

Britain's Place in the World

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PARTICIPANTS BIOGRAPHIES



Evie Aspinall

Evie is the Director of the British Foreign Policy Group, a non-partisan think tank focused on the intersection between foreign and domestic policy. An expert in public opinion, her research focuses on building domestic consent for the UK's international activities and bringing a diversity of voices into UK foreign policy decision making.

Evie holds a BA from the University of Cambridge and an MSc from King's College London. Evie has worked at BFPG for four years, having previously worked at UN Women UK and the Future Leaders Network. She has also served as the UK's Head Delegate to the Youth7, the G7's official youth engagement group and as President of Cambridge University Students' Union. She is a regular commentator in the media on issues pertinent to UK foreign policy.



Ben Bland

Ben is the Director of the Asia-Pacific Programme at Chatham House. The author of two books on politics in Asia, he previously worked in Australia, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam for the Financial Times and the Lowy Institute. He regularly advises government officials, parliamentarians and business leaders on how to better engage in the world's most dynamic region.



Tom Cargill

Tom has been Chief Executive at Wilton Park since January 2021. Previously the CEO of British Expertise International, Tom has extensive experience in UK foreign policy, trade, international development and infrastructure. He has served as founder, CEO and remains Chair of the not-for-profit British Foreign Policy Group. He previously developed an international Business Development Strategy for the engineering multinational, Bechtel, and spent 10 years at Chatham House.



Christine Cheng

Christine is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in War Studies at King's College London. She is an award-winning author, policy advisor, and political activist. Dr Cheng studies the rebuilding of societies after violent armed conflict. She co-led the UK government's Elite Bargains project, which later became the foundation for the UK's conflict stabilisation policy. Dr Cheng has served on the Liberal Democrats' Federal Policy Committee since 2017, and recently chaired the party's International Security Policy Working Group. She sits on the Board of Trustees at Conciliation Resources and the Scientific Advisory Board for swisspeace. 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 and an MPA from Princeton.



Tom Crofts

Tom is an independent political analyst and former British diplomat who focuses on geopolitics, conflict and security. He currently advises think tanks, NGOs, academic institutions and other institutions on international relations. He specialises in foreign policy, international security, conflict and governance. During his time in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Tom served in Afghanistan and Myanmar, and covered a wide range of other countries including Lebanon, Libya, Nepal, Russia, Somalia, Syria and Ukraine. He also served in the Foreign Office's Policy Unit, where he was Policy Planner for Russia, Ukraine, NATO and international security. In this capacity he worked on the UK's response to the Salisbury poisoning crisis, and where he also helped shape UK policy on Russian escalation in Ukraine.



Lord Kim Darroch

Lord Darroch is a retired UK civil servant and life peer in the House of Lords. His diplomatic career spanned over 40 years, primarily focusing on national security issues and European policy.

Most recently, Lord Darroch served as the British Ambassador to the United States (2016-2019). Prior to Washington, he was National Security Adviser to Prime Minister David Cameron (2012-2015), and in that role, oversaw issues such as the rise of Daesh in Iraq and Syria, Russian aggression in Ukraine, and the collapse of government authority in Libya. In addition, he worked in senior roles on UK-EU policy and multilateral negotiations, including spells as Permanent Representative to the European Union (2007-2011) and as EU Adviser to Prime Minister Tony Blair (2004-2007).

Earlier in his career, Lord Darroch worked in a wide range of positions and policy specialties, including Private Secretary to Minister of State for the Middle East, Head of the Adriatic Department during the Dayton Accord negotiations, and as Head of the News Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In addition to his two ambassadorial postings, Lord Darroch completed tours in Brussels, Rome, and Tokyo.

In 1997, he was appointed a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG), and as a Knight Commander (KCMG) in 2008. In 2019, he was made a life peer in the House of Lords. He was born in 1954 in the village of South Stanley, County Durham in the North of England. He attended Durham University, where he read Zoology, and joined the Diplomatic Service in 1977. He married his wife, Vanessa, in 1978. They have two adult children, Simon and Georgina.



Tom de Waal

Tom is a senior fellow with Carnegie Europe, specializing in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

He is the author, most recently, of *The End of the Near Abroad* (Carnegie Europe/IWM, 2024). The second edition of *The Caucasus: An Introduction* was published in 2018. He is also the author of *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide* (OUP, 2015) and *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War* (NYU Press, second edition 2013).

