other major international power cooperating in reinforcing the international order, would seem like a sensible thing to do. Would there be any appetite to, for example, look at a P6 instead of a P5 on the UN, recognising India's more important role and would there be any way in which we could look at seeing whether India's own relationship with China – difficult as it is – could be used to enhance the position of international democracy's rather than international autocracy's?

**DEAN GODSON:** Julianne Smith, you head the Asia Programme at German Marshall Fund, obviously it's been on your beat as a former advisor to then Vice-President Biden, your thoughts?

**JULIANNE SMITH:** I did mention earlier in my remarks, I do – as I said earlier – believe that not only do the transatlantic partners have to get their act together on a broader China agenda which just we



failed to produce over the last year but I do think we have to include other nations like India in that conversation. Kissinger long ago used to talk about the Strategic Triangle in referencing the US, China and Russia and today, as we find ourselves in this era of great power competition, as was outlined in President Trump's National Security Strategy, I think now we have to think more in terms of almost a strategic hexagon so that we've got, still we're competing with Russia and China and the US is there but we've got to anchor Western views and Western approaches on everything from trade to connectivity, with other nations such as Japan, Europe – broadly defined, and India and I think if we use that mindset going forward we can come together to unite in some of these international institutions where China is trying to reshape global norms and reshape the institutions themselves. I think that way we can all strengthen our collective hand, again on a wide range of issues that span everything from soft power to hard power.

**DEAN GODSON:** Julianne, thank you. William, as Foreign Secretary, you were part of the initiation of a new strategic relationship with India back in 2010, your thoughts obviously with much experience there?

**LORD HAGUE:** Yes, well Tom is making a very important point here and India is a very important strategic counterweight to China. It's a complex issue of course because close strategic relationship with India creates complications with Pakistan which in turn creates issues about Afghanistan and that is a whole subject which is probably too much for us to go into now, but an additional point to that is that India isn't going to be a visible tool of Western foreign policy. There is a lot of commonality of interest, so the way Julianne put it I think is very important, and on the question about could there be a P6 on the Security Council instead of a P5 with India on the Security Council? It is British policy, as Tom knows, to have India as a permanent member of the Security Council but I can't tell you what it's like to – well, I'll try to tell you what it's like to discuss with Chinese leaders having India on the Security Council of the United Nations, it is not a productive discussion. Having India or Japan on the Security Council, you'll soon discover this is a very long-term project in China's view and of course it would require the agreement of all the permanent members for the Security Council to be expanded so I think that kind of reform of the Security Council is not available in the foreseeable future. Yes, India is a very important strategic counterweight to China.

**DEAN GODSON:** Alexander.

**ALEXANDER DOWNER:** Well, I agree but I think the fundamental priority here is to try to get the Western position much better coordinated than it currently is in relation to China policy and India has a pretty independent foreign policy. It is one of the founder members of the Non-Aligned Movement and it prides itself in being non-aligned so in that sense it doesn't quite fit in with the West in ways that some of us in the West might like India to do but India itself won't want to lock in that firmly with the West.

So, first of all, the West needs a much more coordinated policy in dealing with China in a much more coordinated approach. Secondly, reaching out to India makes enormous sense. India's view is that it wants to balance Chinese power in Asia, particularly through the Indian Ocean and to some extent in South-East Asia and for those of us that live in the East Asian hemisphere, we look very much to India to help balance Chinese power so that particularly the East Asian hemisphere doesn't become subjected to a kind of Chinese Monroe Doctrine for East Asia which is the risk, has been a risk for quite some years. So, in that sense, drawing India in has been important.

Shinzo Abe, for example, has been pushing this idea of a coordinated policy position between Japan, Australia and the United States and India, a kind of four power agreement, which hasn't quite taken off because the Indians have been a bit reluctant to embrace it but I think we should continue to pursue that particular initiative which doesn't affect any of the rest of you I suppose, other than the



Americans. But drawing India in makes a lot of sense, India will always be well-disposed to the idea of playing a part in balancing Chinese power but they won't want to get themselves into a position of being, if you like, in opposition to China, they'll be very cautious in how they handle that.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. Stewart.

