THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

FALK AUDITORIUM

REVIVING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY:

THE CASE FOR PUTTING AMERICA'S HOUSE IN ORDER

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, May 30, 2013

PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction and Moderator:

MARTIN INDYK
Vice President and Director, Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speaker:

RICHARD N. HAASS
President
Council on Foreign Relations

Discussant:

ROBERT KAGAN
Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution

* * * * *

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. INDYK: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to Brookings. I'm Martin Indyk, the director of the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to moderate this very special event, the launching of yet another book by Richard N. Haass, *Foreign Policy Begins at Home: The Case for Putting America's House in Order*.

You might wonder what the president of the Council on Foreign Relations is doing here at Brookings, but we claim Richard as one of our own since he was prior to moving to the State Department as director of policy planning the vice president for the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings. In fact, I've been following Richard Haass around for several decades now. He was the senior director in the National Security Council, where for what's referred to Bush 41, President George H.W. Bush, and after that he came here to Brookings before he went into the State Department as director of policy planning for Bush 43.

He also served as U.S. coordinator for policy toward the future of Afghanistan and U.S. envoy to the Northern Ireland peace process. For his efforts he received the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award. I actually got one of those, too, Richard. Mine was for the Hebron negotiations. (Laughter) Don't laugh.

Richard is a Rhodes scholar. He holds a B.A. from Oberlin College and a master's and a Ph.D. from Oxford University. He has written many

books on U.S. foreign policy and, indeed, is, I think, probably the most eminent commentator and thinker, leading thinker, on U.S. foreign policy and its role in the world.

His most recent book before *Foreign Policy Begins at Home* was *War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of the Two Iraq Wars*. And before that *The Opportunity: America's Moment to Alter History's Course*. That was in 2006, I believe. And in 1977, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War*. So it is a long line of thoughtful commentary on America's role in the world that leads us to this point today with Richard's new book, a controversial thesis for one so involved in promoting U.S. foreign policy in the world to argue that foreign policy begins at home. But I'll let him explain his thesis to you.

We're fortunate to have on the podium today to comment and lead the conversation another great expert in U.S. foreign policy, Robert Kagan. Bob is a senior fellow in the Center on the U.S. and Europe here in the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings. He was a member of the Secretary of State's Foreign Affairs -- he is now, sorry, a member of the Secretary of State's Foreign Policy Advisory Board; co-chairman of the bipartisan Working Group on Egypt. He previously served in the State Department from 1984 to 1988, where he was a member of Secretary of State Schultz' policy planning staff and deputy for policy in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.

He has his Ph.D. from the American University and his MPP from Harvard. His most recent publications, the best-seller *The World America Made*,

and before that, *Dangerous Nation: America's Foreign Policy From Its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the 20th Century*.

So we're very fortunate today to welcome Richard Haass back to the podium here at Brookings, and please join me in welcoming him. (Applause)

MR. HAASS: Let me begin by saying how good it is to be back at Brookings. One of the many things that makes this country special and different, I would argue, is the robustness of its civil society, the fact that you have truly independent institutions that speak truth to power. And it may sound mundane, but it really is quite special. There's very little of it elsewhere. And Brookings, to me, is one of the premier examples of it in this or any other town. And in this age an edition of great partisanship that often trips -- goes beyond partisanship and ends up looking like polarization, Brookings also stands out as a place that occupies a lot of the political spectrum and does it with thoughtfulness. I'd like to think the institution I'm now associated with does the same, but I really do think that places like the Council on Foreign Relations and Brookings are important. For me, it's also good to be back here.

Two other reasons, one is personal. I had what Martin would probably agree is the most important job at The Brookings Institution, which is the vice presidency for the Foreign Policy Program. Strobe Talbott and some of his predecessors may disagree, but it's like real estate: location, location, location.

And being here with Martin and Bob is a real treat. They are both

scholar practitioners and they have given time in the government. Martin has spent -- if there's any justice in this world we would have had peace in the Middle East by now simply because Martin had worked so long and so diligently at it. He then would probably wonder what to do with his spare time, but I expect he would be more than happy to face that quandary.

MR. INDYK: Cyprus.

MR. HAASS: Cyprus, yes. I left it for you. (Laughter) The first of my many failures.

And he and Bob, again, are scholar practitioners. And I think being here with Bob is a special treat. He, to me, is one of the leading public intellectuals in this country. And I'd also like -- he was, in part, one of the inspirations for this book. I hope I don't get him into trouble by saying this because he writes short books. (Laughter) And one of -- my goal in this, one of the goals, was to write a book that someone could get on the plane in LaGuardia and assuming for a minute you didn't spend three hours on their tarmac, but you actually took off in relatively short order and flew to Chicago, you could have read most, if not all, of the book. I actually believe that idea books should be relatively short. If you write biography, if you write history, you've got license to write phonebooks. But if you write idea books, you ought to be able to express them rather succinctly. Mine's a little bit longer than some of Bob's book, which is, again, further tribute to him. As the old saw goes, if I had more time I could have made it shorter.

But, again, what he and Martin are doing here is important stuff. And so, for me, it's a real personal pleasure and a professional one to be up here with them.

I won't filibuster, unlike some others in this town, so I won't speak at great length. I'd rather have the conversation with these two gentlemen and then hear from you all. So let me just say a few things about the book because the title in some ways makes it somewhat clear, but not as clear as I thought based upon some of the reactions to it. Even when you think you're being clear, you're clearly not.