From 2010 to 2015, de Waal worked for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, DC. Before that he worked extensively as a journalist in both print and for BBC radio in Russia and the UK. His translation of the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam was published in 2023.



Tobias Ellwood

Tobias is a Former Member of the UK Parliament, during which time he served in the Whips' office and as Shadow Tourism Minister whilst in Opposition and Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Defence Minister, whilst in Government. He was then elected Chair of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee.

Tobias served in the British Army with the Royal Green Jackets and is a current Reservist.

He went to school in Vienna Austria and studied at Loughborough University. He completed a Masters at City University Business School and the Senior Executive Course in National and International Security Studies at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University .

Tobias is a Senior Fellow with RUSI and the Atlantic Council. He is a joint UK/ US dual national, private pilot and eagle scout.

Tobias is now a writer and commentator on Defence, International Security and Geopolitics.



Tom Fletcher

Tom CMG is Principal of Hertford College, Oxford and a former UK Ambassador and Foreign Policy Adviser to three Prime Ministers. He has written two fiction books, on the future of diplomacy and education, and two novels. He is a regular media commentator on foreign policy and presented the BBC documentary, 'The Battle for Liberal Democracy'.



Tina Fordham

Tina is a leading independent strategist and advisor to the C-suite working at the intersection of geopolitics, the business environment and the drivers of social change. A trailblazer in the field of global political risk, Tina has 25 years' experience advising senior leaders—from prime ministers and 3-star generals to boards, institutional investors and the United Nations—about the implications of global developments. In 2022 she founded Fordham Global Foresight, an independent consultancy based in London. Fordham Global Foresight provides actionable, forward-looking guidance and helps firms raise their "PQ"—Political Quotient. The first Chief Global Political Analyst on Wall Street (Citi) and the founder of Eurasia Group's financial markets research business, Tina has served as a senior advisor in the U.K. Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and was appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the United Nations first High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

Tina is a member of the international advisory boards of Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, her alma mater, and the Cambridge University Centre for Geopolitics, a Senior Advisor to Concordia, a contributor to Forbes on Leadership Strategy, a frequent guest on Bloomberg, CNBC, CNN and Monocle Radio and is the host of "The Navigator", a global affairs video series, produced in collaboration with the London Stock Exchange Group. She is based in London and is a dual U.K.-US citizen.



Professor Peter Frankopan

Peter is Professor of Global History at Oxford University where he Director of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research and Senior Research Fellow at Worcester College. He is also UNESCO Professor of Silk Roads Studies at King's College, Cambridge. He works on the peoples, cultures, pasts and presents of Russia/Ukraine, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and China. His books include The Silk Roads: A New History of the World; The New Silk Roads: The Present and Future of the world; and most recently The Earth Transformed: A New History. He works with many multi-lateral organisations, including several UN agencies, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank as well as advising on policy in the UK and internationally.



Dr Nigel Gould-Davies

Dr Gould-Davies is Senior Fellow for Russia and Eurasia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Before joining the Institute in 2020 he taught and conducted research in Asia, and held senior government relations positions in the energy industry. From 2000-10 he served in the British Foreign Office where his roles included head of the Economic Section in Moscow, Ambassador to Belarus and project director in the Strategy Unit. He previously taught Politics and International Relations at Oxford University. Nigel Gould-Davies holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University.



Sally Hamilton

Sally is a Prevent Education Officer at Newcastle City Council, and previous fellow of the Counter Extremism Group's Young Leaders in National Security Fellowship. Sally has experience in leading teams, delivering community based projects, developing policy and strategy both in the UK and in an International context.

She has chaired GenEndIt global steering committee, working with STOPAIDS, Restless Development, and USAID, advocating for the reprioritisation of Global HIV and AIDS response in donor and emerging countries. Sally is a Trustee with Action Foundation- a charity that supports Refugees and Asylum seekers.

Sally has a MSc in International Development from Northumbria University, and a BA in Art History combined with humanities from the Open University.



David Hogan-Hern

David has spent two decades at the heart of Government and the wider machinery of the State – at the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office, and the Cabinet Office, as well as the Royal Household (where he served as Deputy Private Secretary to the Sovereign). Currently the Strategy Director at the MOD, his career to date has been anchored around international and national security policy. He has been based in London, Brussels and Bahrain, and has worked extensively with partners across Europe and North America, the Middle East and Africa. He is a graduate of both Oxford University (French and German) and King's College London (International Security and Strategy).