**LORD WOOD:** Engaging India is important but it's always got to be tentative precisely for the reasons Alexander and William said, because there is a non-alignment principle in their foreign policy and because of the fact ... well, I think the reform of the Security Council is more totemic really rather than something that is going to fundamentally change the balance of power that would advantage India over China, and it's not going to happen anyway as William said. So, I think yes to Tom's question, it's an important point but it has got to be strengthening India in relation to India (sic) in a soft economic way rather than in any fundamental foreign policy shift which is overt and which is not going to happen.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. General.

**GENERAL McMASTER:** Thanks to Tom for that question. I think what we can do certainly is all work together with India to help India succeed, the world needs India to succeed for a whole range of issues including balancing against China but also on key transnational issues like climate change and environmental issues. Of course, India faces challenges associated with the scale of any of its problems including carbon emissions and climate change and the environment, food and water security and, of course, there are problems associated with sectarian tensions now with increasingly nationalist policies of the BJP. So, I think it's going to take diplomatic engagement, continued economic cooperation but I think this ought to be a top priority for the United States and like-minded countries, is to work with India on a range of India's challenges because the world needs India to succeed as a free and open democratic country and as a free market economic system.

Economically, there are lot of policies India has in place. They are protectionist, I think if we talk about free trade and free, fair, reciprocal trade we ought to bring India into closer integration, better integration, into the international economy. Just on issues like climate, I think we have to call China out on this as well. China and India could destroy the planet if they don't reduce climate emissions. Before the Covid crisis, Xi Jinping couldn't give a speech without saying climate and environment 19 times as they are building hundreds of coal-fired plants for example. So, I think India has to succeed, we ought to really focus on India because we have to counter China but also first, to counter China we have to get better ourselves and I think this is in areas of technological innovation, areas of education, infrastructure development.

One thing I'll just say quickly on international cooperation, we do tend to engage in a bit of self-flagellation, right, and it seems like we are much happier to criticise ourselves than we are the Chinese Communist Party. I think there is a heck of a lot more international cooperation on China going on than we give ourselves credit for. So, on industrial espionage, December of 2018, I think 15 countries simultaneously took action against APT10 with indictments and sanctions. We have all sorts of infrastructure investment initiatives going on with like-minded countries including the UK, the EU, Japan, Australia, to provide standards for infrastructure investment internationally and to have an alternative to the new vanguard of the Chinese Communist Party with party officials and national bank officials with duffle bags of cash arriving to solicit business in corrupt countries. From a military perspective as well, the international cooperation in the South China Sea has been extraordinary with the UK, Australia, Japan, France so I think we need to build on international cooperation that's already ongoing to confront the policies of the Chinese Communist Party and at the same time, we have to look at ourselves, to strengthen ourselves and India I think ought to be a focal point, helping India succeed.



**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you for that. Harry has asked to asked a question, if you can give you full name and organisation.

**HARRY COLE:** Harry Cole, the Mail on Sunday, thank you Dean. Just quickly can I say the format is tremendous and very useful for us confirmed to us working from home. I want to go back to what Lord Hague said at the top about using the G7 but at the same time accepting that China is not playing by the international community's rules. What happens in the next 12-24 months if China continues not to engage with the root causes of this terrible virus as it currently is? For example, with Mr Downer's suggestion that we use the UN Security Council, China would immediately veto the probe. What stick does the international community currently have in the face of such a vast power? And it used to be the G8, at what point does it have to become the G6?

**DEAN GODSON:** William.

**LORD HAGUE:** I'm not sure that I have a point about ... China isn't in the G7 so the G6 doesn't arise I don't think but what is the stick? We don't have that much of a stick. Alex Downer made a very telling point about how good it would be to have an international investigation and of course in a world with real global governance, that is what we would have, most definitely. However, can any of us see China agreeing to and permitting an international investigation into what's happened here? I think that's very unlikely and of course there have been coordinated attempts by China and social media and other routes to spread ideas that it was somebody else's fault, including the fault of the United States. I think those have been rather clumsy and easily exposed attempts but that is not the behaviour of a country that is going to allow an international investigation.