But the first thing I'd say it's not a book I set out to write. It's not a book I ever expected to write. I've been toiling in these vineyards for 3-1/2 or 4 decades as an academic and as a practitioner. And the idea that I would write a book that had so much of an emphasis on things domestic is just not a place I thought I'd get to.

Two things got me here. One is what I thought was a persistent pattern of overreach. You could trace it back to Vietnam, but in my case I put the emphasis on both Iraq and Afghanistan: Iraq beginning in 2003, Afghanistan not initially. I thought what the United States did after 9-11 was entirely called for to oust the Taliban government when they, in turn, would not oust al Qaeda. But I believe the decisions that began in 2008 and really took hold in 2009 under the current administration to triple U.S. force levels and to essentially make the United States a protagonist in Afghanistan civil war was simply not warranted,

that whatever we could accomplish I thought would likely not endure. And, in any event, I did not think that what we could accomplish would be commensurate with what it would cost. I'll be glad to speak about any of those judgments at length if anybody is interested, but I thought there was a pattern here of overreach, of trying to remake societies that would resist remaking.

And I also thought there was an emphasis on the Middle East that simply did not reflect America's strategic realities in two ways. It didn't reflect where I thought the greatest interests of the United States were to be found. And secondly, it didn't reflect where the instruments of power that we could bring to bear would likely accomplish the most.

So one was this pattern of persistent overreach and I thought over-focus on the greater Middle East. And the other phenomenon that brought me to write this book was a pattern of frustration, not so much with what we were doing, but in this case with what we were not able to do domestically. And it's a long list of things from an immigration system that seemed to have no strategic rationale to infrastructure. If you fly in and out of any of the airports in the city I live in, which is New York, you need say no more. You understand that we do not have a first-world infrastructure when it comes to our airports, our ports, our rail systems, our electricity grids, our roads, our bridges, you name it.

Our schools, I have to be careful about what I say now, but our elementary schools, with very few exceptions, are not world class. I made the comment that no one goes to a U.S. consulate around the world asking for a visa

to come to an elementary school in this country. I have now been corrected in quite a few cases by some very unhappy parents and principals. There are some exceptions, including some in this area, but they are just that, they are exceptions. The pattern is much more that people line up at our consulates around the world to go to Stanford and Princeton and Harvard and Yale and some other wonderful institutions of higher learning. Very few people line up to come to our K through 12, and for good reason. Indeed, many Americans who have the resources or the options opt out, whether it's charter schools or private schools.

And above all, what made me unhappy with what was going on at home was our inability or unwillingness to face up to our long-term entitlement problem. Don't let the recent CBO report lull you into any sense of complacency. We still face what could be an entitlement train wreck -- it's good to go back to transportation images for a second -- in 10 years. It's largely related to health care-related obligations, to a lesser extent to Social Security, but the gap between obligations and resources is enormous. And the temporary improvement in the budgetary situation comes at some cost given the sequester, which, to me, is an example of dumb not smart public policy.

But in any case, the benefit, if you will, when it comes to reducing the ratio of GDP to deficit is short-lived and the problems will come back in about 7 to 10 years. And the problem is you can't address entitlement challenges in a hurry. It's the equivalent of public policy supertankers: if you want to turn

around, you've got to turn around now. Otherwise, to switch metaphors yet again -- I apologize -- it's Lucy and the football. You can't tell someone who's 64 that you're going to move the retirement or that the set of expectations about health care is going to be fundamentally different. You've got to tell them when they're 50 or 55 and then they can adjust their lives and careers accordingly. The problem is we're not doing it; that we are simply not addressing those issues now even if they were to kick in down the road. So it's this combination of what I think is overreaching abroad and underperformance here at home that I think jeopardizes our position in the world to be the power the world needs.

Let me just make clear, I'm not talking about isolationism here. I think the United States needs to remain active in the world, but I am talking about an adjustment in our foreign policy. The word I like to use is "restoration," to restore some of the traditional balances in our public policy and in particular two. One is the balance within our foreign policy and the regional domain, essentially that we need to bring to an end this area of -- in which the greater Middle East absorbs the lion's share of our resources and our attention.

Instead I believe in this case, consistent with the administration, we ought to put far more emphasis on East Asia and the Pacific. That's where the great powers of the world tend to interact, less so in the Middle East. It's also where the instruments of national power that we have potentially to bring to bear are likely to have far greater effect. So I would put more -- dial up in that part of the world. I'm glad to see we've begun trade negotiations in earnest. I would

increase air and naval presence. I would increase our diplomatic efforts in dealing with some of the growing nationalism and frictions within and among the leading countries of the region. And I would put what you might describe as something of a ceiling. I would limit what it is the United States did in the greater Middle East, particularly when it came to getting involved in the internal workings of many of the countries.

I'd also do more in this part of the world. I actually think that North America has the chance to become not just energy self-sufficient, but more than that, an energy exporter to the rest of the world. And even more important, could become something of a global economic engine.

I believe that we're at a moment that it's increasingly clear that Asia growth is slowing down. African growth, while significant, is still too small in scale to be much of an engine. Latin American growth, with few exceptions such as Mexico, is slowing down. The United States and North America more broadly has a tremendous opportunity to grow at a robust pace. And I think that we can do those things if we focus more on this part of the world. So, again, part of what I want to do is restore the balances within American foreign policy.

And then second of all, I want to slightly restore balance between foreign policy and things domestic. And, again, it's a question of degree. These are dials, not switches, but I would put somewhat less emphasis on what goes on overseas and somewhat more emphasis here at home.

