

*Think*  
*new things*  
*Make*  
*new connections*

## Terms of Reference

**Evolving alliances: how  
does coordination of  
democratic countries'  
interests need to evolve  
in response to  
geopolitical pressures?**

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DITCHLEY

# Terms of Reference

For European countries, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has changed everything, a true *Zeitenwende*. This applies not only to Germany, where Chancellor Scholz coined the phrase, but equally to others across the political West. To the north, Finland has just joined NATO, meaning that the alliance now has an 800-mile-long border with Russia. Sweden will join shortly, breaking a long tradition of neutrality. Poland and Romania are now vital logistical and military partners in delivering western support to Ukraine. Ukraine itself, provided it survives, is becoming one of the largest, best equipped, most innovative and most experienced military powers in Europe. If Ukraine is not in NATO, it has become an essential ally, as much as a dependent for its reconstruction.

How will the expansion of the NATO alliance change European defence? What are the implications for other European defence initiatives and defence leadership in Europe? How can the US and European powers best remain in lockstep on shared strategic interests?

The war has also exposed brutally the fragility of globalised supply chains, once exquisitely optimised by market forces for efficiency, now found wanting on resilience. How do we recast transatlantic and European energy systems to achieve our climate goals whilst increasing our resilience and independence? What do we need to do, on critical minerals in particular, and how can we coordinate an approach so that we compete with our systemic rivals and not each other?

Beyond energy, how do we cooperate to build the technologies and industries of the future to underpin our defence, stability and prosperity? What is the right response to the Inflation Reduction Act? How can we combine innovation and production expertise? What would a more coordinated western industrial strategy look like and how could it be managed without killing market driven vitality? For the moment at least, neither the US administration nor anyone else wants a broad decoupling from China but the US is certainly determined on a focused effort to stay ahead of China, *and to retard Chinese progress*, on leading edge technologies, with natural security and defence implications.

How can we best coordinate continued economic engagement with China, whilst building resilience and advantage on key technologies? The Indo-Pacific is more than China of course: what scope is there for further expanding the CPTPP and other mechanisms to bring the Atlantic and Pacific together? We are losing ground in the Global South, weakening not only our political position in multilateral fora but also risking trade opportunities. How can we work more collectively to make the case for democratic countries as partners?

2024 will see yet another pivotal election in the US, alongside important elections in many other countries. There are concerns in many countries on the risks of a more isolationist, less consultative US. How can the transatlantic alliance be best bolstered and institutionalised to ensure continuity across administrations? What do we need to do to hedge against political instability in the US?

Resilience is also a state of mind. How can we develop a well-coordinated and positive narrative for the political West and Europe in particular, immunising our societies against disruptive misinformation and bridging our internal divisions?

On the second day of the conference, we will split into three working groups to explore these issues in more detail from three perspectives, with the aim of reaching useful insights and recommendations for politicians, policy makers and private sector leaders.

**Working Group A** will explore the impact of the war in Ukraine on European powers, the US and other allies and the implications for defence, diplomacy and politics. How are our existing mechanisms for coordination working? What more do we need to do?

**Working Group B** will explore the impact of the war and growing geopolitical tension with China on energy security and climate change action. What scope is there for Europe and G7 partners to move forward in a coordinated way on both energy security and action to address climate change? How are our existing mechanisms for coordinating action on energy and climate change performing? What more do we need to do?

**Working Group C** will focus on policy towards China, and in particular competition on foundational technologies with national security implications. How can we build a coordinated transatlantic approach to China, balancing addressing risks with economic interests? What are our channels for developing coordinated policy towards China? What more do we need to do?