Nevertheless, you can also see that the Chinese have a very good idea about what's caused it. Why are they making new laws that you should not be able to trade or consume illegal wildlife in their markets anymore? Because they know full well what the most likely explanation for this has been and so I think there isn't a stick to force those things, it reinforces the point that there has to be some framework of global cooperation and we should be saying to China, as well as having the hard-headed approach that I think everybody, all of us have advocated, we should be saying we need to cooperate more closely on these things in the future. Let us have an international pandemic unit that is spearheaded by the United States and China, let Western countries and China work on antibiotic resistance together. This is the agenda that we have to present in the future. China can say no to that but it would be under immense global pressure to accede to those things. So, I think we have to be realistic about, sadly, about an internationally agreed investigation and find new ways forward for the future.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. Anyone else want to come in, the question was directed for Lord Hague but do any of the other panellists want to add anything in response to Harry Cole at the Mail on Sunday?

**ALEXANDER DOWNER:** Can I just take up William's point about the investigation? I think this is an example of putting China under pressure and I think in these circumstances I'm here reflecting the views of the broader Western public who are all suffering and suffering quite egregiously from this coronavirus crisis. We know it started in China; we don't exactly know how it started. We need to make demands of China and of course William's right, they might be pretty resistant to this, at least at first blush they might be resistant to it but I think we have to persevere and the reason I think we need to persevere is partly because of the soft power that comes out of this.

For China, this is potentially quite a blow to its standing in the world. This is a pretty rough thing to say but I think we need to ram that home to them, I think we need to make it perfectly clear that if any country wants to trade with the international community and engage with the international



community, they are extremely welcome but there are certain standards that have to be met and the standards here of biosecurity, of broader security, fall well below what the international community expects and we need to ram that message home to them in a pretty brutal, sort of diplomatic way and this will ... I mean they can resist that but it is very difficult for them continually to resist it and I think it will damage their standing with the broader community, not just with the Western community but with the broader international community, if they continue to try to cover up – assuming they know, if they continue to try to cover up how this coronavirus pandemic erupted from Wuhan.

I think these issues of soft power are very important and the standing of China and the prestige of China is at stake here and we need to make it perfectly clear to the Chinese that they need to collaborate much better with the international community if they want to regain their prestige.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. I just want to give as many people as possible who have put their virtual hands up to ask questions. I think if we go on from this then I'll ask other panellists in turn if they want to take the lead on any subsequent questions. I have got a question from Juliet, if you can state your full name and organisation.

**JULIET SAMUEL:** Juliet Samuel, I'm a columnist with the Telegraph and also a Fellow at Policy Exchange. So, two quick points. We know that China tried to cover up the start of the epidemic so to what degree is China telling the truth now about having controlled it? There have been some anonymous briefing and picture of huge stocks of urns suggesting they aren't but on the other hand, I at least can't find a scientist who thinks that the data they're getting doesn't match up. The second point is, will China necessarily lose from this? Alexander Downing mentioned it's a blow to prestige but on the other hand, just anecdotally knowing a few people in Italy, China's image has completely changed in a very positive way from the help and aid that they have given Italy in combatting this virus so what will be the net result of that around the world and how do you combat that image change, the positive image?

**DEAN GODSON:** General.

**GENERAL McMASTER:** Well, I think this goes back to the point of competition, we have to recognise it is a competition and we have to really confront these unfair and despicable practices of propaganda, disinformation aimed at the West. Using the Chinese Foreign Ministry to propagate this conspiracy theory that first of all the American military had done it but then also there was a subsequent conspiracy theory that it originated in Italy as well. I think that the Chinese Communist Party has set themselves up for a significant blow-back and we ought to not be too pessimistic about this but what we have to do is to recognise that this is a competition and stop covering up for the Chinese Communist Party. Competition should not foreclose on cooperation or key tasks but this language of cooperation that we have adopted, I think tends to be seen as self-criticism and for cover for the Chinese Communist Party's story here, to reinforce their story.