I think we have the opportunity to do that and this is where the

book arguably gets controversial, that I believe right now we face an international situation where there is something of a respite, there is something of time and space for the United States to place more emphasis at home. I don't see any great power or peer competitor now or for the foreseeable future. We ought to take advantage of that situation. And in so doing, by restoring the foundations of American power, I believe we make it less enticing for any peer competitor or superpower rival to emerge. And if one were so to calculate and emerge all the same, then we'd be much better positioned to deal with it.

So, again, this is not an isolationist track. It's actually a long-term internationalist track. But, you know, you've got to look at your situation. You've got to look at your needs and you've got to decide what your priorities are and where to choose.

And I would simply say that -- two last points and I'll stop, but this is also not an argument in any way that the United States is in decline. We're not. We're growing economically plus or minus 2 percent. The energy transformation is just that, it's transformational. It's quite remarkable what's happened in the space of a couple of years thanks to new technologies that were introduced out West. But, again, we're underperforming and I worry about that large chunks of our population, whether long-term unemployed or poorly educated, are simply not going to be competitive in the 21st century and we're not going to have the talent we need. And I think, again, this can be fixed through improving our schools and improving our educational system.

I think our competitiveness can be enhanced by improving our infrastructure as well. I actually think American economic growth should go back to at least post-World War II averages, and that's about 3-1/2 percent. We are growing far under the post-World War II average and there's no reason for it. And, you know, 2008 now is five years behind us, so whatever cyclical reasons have largely washed out. There's been a massive stimulus. We see the housing sector is now surprisingly robust. There are no structural reasons as best I can see it that explain why the United States is growing at a rate that's significantly below the historic norm, and we've got to fix that. So, again, the argument about decline is a red herring, but I think there is a reality that we are underperforming and the reason has less to do with the intellectual lack of ideas about what needs doing, but a lot of it comes down to politics in this town. And we can talk about it more, but that we have a political system that I think is simply not -- no, we have representatives, but they are not acting in a way that is representing in many cases the best interests of this country and where special interests continue to crowd out the national or the general interests.

I'd like to say one last thing and then I'll stop, which is what led me also to write this book is I'm worried. I am genuinely worried about this combination of I think doing the wrong things abroad and not doing the right things at home. And I'm worried that if we don't essentially sort ourselves out, a crisis will come at some point. We will not -- and it will do things to us that will force unfortunate choices upon us. I want to avoid that. I want to get the United

States on a sustainable trajectory.

And I would simply say that the stakes here are enormous because -- and I feel this strongly and it's often misunderstood, but the alternative to a U.S.-led world is not an anybody else-led world. It's not China, it's not Japan, it's not Europe, it's not India, it's not Brazil, it's not Russia, it's not anybody. And the reason, this is not a statement of arrogance, it's certainly not a statement of unilateralism, leadership implies followship, it's simply an objective statement: I don't see any other country out there that has the habits, the strength, and the inclination to play a world leadership role. You want to argue with me, I look forward to being persuaded otherwise. I'd actually welcome the fact that other countries were willing to play a large role in dealing with regional and global challenges. I simply don't see it.

So the alternative to a world in which the United States continues to play a leading role I think is a world that becomes increasingly messy, if not chaotic, and that's a world that does no good for the 7 billion out there and it does not good for the 300 million living here. So the world -- it's not just Americans who have a stake in the United States sorting itself out. The world has a stake in the United States sorting itself out. And the reason I wrote this book is I believe in the potential ability of ideas to affect debates and debates to affect policy.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. INDYK: Thank you very much, Richard. That was, I think, a

very concise summary of what is a very compelling and, I would add, well-written and convincing argument.

Bob, would you like to comment?

MR. KAGAN: Yeah. Well, first of all, I do recommend reading the book. It's an impressive book. It does make a lot of important points in a brief, concise, and easily read fashion, which I do admire.

I also admire Richard's ambition. As someone who tries to be a foreign policy expert without ever really feeling confident that I know enough to do that, I'm impressed with a guy who's willing to recommend an immigration policy, an energy policy, an education policy, fixing the political system of the United States. I think I've left some things out, but, in any case, it's an ambitious work and it's a tribute to Richard that he took on that task.

I would like to start where Richard ended because this is the main point of agreement that he and I have, which I don't think separates us from everybody, but it does, I think, separate us from some people. If you think back on the book that Fareed Zakaria wrote, *The Post-American World*, his depiction of a post-American world was that it would be pretty much just fine. It would be much like the American world in all respects only the United States would be retracting in terms of its power and the others would kind of be coming up to pick up the slack because they have an interest in this world order and that would include China, India, and the so-called rise of the rest.

I agree with Richard that the alternative to a world that is

fundamentally shaped by American power is not the same only without America. It's a different world. It's either a more chaotic world, a more disorderly world, probably a more war-like world, probably a less prosperous world, a less democratic world. And this is not to say that America's a uniquely wonderfully virtuous country. A lot of the things the United States provides are sort of by accident, but, nevertheless, it's in a unique position which is very hard for other powers to replicate. So that's our basic fundamental agreement, which I think is an important point. And I wish actually both our President and the members of our political establishments spent more time making that point to the American people because I think it's very easy for Americans to take for granted that there's a certain kind of world which would exist with or without American involvement at a pretty extensive level, and that's where Richard and I agree.

So then where do we part company? A couple of points that I would raise a couple of questions that I would raise in response to Richard's analysis. One is even as I read the book it doesn't seem to me to be anything like a zero-sum game as to whether we can do the things that you recommend that we do at home, but that somehow that requires us to do less abroad. It doesn't seem to me -- I didn't really see anything in your recommendations for education or immigration, et cetera, most of which I agree with as far as I know anything about them, but it didn't seem that any of them required less involvement overseas.

