



Deadly coronavirus, domineering China and divided America: What the new geopolitics means for Europe

by Charles Grant,
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For the third time this century, the geopolitical kaleidoscope has been severely shaken. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the financial crisis, the double whammy of Donald Trump's presidency and COVID-19 is causing further disruption to the global order. Each of these events has strengthened an increasingly self-confident China but created profound problems for the US, Europe and the liberal democratic values they espouse. Can the arrival of Joe Biden as US president, and renewed momentum for European integration, restore the self-confidence of the Western democracies?

This [essay](#) by Charles Grant, the CER's director, looks at 12 geopolitical trends that will matter for Europe: Biden's efforts to repair the Trump-inflicted damage to America's reputation, China's growing stridency and the reaction that is provoking in the West, the increasing geopolitical rivalry between the US and China, Russia and Turkey's slide away from the West, the potent challenge of right-wing populism, the growing political and economic strains in the UK, the continuing strength of globalisation (with certain exceptions), the shackling of Big Tech by governments, further European economic integration, a persistent east-west rift within the EU, a more dominant Franco-German leadership of the EU (with France *primus inter pares*) and some European progress towards 'strategic autonomy'.

Charles concludes that both the US and the EU should start by sorting out their internal problems. *"If the world judges North America and Europe to be well-managed and successful continents, it will have more respect for their democratic principles....It should not be beyond the wit of Biden and European leaders to make their liberal democratic model more appealing than China's authoritarian system."*

Note for editors:

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