The same thing with this idea of there being Sinophobia, I think we have to counter that by positive interactions with the Chinese people and those entities we can find that don't act as an extension of the Chinese Communist Party. I think to have more Chinese students for example is a good thing in the West and we ought to ensure they have the most positive experience they can have, as long as we also have some defences in connection with sensitive research and that sort of thing. But to answer Juliet's question, I think we can counter what I think has been a very clumsy effort to use a crisis they had an aid in creating through not only just the conditions within China but the deception about it, the suppression of doctors who were trying to tell the truth and the shutting down of internal travel before international travel. I believe all of this will blow back on it once we get beyond what we ought to be preoccupied with I think, which is getting through this crisis ourselves.



**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. Julianne.

**JULIANNE SMITH:** I'd just second a lot of what General McMaster just laid out. I mean I think it is absolutely disgraceful, the narrative that the Chinese are putting out in official capacities across Europe about their assistance. They are also providing, in some cases, fault equipment, we've had issues with faulty testing kits, masks that don't meet standards, they are getting far too much credit for this but I am going to say something that General McMaster will probably disagree with me on and I think the unfortunate part of this in my mind, personally I think that the Chinese have seized on an opportunity where the US frankly has been slow to respond and provide its traditional global leadership role. The US did not call for the G7 and the G20 to convene, the US has been slow to provide assistance to Italy, we just delivered a huge package of aid that was absolutely critical but in my mind that was a little bit of a day late, dollar short. I also think instituting the travel ban with Europe may or may not have been the right approach but without consultation with our European allies, it's all left a bad taste in the mouth of our European friends. China has seized on this, has seen that the United States is not playing its traditional role and then walked through that door.

I agree though, that we have to step up, correct the narratives, go after the disinformation, correct the record where we have a different story to tell, pat ourselves on the back that we're doing far more than the Chinese give us credit for but again, I think in this debate we have to acknowledge that the US is playing a different role here than it has traditionally in the past, particularly in the way in which we went about tackling the Ebola crisis in 2014.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. Stewart.

**LORD WOOD:** Actually I think, as terrible as it was about the cover-up and the origins of the coronavirus crisis and the numbers, I think as bad is the fact that the rest of the world is trying to learn in real time about this virus and strategies for coping and not having accurate figures about the demographic and other medical side of the casualties and the sick in China has been materially damaging to other countries as they have been trying to work out how to respond to this so I think there are a huge set of issues here.

Will China lose out from this? Well, firstly, just to reinforce a very important point Julianne has made. Compared to 2008, I was a very minor figure in the UK government in the 2008 economic crisis and its response to that, it is astonishing how little international coordination there is at the moment in response to a much more global, much more interdependent crisis. It's quite astonishing that there are 200 national stories going in response rather than any serious internationally coordinated response and I think we in the West have to bear responsibility for not looking to each other in trying to engineer that and China, as Julianne has said, has sort of stepped in with a soft reputational power boost to itself in that vacuum.

Will China benefit in the long run? Well, look, China is in competition with us, as General McMaster said, in various ways. It does very well on soft and even harder economic power internationally but it is also in competition with us over values, over attracting talent and I think in those things China is not doing well and will continue not to do well and this crisis is going to make their position weaker, not stronger. Just to pick up Alexander Downer's point about how we are going to emerge from this crisis, there is definitely going to be a huge emphasis on biosecurity, in international regimes and international discussions going forward, maybe even new regimes internationally on pandemics and biosecurity and do not underestimate the power, as he said, of shaming China constantly if they do not cooperate in either the creation of these new regimes or full disclosure about things that have happened.



It is not enough maybe but it is something that will continue to matter if the world gets its act together properly as it should do.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. We'll go on to Aubrey please, name and organisation.