So it seems to me you've got two separate arguments that you're

making. One is we ought to get our house in order, but the other then, and this gets back to a discussion I think that Richard and I really in some way have been having for maybe 20 years, which is, you know, are we too -- setting that aside, are we still too involved? Are we too aggressive? Are we too jumping into military adventures, et cetera, et cetera?

And then I think we are then arguing over whether you were leaning forward, whether we're leaning backward, whether we should be doing more, whether we should be doing less. And even more specifically, what should we do in this particular case? You can have disagreements. I don't think Richard's position is we should never intervene anywhere. And my position is not that we should intervene everywhere despite what the caricatures often suggest. There are all kinds of parts of the world that I have no interest in intervening in. (Laughter)

MR. INDYK: Australia.

MR. KAGAN: But I can't think of any off the top of my head. (Laughter) No, but seriously, so then the question comes down to, you know, specific cases. And then the problem, it seems to me, is it is very easy to look back on conflicts that you can decide were a mistake. It's much harder to know before you undertake them that they're going to be a mistake. And I think that's where maybe Richard and I might have some disagreement.

And even on the issue, this wonderful now open and shut case of Iraq, there was a very broad consensus that Iraq was the right thing to do,

including among Democrats, Republicans. I recall Richard, you know, at the time, whether it was right afterwards, right after you left the government, you said, you know, it was kind of a 60/40 call. I think at the time it was 60/40 in favor. Later you said it was 60/40 against. Now you say it was obviously a terrible mistake. But I think 60/40 is probably about right. And a lot of these decisions are 55/45. And I don't think, unfortunately, there is a clear doctrine that tells you which one is right and which one is wrong.

And I guess I have a general sense that -- I happen to be writing a history right now and I'm writing about the '20s and the '30s. And by the way, they didn't call themselves isolationists either. And by the way, you're not making an isolationist point, as I say. They thought they were making a clear, discriminating point, which was we got into a war in Europe, it was a disaster, we should not do that again. They weren't saying let's pull back from Europe. They weren't saying let's pull back from the rest of the world. Let's pull back from Europe. Well, it turned out that that general approach of pulling back was disastrous. So you can make a mistake of pulling back too much and you can make a mistake of going forward too much.

And I guess if you want to ask me which mistake history tells me I'd rather make, pre-World War II we were too far pulled back; post-World War II we were too far, you could argue, pushed forward. We got into Korea, we got into Vietnam. We made a lot of mistaken interventions, Iraq, what have you. We also had some very successful interventions. We did remake some societies, so

to speak, whether it was Japan and Germany, elsewhere. We did intervene, I think, effectively in the Balkans despite similar concerns.

And so my basic view is can we -- the question I have is can we count on the order staying the same if we are not sufficiently active? And the paradox of American foreign policy, it seems to me, is that if you look at American foreign policy from World War II on, when we were really quite obsessively involving ourselves in the world, you can point to all the obvious mistakes, even disasters. But the net effect was we have actually preserved this world order which was destroyed in the first half of the 20th century.

And so I wish there were a doctrine that would tell us this you should do, this you shouldn't do, but, unfortunately, there isn't one and, therefore, you're going to have to make judgments. And then the question is should you, as I say, be leaning forward or leaning backward?

And I'm going to end by the two specific cases that are right in front of us and which also, unfortunately, Richard you may say the Middle East shouldn't matter to us anymore as much as it did, our interests have shifted, this has certainly been the administration's position, except, ironically, no sooner do administration officials go rushing out to Asia to talk about rebalancing and they get pulled back to go to some crisis in the Middle East. But in any case, we have two potential interventions staring us in the face and I would say the odds that the United States will use force either in Syria or in Iran and possibly both in the next two years are fairly high. Fairly high.

We already see -- I'm sure the administration is seriously considering a no-fly zone at this point in Syria. I believe they are seriously considering it. And Iran, the President and every official you talk to has been dead clear about his intention to do whatever it takes to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. He may not be telling the truth, but, if so, he's not telling the truth over and over and over again. I think he means it. And so there you have it.

And then the question is yes or no, Richard, on both of those. And I know I'm talking even longer than you did, but I'm going to stop with this. Syria has looked like a humanitarian crisis for quite some time. I think it is evolving into something more than a humanitarian issue. We have now a proxy war going on in Syria with Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah arming one side with sophisticated weaponry and sending troops in to help fight against the forces that we would prefer to support, who we're not supporting, but, nevertheless, it's a clear proxy war. It's going to be of greater than humanitarian significance if the end result of this, I would argue, is that Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah help Assad defeat this opposition. I just lay that out there for your perusal.

MR. INDYK: Well, it was, I would argue, always a strategic as well as humanitarian issue.

MR. KAGAN: Fair enough.

MR. INDYK: Richard, your response.

MR. HAASS: A couple points. One is of course it's impossible to

know before an intervention exactly, you know, whether it's right or wrong or how it's going to play out. You know, that's why it's called judgment. But one of the things we ought to have learned and is in three of what I would say our least successful interventions -- Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan -- is local realities count a lot: local history, local culture, local societies, politics, the makeup of the societies, the presence of nationalism, sectarianism, what have you. And I would say that in all three cases we've gotten into trouble when we didn't understand exactly what it was we were getting into.

And in the case of Iraq, I was 60/40 against the war, as I said at the time, thinking the Iraqis had weapons of mass destruction. If I had known then what I know now, that they did not, to me it would have been 90/10 against it. Not even a close call. In the case of Afghanistan, I was 90/10 against tripling the force levels. It wasn't a close call. So, yeah, some things are 60/40 or 51/49, but not all of them.

