



In association with the European Liberal Forum (ELF) The Paddy Ashdown Forum introduce a series of Online Webinars.

Geopolitics In The Time of COVID-19

[In association with Liberal Democrats Overseas](#)

[Zoom Webinar](#)

Sunday 28th June 2020, 14:00 – 15:00 British Summer Time

About the Event

Crises spawn emergency measures. Emergency measures tend to linger long after the threat has passed.

And, Covid-19, has seen a raft of emergency measures introduced: the suspension of election campaigns or even the introduction of a 20-year prison sentence for “peddling falsehoods.” Great for the incumbent rulers and a useful pretext for imprisoning political opponents.

Are we seeing today countries that use legerdemain to make territorial gains, arrest pro-democracy campaigners, enable more corruption or gain data that invades privacy?

Further Reading:

[Meta – Geopolitics of Pandemics: The Case of COVID-19](#)

[Is COVID-19 a Geopolitical Game-Changer?](#)

[Is China winning? The geopolitical consequences of covid-19 will be subtle, but unfortunate.](#)



The European Liberal Forum (ELF) is the official think tank and political foundation of the European Liberal Party, the ALDE Party. Together with 46 member organisations ELF work all over Europe to bring new ideas into political debate, to provide a platform for discussion and to enable citizens to make their voices heard.



Event Schedule

13:55 – Participants connect to Zoom

14:00 – **Opening Remarks** - Moderator
George Cunningham – Chair, Liberal Democrats Overseas

14:05 – **First intervention**

Dr Christine Cheng is a lecturer in war studies at Kings College London and will discuss that throughout China's rise to superpower status, Britain has maintained a mixed and ambivalent relationship with Beijing - admonishing it on human rights violations one moment and then, at other times, welcoming China with open arms with the aim of making the UK the number one destination for Chinese investment in Europe. But...with Brexit looming, and the UK separating from the EU, how, in a world after COVID-19, should the UK and the European Union engage with China?

14:15 – **Second intervention**

Paul Reynolds will use his extensive global experience as a geo-political advisor to more than 70 Governments to discuss whether the deteriorating US-China relations are a cause or a symptom of the global pandemic. Did China's mistrust of the US and global institutions affect how it fulfilled its International Health Regulations (IHR) and World Health Organisation (WHO) treaty obligations? And, in contrast, did US mistrust of China lead to unjustified criticisms of Chinese state over COVID-19? In Paul's brief exploration of these issues both the sequence of events in China, and the context of Europe's China policy will be discussed. And is Europe caught between two sets of hegemonic ambitions?

14:30 – Q&A

14:55 – Closing remarks by moderator

15:00 – End of Event



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Speakers Bio's



Dr Christine Cheng is a member of the Liberal Democrats' Federal Policy Committee since 2017. She was Vice Chair of the LibDems foreign policy working group and currently sits on the Nature of Public Debate policy working group. Dr Cheng is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in War Studies at King's College London. Previously, she was the Boskey Fellow in Politics at Exeter College, Oxford, and the Cadieux-Léger Fellow at Global Affairs Canada. Dr Cheng holds a DPhil from Oxford (Nuffield) and an MPA from Princeton (Woodrow Wilson School). Dr Cheng has also worked for the UN as well as the World Bank. She is an advocate on gender equality issues, and is committed to increasing the proportion of women politicians at all levels of politics ([TEDx talk](#)).



Paul Reynolds is a former professor of economics & government at the University of Westminster, London. This has underpinned Paul's vast experience that bridges the boundaries of academia, the United Nations system institutions and working with the heads of government in more than 70 countries. Consequently, Paul's advisory rolls have covered defence & security, economic reform, human rights and governmental-fiscal reforms. As a result, this has often meant that his expertise has been required inside countries in conflict such as Chief Political Adviser to Coalition Forces Iraq from 2003. Paul is an advocate of a rules-based international order, and of the further development of the institutions of international law. In China, Paul has worked with the Ministry of Finance, Central Party School, NDRC, and Ministry of Commerce as well as visited Xinjiang Province.



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George Cunningham



George Cunningham - Chair of Liberal Democrats Overseas.
(Moderator).

George is the Strategic Adviser on Asia-Pacific at the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels as well as the EU Alternate Senior Official for the Asia-Europe Meeting – ASEM.

Previously, George has served as Deputy EU Ambassador to Afghanistan; EEAS Deputy Head of Division for China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Mongolia; Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the EU's Delegation to New Zealand; Coordinator for bilateral trade relations with the United States at the European Commission's Trade Directorate General; Head of Accession Process and Cooperation at the European Commission's Delegation to Cyprus; and Head of Press/Public Affairs and Political Counsellor at the EC's Delegation to the United Nations in New York during 9/11 (2000/03).

For over twenty-five years George has worked for the EU across all the main files, especially foreign and security policy, public diplomacy and trade. He has particular interest in promoting social justice, fighting corruption and security sector reform.

And, before joining the European Commission, George served as a UN official in New York and was also an advisor on European integration to the Polish Council of Ministers in Warsaw.

He is a member of Chatham House in London. Writer and lecturer.

Graduate from Oxford University (MA Oxon Modern History) and former British Army officer.

[**Register**](#)



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