**AUBREY ALLEGRETTI:** My name is Aubrey Allegretti and I'm a reporter from Sky News. We've had some reports over night in the Times that the Foreign Secretary, in a call with China's Foreign Minister, made a pledge not to politicise the coronavirus outbreak. This was from a read out from the Chinese Embassy in London that said that he promised and fully agreed with China that the source of the virus is a scientific issue that requires professional and science-based assessment, which would obviously run contrary to some of the views in this conversation that we do know where it originated if not exactly how. I was just wondering whether the panel could comment on that and whether Mr Raab potentially needs to take a stronger line publicly on that because the British government at the moment are not responding to requests on that account?

**DEAN GODSON:** William, unfair perhaps to ask you in the line of apostolic succession, your successor but five.

**LORD HAGUE:** I don't mind being asked that at all and I am definitely not going to criticise the Foreign Secretary on the basis of an account given by China of a conversation that he had with the Chinese Foreign Minister and I'm sure he said all the right things in that conversation. In any discussion about politicising, I think that is totally in line with everything we've been discussing on this panel, that we all want, the whole world will want, the scientific truth about how this happened. Alex Downer has been advocating the international mechanisms by which that might happen but however it happens, we all want that. The scientific consensus is one, including from Chinese scientists in the initial investigations in January, is there is a consensus about where it arose and how it probably arose in terms of the wet markets in Wuhan but there are alternative theories. I haven't seen a credible theory that doesn't have it coming out of China somehow.

So, I haven't seen anything reported in what the Foreign Secretary said that is at variance with the world's hunger for that, far from it or on this panel, at variance with that. I think we are all on the same page including the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom.

**DEAN GODSON:** Stewart.

**LORD WOOD:** Who knows what was actually said, as William said, but if by rejecting politicisation, they mean, the Foreign Secretary means resisting turning this into a broader moment to be anti-Chinese or even to be complacent about Sinophobic possibilities, as it were, of this then I support that idea but of course this has got to be something where we have got to get to the truth of it because it's a material health and security interest to the world.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. General.

**GENERAL McMASTER:** I think this is to be expected. Carl Von Clausewitz, the Prussian philosopher of war, 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher of war, said that war is an extension of politics and I think we're learning that at least to some extent, pandemics are an extension of politics as well. It was the political nature of the Chinese Communist Party that exacerbated this crisis and probably turned an epidemic into a pandemic and of course, it is politics is what China is doing, trying to then use this crisis to try to bend this crisis in favour of the Chinese Communist Party's interests and so I think it is important to try to call China out on this. This whole narrative of China being benevolent and helping the world get through this, I agree with Julianne's point that we have to be much more effective at publicising what we're doing but I think because we have become so polarised, at least in the United States, Julianne, that we don't talk about really what we're doing together as a nation.



For example, the US funded the WHO \$900 million, ten times the amount that China contributed to the WHO even as China was subverting the organisation's effectiveness. In March, President Trump signed a bill that included a \$1.3 billion increase in foreign assistance in pandemic response and Secretary Pompeo, just a couple of weeks ago, announced an additional \$275 million in foreign assistance to at-risk countries. We don't publicise what we're doing and that's because we are, I think, much better motivated than the Chinese Communist Party. As Julianne said, a lot of the tests coming out of China are just fake tests, completely fake, not just flawed and a lot of the equipment is flawed as well but China is doing this, they are not providing assistance to really help humanity, they are doing it to advance the agenda of the Chinese Communist Party. I think we just have to be better at countering the sophisticated political campaign by the Chinese Communist Party.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. Dominic has a question, name and organisation please.

**DOMINIC LAWSON:** Dominic Lawson, columnist on the Sunday Times and the Daily Mail. First of all, Dean, congratulations, it's a wonderful event and very educative for all of us. I wanted particularly to address my question to General McMaster but to the others too. General, you were very eloquent about the tyrannical nature of the communist regime, others have spoken about the need or the lack of a big stick, what do you say to recognising the democratic free and independent country of Taiwan?