And sometimes, look, it's not only in hindsight. I actually think some of these things were knowable in advance. And people piled assumption upon assumption in places like Iraq. If you assume that if you go into a place like Iraq that you're going to be met with an excited, positive, happy populace that are, you know, going to be reading *The Federalist Papers* in Arabic, you know, translated to Arabic a week later, great. And if you can do all that with hardly any troops, great. I mean, if you basically build a case piled upon flawed assumptions, no wonder you do it. But, you know, your judgment is only going to

be as good as the accuracy of your assumptions. And some things are noble, maybe not with 100 percent confidence, but that's, again, you know, why this is an art and not a science.

But I don't think it's -- we don't have the luxury of saying you only know these things in hindsight. You've got to do your best analytical. And I would simply say that we get into trouble, whether it was anti-communism in one era or promoting democracy or what have you in the contemporary era, when we allow generalizations to overwhelm local specifics. I think the United States stubs its toe on these things.

Bob's first point, can we do less in the world and still do all we want at home, on one level yes, but there's two caveats. One is that to do a lot in the world does take a lot of resources. And the resources, while not the cause, say, of our budgetary problems, are a contributing factor. More important, I think there's a bandwidth question politically. And presidents who decide to do a lot abroad are simply not going to have as ambitious a domestic agenda. And I would say right now, I would say the marginal presidential political resource should go into addressing our flaws here at home more than, if you will, flaws in the world.

I continue to think -- again, it's not a question of withdrawal from the Middle East. We're talking rheostats or dials. We're not talking switches. That's why I never liked much the word "pivot."

Do I think we should be doing somewhat more in Asia?

Absolutely, with all the tools that we have. Should we be doing somewhat less in the Middle East? Yeah, I think on balance we should. Does that mean we withdraw from the Middle East, ignore the Middle East? Of course not. We have important interests there, obviously, proliferation. We have the vital interests of Israel's security. We have concerns about terrorism and all that.

What the Middle East doesn't have, though, in the direct sense, though, is great power involvement. And the Russian involvement, if you will, it's limited in the sense that Russia does not present to the world anything like the challenge that the Soviet Union did 50, 60 years ago or anything like Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan did. So this is not -- it's a proxy struggle to some extent, but not with the stakes. The Middle East is not Europe and that's where the analogy breaks down. You know, the balance in the Middle East today is not equivalent to the balance in Europe or Asia or at any time in modern history. Again, though, I'm not arguing for doing nothing.

And Bob's right, the two most pressing issues are what to do about Syria, what to do about Iran. I would say that -- and yes, Syria is more than a humanitarian struggle. From the outset it was a strategic one and I think as it evolves the strategic dimension of it has grown while the humanitarian dimension of it has grown as well. It's become, if you will, a bigger problem on both ends. I simply at the moment am not confident that I've heard anything like an intervention which would have results that are commensurate with our interests.

So I would say again, you know, my disagreement with the administration, by the way, if the administration, from my point of view is properly reticent about direct U.S. military involvement, then I would lean forward more on indirect military involvement in terms of supplying those elements of the opposition whose agendas we can live with, with greater means to help themselves. I find it an inconsistent position to be against direct involvement and putting such severe limits on indirect involvement given the interests that are at stake.

But I have profound questions about the wisdom of going down the direct military path not simply for the part of the struggle to hopefully remove Mr. Assad from power, though it may be very hard to remove him and his crowd from some sort of a carve-out within the country or in Lebanon or both, but then what comes after? I can imagine Syria being a prolonged effort and I'm just not sure getting involved in another prolonged effort in that part of the world will ever be worth it.

I actually Iran's a tougher test for me. I actually find the interests and the stakes there are greater. As I wrote the book it's the part of the book I struggled with most. That's a full confession. And no one who's against military action in Iran should think that that is a cost-free path. It's an expensive path, not simply because of what we said, but because of what the consequences would be if Iran were to have nuclear weapons. In terms of Iran's own behavior it would become that much more assertive. In terms of how others might be tempted to

follow suit, in terms of the implications for what the academics in places like this call crisis stability, we should not kid ourselves. That outcome would be extraordinarily costly and risky.

So, too, though, would be using military force in terms of what we would accomplish, uncertainty, more important how Iran would respond. And the possibility of that and the reason I struggled with it so much is I'm clearly against the situation where Iran has nuclear weapons. On the other hand, I understand that if you favor using military force it would, at a minimum, be inconsistent with my larger argument about reducing our involvement in the Middle East. It's because I so dislike these two choices and I admit that, I constantly come back on what is it we can do to avoid having to make this choice and what we can do with sanctions, with diplomacy, not just private diplomacy, but public diplomacy, covert tools, and so forth. I would like to, if possible, avoid having to make what I think would be a really fateful choice whichever way we went.

MR. INDYK: But we're heading towards a fateful choice.

MR. HAASS: Maybe.

MR. INDYK: Well, all right, we won't indulge in hypotheticals for the moment. Maybe we can come back to it. But one thing that struck me, Richard, was your argument, and I think it does reflect a deeper philosophical position on your part and a bit different to Bob's, which is that you are basically a Westphalian man. That is to say --

MR. HAASS: I've been called many things before.

MR. INDYK: Never that? But you say in the book that you think that U.S. policy should be focused more on shaping how other governments act beyond their borders rather than within their borders.

MR. HAASS: Yes, sir.

MR. INDYK: And I think that is a fundamental doctrinal position on your part.