Sandra Khadhouri

Sandra is director of Keeping Channels Open, a dialogue network for British, European and American stakeholders, aimed at countering fragmentation and promoting strategic cooperation. She has over 20 years of experience as a political, communications and stabilisation adviser in post-conflict countries for UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, AU, ICC & UK Foreign Office, and 10 years prior to this as a TV journalist and documentary-maker for CNN, Euronews and Sky News. Roles include directing communications strategies around complex policies, capacity-building & stakeholder coordination. She has also worked on many military exercises, and overseas elections in technical assistance.



Sir David Lidington

David Lidington is Chair of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), the UK's foremost Defence and Security Policy think tank, and UK Chair of the Koenigswinter Conference (UK/Germany) and the Aurora Forum (UK/Nordics and Baltics). He is a member of the Advisory Council of the Centre for European Reform and Hon President of the Great Britain China Centre, a Foreign Office arms-length public body.

David represented Aylesbury in the House of Commons from 1992 to 2019.

As Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster he served as deputy to Prime Minister Theresa May from January 2018 to July 2019, having previously served in the May governments as Leader of the House of Commons and as Justice Secretary.

David served as Minister for Europe throughout the coalition government and David Cameron's Conservative government (2010-2016), the UK's longest-serving holder of that post. He held responsibility for the UK's relations with more than 50 countries in Europe and Central Asia and represented the UK at the EU, NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe and the UN Security Council.



Edward Lucas

Edward Lucas's expertise includes energy, cyber-security, espionage, information warfare and Russian foreign and security policy. He is an acclaimed author and versatile speaker at high-level international events.

Formerly a senior editor at The Economist, the world's foremost newsweekly, he is a senior vice-president at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA). He writes a weekly column in the London Times. He has been the Lib Dem candidate for the highly winnable seat of the Cities of London and Westminster since 2021.

In 1992, he co-founded an English-language weekly in Tallinn, Estonia: the Baltic Independent. For many years a foreign correspondent, he was based in Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Moscow and the Baltic states.

In 2008 he wrote *The New Cold War*, a prescient account of Vladimir Putin's Russia, followed in 2011 by *Deception*, an investigative account of east-west espionage. He has written three other books,

An experienced broadcaster, he is a regular contributor to the BBC's Today and Newsnight programmes, and to NPR, CNN and Sky News. Edward has lectured at Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge and other leading universities.

Lucas is the recipient of numerous awards and decorations. He was also the first foreigner to receive an Estonian electronic identity card, and received the first Lithuanian visa in 1991. He was deported from the Soviet Union, arrested, beaten up, interrogated and spied on by communist secret police agents behind the Iron Curtain. He studied economics at the London School of Economics and speaks five languages — German, Russian, Polish, Czech and Lithuanian.



Sir Mark Lyall-Grant

Mark Lyall Grant qualified as a Barrister before joining the diplomatic service in 1980. After postings in Pakistan, France and South Africa, he was appointed High Commissioner to Pakistan (2003-06), Political Director in the FCO (2007-09) and Ambassador to the UN (2009-15). In that capacity, he chaired the UN Security Council on 4 occasions.

Mark's final Government appointment was National Security Adviser to David Cameron, then Theresa May (2015-17), advising the Prime Minister on Security, Defence and Foreign policy issues, overseeing the British Intelligence Agencies and acting as Secretary to the National Security Council.

Mark is currently a visiting Professor at King's College, London, a Bencher at Middle Temple and a fellow at Eton College. He has a number of private sector consultancy roles, focussed on national and international security, and on geopolitics; and is on the advisory board at Chatham House. He was knighted in 2007 and is the King of Arms at the Order of St Michael and St George.



Sir Robin Niblett

Robin is a Distinguished Fellow with Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) and Senior Adviser at Hakluyt, the strategic advisory firm.

Robin was the Director and Chief Executive of Chatham House, 2007 – 2022. From 2001 to 2006, he was the Executive Vice President at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, in Washington D.C., where he also led the CSIS Europe Programme.

Robin is the author of *The New Cold War: How the Contest Between the US and China Will Shape Our Century* (Atlantic Books, 2024), along with numerous reports and articles.

Robin was appointed KCMG in 2022 and received his MPhil and DPhil in International Relations from New College, Oxford.