**GENERAL McMASTER:** Well, I think there is no need for us to go beyond the Taiwan Relations Act. What I think we should do though as fellow free and open societies, like-minded countries, are to reject the coercive campaign by the Chinese Communist Party to isolate Taiwan and to increase pressure and coerce Taiwan. We have seen this play out a connection with this crisis, right, we saw how effectively Taiwan was able to respond to this crisis and Taiwan is appearing as a greater threat to the Chinese Communist Party because you have this successful democratic government that dealt very effectively with this crisis, that just went through an election that the Chinese Communist Party tried to skew in its favour and was rejected completely. I think the biggest threat to the Chinese Communist Party is that there are some people who try to say that the Chinese people are not disposed culturally towards wanting a say in how they are governed. Well, of course, that is absolutely not the case when you look at Taiwan or Hong Kong for that matter. So, I think Taiwan needs and deserves international support now, critically, and we have already seen some troubling signs of China responding in the wake of this crisis with a greater coercive stance toward Taiwan militarily, more violations of Taiwanese air space in the recent days and weeks for example.

So, I think we all ought to help Taiwan be as strong as they can economically and, of course, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and US policy, to be able to defend itself, to ensure that China is deterred against any kind of a violation of the agreement and is deterred by denial, concluding it can't accomplish its objectives on Taiwan through the use of force.

**DEAN GODSON:** Terrific, we've just got time for one last question, so Patricia, name and organisation.

**PATRICIA HODGSON:** Previously Chair of Ofcom, worked for the BBC for a long time, trustee of Policy Exchange. Very powerful stuff about China's propaganda and disinformation. With Germany and France distracted by EU problems, inevitably the UK is going to have to take a leadership role for Europe in terms of Western values in the post-pandemic global order, how can we best mobilise some of our traditional strengths in cultural institutions, I'm thinking of our universities, the BBC, the British Council and so on, in a fast, focused and effective way, to support Lord Hague's two pillars?

**DEAN GODSON:** Julianne, you've got to go I know but I just wanted you to come in one last time there more broadly because cultural pillars have been under attack in the US as well, it has been alleged, from the challenge of China.



**JULIANNE SMITH:** Did Patricia direct this at General McMaster?

**DEAN GODSON:** I didn't hear her, I thought she'd finished. Patricia, did you direct the question at General McMaster?

**PATRICIA HODGSON:** It was really directed at our British colleagues but I think when you think of the cooperation in Western values during the Cold War, we really have to think about how we gear up to be as effective again, probably by digital means, but in these new circumstances.

**DEAN GODSON:** Julianne, I know you have to go, thank you for your time today.

**JULIANNE SMITH:** Thank you, I'm sorry but I've got to jump on another call but I couldn't agree more with the question when you think about what China is doing, with the Confucius Institutes and the academic exchanges and the journalist exchanges, we have a lot of work to do. We have let our guard down in this space and it would be nice to reflect on some of the tools that we used many decades ago and how we can modernise some of those instruments to be more effective in coping with the cultural and communications challenges that she's referencing here.

**DEAN GODSON:** Brilliant, thank you for your time Julianne. Stewart, on Patricia's point?

**LORD WOOD:** Just very quickly, I'm not sure I think that the UK will be head and shoulders above the other Western European countries in leading the west's response but I take the point about, look, we've got to emphasise the independence and transparency of news sources and the virtues of the way in which we, with the BBC which I think is having, by the way, a sort of re-bonding moment with the British public by the way, here in lockdown UK. It was under a lot of attack before, I suspect it will be under less attack after lockdown, we'll have to wait and see but I think those values that are core to our broadcasting and information services, have got to be core. I would like to see Western countries coming together to think about how these values, with the emerging debate about internet regulation and how that is conducted, I think the UK, US and Western European countries need to come forward and start talking together about a common way of doing that because Patricia's question is exactly right.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. Alexander.