MR. HAASS: No, it is. It is. And, again, it's the reason that I do not support or I reject the idea of a foreign policy based upon affecting things within borders, be it for purposes of alleviating humanitarian hardship, which is one school of American foreign policy thought, or promoting democracy. I simply don't think those are adequate rationales for steering American foreign policy. And, you know, I think, again, they don't lend themselves to the tools we have to bring to bear and I just believe we have greater interests that we cannot afford to put on the backseat next to those hopes.

MR. KAGAN: But, you know, your own views of various issues don't suggest that you think it's irrelevant what kind of regime is in power. I mean, obviously you are very worried about Iran getting a nuclear weapon or weapons, but you don't seem to be very concerned about India having nuclear weapons or France or Britain. And I think that, you know, you're clearly making a judgment in that case that the Iranian regime is a more dangerous regime than alternatives. And that's a judgment that Americans have made over and over again throughout their history, which is that, you know, by and large we are more

comfortable with democratic regimes wielding a lot of power than we are with dictatorial regimes wielding a lot of power. So if you start from that premise then you are already outside of a Westphalian world.

And the only question, again, we're arguing about, you know, details. I mean, no one is talking about intervening in Russia to overthrow Putin. The question is should we be doing more to support the opposition? Should we be making Russia's domestic behavior part of the issue in our dealings with them overall? Because I think there's a general judgment, which is, I think, demonstrated, that Putin's -- the nature of his regime affects the sort of generally anti-Western tone of his foreign policy. And so let me -- I mean, you know, you're not that Westphalian.

MR. HAASS: Well, again, you know, it's almost a replay of the previous argument. It's not all or nothing. I think it's easy to caricature people who are Westphalian or realists and say all they care about is the other.

MR. KAGAN: It's also easy to caricature the people on the other side. (Laughter)

MR. HAASS: I much prefer that.

MR. KAGAN: You like that one better.

MR. HAASS: No, so like, again, it's a question of percentages or other reasons. I think you can make the analytical point that the nature of regimes is significant vis-à-vis their behavior. It doesn't necessarily lead, therefore, to prescriptive recommendations.

MR. KAGAN: It doesn't necessarily, right.

MR. HAASS: So it's true, if tomorrow certain countries were to develop nuclear weapons I would have -- even though I wouldn't like the precedent, I would have less concern than a country like Iran just to name one or I disliked at the time and I dislike even more now the fact that Pakistan not only has nuclear weapons, but is churning them out faster than anybody else in the world. That to me is, in some ways, we haven't mentioned it here today, but it's the, to me, and it has been for some time, is the most worrisome foreign policy problem out there. And, again, it's one I think that resists treatment by the United States as our various efforts of either support or sanction have demonstrated.

MR. INDYK: But let's just look at the other side of the coin for a moment, which is the humanitarian issue. And, you know, we clearly have a humanitarian issue in Syria. We had one in Libya. And in Libya, the principal --

MR. HAASS: Well, in Libya, we didn't have one. What we had was a small one. We had the potential for one. And the United States did things on the assumption that Qaddafi's words were actually -- were not an empty threat, but an imminent threat. I'm not sure that was ever demonstrated, but I think Syria, it's a different situation.

MR. INDYK: So you would have not intervened in Libya?

MR. HAASS: Yeah, I would not have.

MR. INDYK: Right. But in Syria now there's a dramatic humanitarian problem that's real.

MR. HAASS: Oh, absolutely.

MR. INDYK: And so what do you do about that? What do you do about this principle of responsibility to protect?

MR. HAASS: Well, I'd say two things, one about Syria and one about the principle. About Syria, look, you've probably got upwards of probably close to a million and a half -- I think it's hard to get hard numbers now -- of internally displaced and refugees.

MR. INDYK: Five million actually.

MR. HAASS: Five million?

MR. INDYK: Internally displaced, yes.

MR. HAASS: Okay. Wow, I didn't realize it was that high. And a million and a half refugees give or take, 1.2?

MR. INDYK: Well, it's -- yeah, it could get up to 2-1/2 million.

MR. HAASS: Whatever. Look, whatever it is, it's awful, whatever the specific numbers are. So at a minimum, we want to do whatever we can. It's easier to help refugees than it is internally displaced. You do whatever you can. I think it's important to support Jordan and Turkey as much as -- you know, as bad as the situation is, it could get worse. And the last thing we need is, you know, the weakening of stability, particularly in Jordan. So you would want to do more there.

But at some point, you know, I'd say there's a limit to what humanitarian aid in the narrow sense can accomplish, so then you're back to the

basic argument. Do you want to intervene in terms of trying to change the fundamentals of the situation? I would say -- at the moment I would say not beyond what I've suggested, which is helping the opposition more, which I think would conceivably create greater rebel opposition-controlled areas, which would alleviate some of the humanitarian hardship.

Let me say something larger about you mentioned R2P, responsibility to protect. It's about, what, seven, eight years old now, since the United Nations passed this principle. I've got increasing problems with it. More important, so do a lot of the people who voted for it. What you have here is the diplomatic equivalent of buyer's remorse. And if you put it to a vote today it wouldn't pass. You simply would not have a consensus among many countries that R2P is a desirable or viable concept.