Olivia O'Sullivan

Olivia is Director of the UK in the World Programme at Chatham House. Before joining Chatham House, Olivia worked for over a decade in international development and foreign policy in the UK government, across roles in the Department for International Development, Cabinet Office and cross-government teams. Her experience includes managing external expert engagement for the 2021 Integrated Review, working on the UK's funding and policy response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, and overseeing a range of international development and humanitarian funding programmes.



Sir Ivan Rogers

Ivan is the former UK Sherpa (top official) on EU, G8 and G20 issues. He previously served as Principal Private Secretary to PM Tony Blair. He ended his civil service career as the UK's Permanent Representative (Ambassador) to the EU. He worked as head of public sector banking issues for several years at two major investment banks. Earlier in his career, he served as Chief of Staff to the Vice President of the European Commission, Leon Brittan, and as EU Director in HM Treasury working for Gordon Brown.



Sir Adam Thomson

Sir Adam Thomson has been the Director of the European Leadership Network since 2016. The ELN is an independent, non-partisan, network of leaders from all across the continent dedicated to a safer Europe. It helps to prevent existential conflict in Europe and beyond.

Adam served for 38 years in the British Diplomatic Service. His final posting was as the UK Ambassador to NATO 2014 - 2016. From 2010 Adam served as British High Commissioner to Pakistan and between 2002 and 2006 he was British Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. Other postings included Moscow (1981-3), NATO (1983-6), Washington DC (1991-5) and New Delhi (1995 – 98). He was the Soviet analyst for the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee 1989 – 91. He headed the Foreign Office's Security Policy Department 1998 – 2002.



Professor Robert Tombs

Robert Tombs is a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and a historian of modern Europe, of Britain, and of Franco-British relations. Recent works include *This Sovereign Isle: Britain In and Out of Europe* (2022), and *The English and Their History* (2023), and he was a co-author of a report entitled *Defining Britain's Post-Brexit Role in the World* (2022). He is co-editor of the websites 'Briefings for Britain' and 'History Reclaimed'. He is presently working on a history of the union between England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.



Cat Tully

Cat leads the School of International Futures (SOIF), a not-for-profit international collective of practitioners based in the UK who use futures thinking to inspire change at the local, national and global levels. SOIF has worked with organisations like the UN, Omidyar, NATO, the Royal Society and national governments to make the world fairer for current and future generations. SOIF also supports a growing network of Next Generation Foresight Practitioners. Previously, Cat served as Strategy Project Director at the UK Foreign Office and as Policy Advisor in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. She is a non-resident fellow at the US Government Accountability Office's Center for Strategic Foresight and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Chilean Council of Foresight and Strategy. Cat's mission is to inspire individuals, communities, organisations and governments to reinvigorate democracy by designing, scaling and embedding a range of innovations incorporating thinking about the future.



Kate White

Kate White is the Strategy Director at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). She was formerly the Director for Trade and Economic Security from February 2021 to April 2024 and was the interim Director General, Economics, Science and Technology from November 2023 to January 2024.

From April 2017 to January 2021, Kate was Director Asia Pacific, advising on UK policy toward the region covering China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Mongolia, the 10 countries that form the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Timor Leste, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Island countries.

Kate has also held a number of head of department roles at the FCO covering global economic issues, climate change, international science and innovation cooperation, and human resources. She was Joint Head of the new cross-government International Energy Unit established by the FCO and Department for Energy and Climate Change in 2014.

Overseas, Kate has worked in Hong Kong as part of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group (1998 to 2000), at the British Embassy in Jakarta (2007 to 2008), and on secondment to the British Trade and Cultural Office in Taipei (2000 to 2003).

Kate studied Mandarin Chinese in London and at Beijing Normal University as part of the FCO's full-time language training programme between 1996 and 1998. She led the FCO's work to re-establish a Language Centre in 2013, which supports British diplomats to strengthen language skills.

Kate has a degree in history from Cambridge University and was a Policy Fellow at Cambridge University's Centre for Science and Policy from 2018 to 2020.



Joseph Wight

Joe is a Policy Manager at Liberal Democrat HQ, where he played a major role in creating the party's successful 2024 General Election Manifesto. He was also the principal author of Liberal Democrat policy paper *Liberal Values in a Dangerous World*, setting out the party's approach to international relations, defence, security and international development.