



# THE DITCHLEY FOUNDATION

## **WHICH WAY IS WEST AND IS THE WEST STILL BEST? WHAT DO PRESIDENT TRUMP, BREXIT AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WEST?**

**16-18 March, 2017**

**Chair: Mr Peter Thiel, JD**

In a couple of weeks' time, President Trump will be the effective leader of the West – what earlier generations called the 'free world' – and, like it or not, he will have a big influence on the world we all live in now. How would we like him to act? What opportunity to lead do we owe him? Having complained about American actions under Bush and occasionally under Obama, will we now have to lament America's absence as President Trump focuses on the US homeland? How do we find common ground in what may be a time of deep change? What events could test even minimal unity?

Another democratic decision was the referendum result in favour of Brexit, the departure of the UK from the EU. What is the global role of the UK now that it has announced its intention to leave the European Union? Is the UK still a credible member of the P5 if it does not represent Europe alongside France? Can and should the UK move closer to the US and what could it offer? What kind of country does it need to be to prosper? What should the relationship be between the US, the UK and Europe? What is the future of a European Union made up of the remaining 27 states?

Can 'the West' continue to be a resonant term, in light of these decisions? Is it still anchored in shared defence capabilities? What are our shared values and how can we defend them? Do we still believe in a responsibility to, and national interest in, exporting our values and systems or are we content, or at least resigned, to live in a bipolar world split between democratic capitalism and authoritarian capitalism? Can these two systems continue to cooperate effectively through international trade?

The big picture context for Trump and Brexit has some features that are becoming close to universally accepted. One of the few undisputed facts is that human populations are growing rapidly and may exceed the ability of the planet to support us. Most people now accept that the climate is warming faster than normal, most probably due to industrialisation, although the urgency of action is still contested. We can all see that industrial and developing societies alike are evolving into hyper-connected networks through the impact of digital technology, with intended and unintended consequences. Technology has enabled the opportunities of globalisation and is in turn the only possible answer to the challenges of globalisation. For the moment, global growth remains stubbornly slow. In general, incomes are stagnant. Many struggle to see the design pattern for success in this new life. Technology may make more old jobs obsolete than it creates new ones. The new jobs that are created may not carry the same status as those destroyed. How do we prosper in the fourth industrial revolution? How can we guarantee meaningful employment to our populations and how do we provide for people if we cannot do so? How do we revitalise international cooperation as post war institutions and models begin to lose their connecting power? How do we reinvent government and democracy?

This conference will seek to look forward rather than back and to offer ideas, recommendations, and perhaps redlines, to the new administrations in the US and the UK and, looking further ahead, to possible new governments in Italy, France and Germany.

We will address the following:

- What are the shared core values of western democracy in 2017? What do we have to protect as the core of liberty?
- How do we believe we can best deliver better economic prospects for our countries by increasing trade, whilst providing a degree of protection for individuals and communities from the impact of globalisation?
- How do we promote and benefit from the fourth industrial revolution, harnessing and hastening the development of technology?
- What should be the relationship between the West and the authoritarian capitalist powers, China and Russia?
- How do we want the European Union to develop?
- And what is the role of the UK vis à vis the US and Europe?