And the reason is that if you think I'm Westphalian, I'm nothing compared to a lot of these other countries. They're absolutists on sovereignty and they oppose this on the basis that it dilutes sovereignty and it creates conditions where when the international community judges the countries who violated the obligations of sovereignty, essentially it puts in motion, at least in principle, a set of actions that says, well, if you violated the obligations of sovereignty, now you're going to suffer the forfeiture of some of the advantages of sovereignty. And that's what R2P's about. And the problem is that a lot of the international community doesn't agree with this because they're all worried it might be used against them. The Chinese take that view, the Indians take that

view, the Russians take that view as do many others. And even those that don't disagree with the principle don't much like being put under pressure to commit resources. So it ends up with being a rather -- so it's not only a principle that many now don't embrace, but it's a principle that can't be put into practice in any wide sense. So I don't much like having on the books a statement like that.

And I actually think we also need more discretion. It gets back to the judgment argument or conversation that Bob and I were having. I don't think we can set as the standard a responsibility to protect. To use your position, if tomorrow 100,000 people get slaughtered in Red Square or Tiananmen Square, we're not going to call for the responsibility to protect. We can't do it. We wouldn't do it because other interests. We might have -- but I do think we have a responsibility to react and respond. So I think it has to be a much more tailored international approach. But I think the standard, what was said seven, eight years ago, is simply an unrealistic standard.

MR. KAGAN: Let me just -- you know, as a historical matter the notion that up until recently nations did not intervene in the internal affairs of other nations is one of the biggest jokes in history, including from the time of the signature of the Westphalian Treaty. I mean, nations are always against the intervention in the sovereign affairs or other nations when they are the victims and always in favor of it when they have the capacity to do it. I mean, Russia didn't mind intervening in the internal affairs of Georgia or many other neighboring states in various different ways. Of course they don't want the

world's liberal nations declaring that they have a right to do the same. I mean, we are engaged right now, and have been for quite some time, in a kind of struggle between autocracies and liberal democracies over what are the rules of the road. And autocracies are naturally not in the business of helping undermine other autocracies. But democracies ought to be in the business of trying to help democracy because that's just -- that is the struggle that we're engaged in. And the notion that if we don't declare a responsibility to protect, then we'll just go back to some everybody behaving according to the rules, I mean, that's just never been the case.

So -- which isn't to say, again, obviously we're going to have to be discriminating in what we exactly do in response to these things. The Chinese are opposed to this whole notion because, in fact, when they slaughtered people in Tiananmen Square they did suffer a very serious global reaction. They were very badly isolated. They paid a price economically. It's still a very sore subject with them. I think if the Russians killed 100,000 people in Red Square, I would hope the world would respond similarly, and I'm sure you would support it.

MR. HAASS: But I think that's why to me it's to respond, not necessarily to protect.

MR. KAGAN: Well, I don't know, does R2P require military intervention?

MR. HAASS: It doesn't require it, but it has a set of measures. But it clearly raises expectations beyond that I think are capable of being fulfilled

in most instances.

MR. INDYK: Beyond that, there is a question of what shape the emerging global order should take.

MR. HAASS: Absolutely.

MR. INDYK: And I wonder whether you would address that. Bob and I argue that it should be an extension of the liberal international order that the United States established after the Second World War. Is that your view or is it a little bit different?

MR. HAASS: No, it looks very much like that. And two books you mentioned, you were generous enough to mention some earlier books of mine, but *The Opportunity* is just about that. It's basically laying out an international order that is very much based on that, but updated for some of the modern challenges. And indeed, in that book I argue not for a foreign policy doctrine of restoration as I did here, but 10 or 15 years ago I argued for a foreign policy doctrine of integration, that essentially the principal purpose of America in the world ought to be to bring about, if you will, a slightly modified global international order consistent with those principles, but able to deal with the challenges of this era. Because unlike previous eras of history where the principal challenges I think were rival great powers who had decidedly different views of international order, I think actually think still the principal challenge of this era is global issues, whether it's the regulation of the cyber domain or climate change or proliferation, disease management, or what have you, keep maintaining an open financial and

trading system. So very much so.

That is, again, one of the reasons I argue now for restoration. And in the book I try to make the -- it's almost one of a degree of sequentialism, a degree of simultaneity. I would love to keep us in a position or get us in a position where we're strong enough to promote this and where others would basically take, as a result, the conclusion that it makes no sense to try to overthrow a basically liberal post-World War II order, but essentially they've got to more work within it. And yes, there's a role in shaping it. It's not take it or leave it coming from the United States. But that ought to be -- I would love for the day to come when one of John Kerry's successors doesn't spend his time doing what John Kerry's doing, but, among other things, spend more of his time having this conversation with counterparts around the world. Or put it another way, in some ways the conversation about to happen next week in California between the President and the new -- is to me more the sort of diplomacy I want to see and less of the sort that we're seeing going on with what I fear will be a fairly unproductive conference at best about Syria.

MR. INDYK: In Geneva next week.

MR. HAASS: Yeah, I'm quite worried about that.

MR. INDYK: Yeah, yeah. Bob, you want to come in on that issue?

MR. KAGAN: You know, it's just that sometimes I feel like we are all so enthralled by what's new that it's a little bit easy to forget the things that,

unfortunately, are not new and are still drivers. And I believe that it would be nice to think that, you know, all we need to do with the Chinese is discuss what the world order should look like, but I can easily envision a scenario which is very similar to previous scenarios where some dispute over Iraq and the South China Sea gets ratcheted up for all kinds of reasons on both sides and, guess what, we're back to the old days again. And yes, we would like to avoid that and they wanted to avoid it in 1914, too, for the most part, okay, but failed to do so even though they also were living in their own version of a globalized world.

So I think we can't lose sight of this sort of -- there's a certain bedrock reality which has not changed.

MR. HAASS: Sure. Agree 100 percent. It's one of the reasons, again, I want to see us spending more time out in the Asia Pacific. I am exactly worried about that.