**ALEXANDER DOWNER:** Britain has these institutions but it has something else going for it, speaking here from Australia as sort of an outsider albeit as the Chairman of Policy Exchange. It has a Prime Minister who himself has great standing in the world and I think this is an opportunity which Britain should take of providing great leadership to the West with dealing with this problem. I know the Prime Minister has had his own personal experience of coronavirus. I like the idea of convening a G7 meeting to deal with it and to deal with the issue that I've been raising through this conference and that is starting to put together a strategy for getting together an investigation into the causes of this coronavirus outbreak and I think the British Prime Minister could play an important part in putting that G7 meeting together. Maybe normally you would expect the American President to do it but he hasn't done it so far so I think Britain could play a leading role, perhaps working with the American President, to do that.

I think in the end, in the short term this issue is going to have to be addressed through diplomacy and my basic advocacy here is for hard diplomacy, for going in very strongly but making sure it's targeted, making sure we are focusing on the coronavirus issue. Somebody asked earlier a question, I think it was Dominic Lawson who asked a question about Taiwan and whether we should abandon the One China policy. I wouldn't do things like that; I wouldn't break away onto other issues therefore exacerbating tensions from China to a very dangerous level. I would focus entirely on the coronavirus issue and I would try to get the G7 to work together much better on the coronavirus issue than has so



far been the case. Britain's soft path through the BBC and its universities and so on, it is as it is. It's not possible to convene that to do something specific now but that explains a point that perhaps when you're living in Britain you take for granted but that to the outside world is an expression of Britain's influence in the world and soft power in the world and that can be harnessed, that soft power can be harnessed through some hard diplomacy of the kind I described.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. William, last turn for you.

**LORD HAGUE:** Well, thank you to Patricia for that question, I'm glad that my two pillars of strategic independence from China but global cooperation, classic British values of transparency, democracy, fair competition but global responsibility are absolutely in line with those things. That's why you had in the course of this discussion, Stewart Wood and I are from different sides of British party politics, have said almost exactly the same things and agreed on them, because these are the values that are central to Britain and to our allies as well as we've heard. So, yes, let us use our very powerful cultural institutions but it's an essential part of our soft power that our cultural institutions make their own decisions and so it's up to them how they are going to take that forward.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you. General, the last word from you before we have sadly to wind up, we could have gone on for a long time and we're waiting for the publication of your forthcoming book, part memoir, part geopolitical, we look forward to what you have to say.

**GENERAL McMASTER:** Well, thank you and I just want to say what a privilege it has been to be with all of you. Of course, we have to focus on getting through this crisis and as a now retired Army Officer, I know that our free and open societies respect the sacrifices that our soldiers, sailors and marines make in combat to protect our way of life and what we are seeing is a new warrior today on the front lines and that's our healthcare workers and first responders and I think all our thoughts and prayers ought to be with them as we get through this crisis but I just want to congratulate you, Dean, for putting this together.

It is not too early to think about what are the geostrategic, geopolitical, geo-economic implications of this crisis and as I mentioned earlier, I agree with everything the panel has said but I would just add the dimension of competition, which I don't think forecloses on cooperation, at every chance we can get. I think to answer the last question as well about what we can do, we can call out the practices of the Chinese Communist Party and then deny the party the ability to place our criticism of its policies and its aggression against its own people and against us, to try to mask that by saying this is some sort of Sinophobic response, it's not. This is a response which I think is required and it's for us to be able to counter this aggression by the Chinese Communist Party.

So, what a great privilege it has been with all of you and thanks again, Dean.

**DEAN GODSON:** Thank you, General. Thank you to our brilliant panel today and as I say, it is part of our mission to bring analysis and discussion of the most important issues on the national and international table at the moment, particularly as I say, post-coronavirus and the key inflection point that this tragically is. I look forward to welcoming all of our panellists back and we'll be back shortly to all of you, all of our guests, with our next panel event and I'll make sure that those who have not had a chance to ask a question on this occasion will get a chance next time and if anyone wants to ask any further questions to transmit to any of our panellists, we'd be very glad to do so, please contact us by email. So, thank you and we look forward to welcoming you all back very soon. Good night.