I think the most demanding set of diplomatic problems is going to be out there because of these various disputes over territory, rocks, sea space, air space, you name it, against the backdrop of a lack of dealing with the historical baggage of the last 70, 80 years. Nothing like the equivalent of the reconciliation in Europe has come to this part of the world. You don't have anything like the degree of institutionalization in terms of regional frameworks, particularly in the political-military sphere. So yeah, I'm worried.

I'm actually worried that the Asia Pacific does have some -- I know there are lots of differences, there are some uncomfortable similarities to pre-

World War I Europe. And I worry about the, you feel it, the degree of nationalism in the air. And there's lots of reasons for it in China and Japan, South Korea, and elsewhere, but that's a dangerous brew. And, again, I am as concerned about that as anything, which, in part, explains -- and I do think there it's a perfect example where the United States I would say has an essential role.

I get criticized for a lot of things in this book because one of the things I keep saying it's somehow that you're saying that the Asian countries can't manage stability and security in Asia. Well, I'm not sure I want to test that possibility. And, you know, one can imagine different scenarios, say, with North Korea, where suddenly Japan and South Korea revisit not just their military postures, but their nuclear postures. One can imagine various incidents developing. I think the United States is essential if this part of the world is going to remain stable. It's had three decades essentially where the history of this part of the world has been more dominated by economics than, in some ways, is historically the norm. I'd like to keep it abnormal in that sense and reduce the political-military component of contemporary Asian dynamics, but I don't think that happens without the United States playing a central role.

MR. INDYK: Since much of your book was focused on domestic policy I feel like I have to ask you about a domestic issue.

MR. HAASS: As reluctantly as you are --

MR. INDYK: I am reluctant to do so. We can certainly go to your questions in the audience momentarily and maybe you'll be willing to engage

Richard on this. But immigration, we do have an immigration reform bill or two of them working their way through the Congress and Senate. You used the word "strategic." You feel that the mistake was we weren't strategic enough in our immigration policy.

MR. HAASS: Right.

MR. INDYK: Do you think that what's happening now in the reform process is going to address those strategic concerns you had?

MR. HAASS: Not quite. For those of you who haven't had the 2-1/2 hours free to read the book, the argument is that our -- there's many things that are wrong with our immigration policy and I strongly support a path to citizenship. I don't think it's healthy to have a 11 or 12 million people outside the mainstream of an economy or society. I think lots of the security issues have been taken care of by ways we've beefed up our security and by the fact -- and by Mexican demographics in economic performance taking care of most of the flows from that direction. What interested me most about immigration is the questions of green cards and H1B visas. And after 9-11, for reasons I still do not understand, we reduced the number of H1B visas, so I want to dramatically increase them.

But more broadly, American immigration policy -- actually one of the fun parts of writing this book is I learned a lot about some of these issues. You go back to the history of it, a lot of our immigration policy was not based on a strategic notion. It was based on a very human one, which is family unification.

So essentially -- so you had country quotas that were often, quite honestly, decided by political power on the Hill, so certain countries which had large immigrant populations here tended to get large quotas.

And then secondly, within that, you had people who had husbands, wives, children, cousins, parents, whatever, perfectly good -- you know, I'm not against families; let me make that clear on the record in case my kids or my wife's listening to this -- the family unification. But it's very different among other countries, from Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and others, where you have a strategic approach to immigration; where while you can't -- yes, there's a degree, if you will, for family, large amounts of the totals for immigration are basically allocated on "a point system," where different skill sets gets certain degrees of points, different educational levels of attainment, and so forth. And you basically -- and you can argue this is too much centralized planning, but just bear with me for a second. But essentially you allocate the right to immigrate or stay in part based upon matching the skill sets of immigrants and the needs of the economy and the society, the actual needs or the projected needs. And I simply think that we ought to do more of that in this case.

MR. INDYK: Great. Let's go to your questions. I'd ask you, first of all, wait for the microphone. Second, identify yourself. And three, make sure there's a question mark at the end of your sentence. Syed?

MR. WERNER: Thank you.

MR. INDYK: Oh, sorry. Syed, we'll come to you next.

MR. WERNER: Robert Werner of the Managing Uncertainty Group. There's a new Quinnipiac poll out showing Obama's rating at 45 percent. Given that and given the alleged improprieties in the IRS and the AP situations, how do you think this will affect the President's ability to conduct foreign policy?

MR. HAASS: One immediate potential effect is it might make it slightly more difficult to pass immigration reform, which worries me. That seemed to have been gaining a lot of momentum and then when the IRS and AP -- and I do think they're scandals -- came out, it seemed to have slightly derailed them and changed a little bit the political chemistry in this town. You all live here, I don't. I live in that center of America known as Manhattan. But my own sense is it lost some of the momentum.

I don't think it's lost for good, but it -- I think more broadly on the question of conducting foreign policy, I actually don't think it has much impact in the sense that under our political system, from everything from the formal system of the Constitution to practice, presidents have a lot more latitude when it comes to conducting foreign policy than things domestic, which tend to -- particularly those things domestic which have to go through legislation. There's aspects of domestic which don't have to go through legislation, whether it's through administrative-type things or certain agencies have a degree of discretion. But foreign policy, a larger chunk, if you will, of foreign policy, can be undertaken by the Executive Branch without formal or certainly advanced congressional buy-in.

And also, the tendency of second-term presidents, because of

that, also emphasize foreign policy more. As they are seen as “lame ducks,” the temptation is often to become more of a foreign policy president. So I would think that all those things will happen.

MR. WERNER: Can I just add to that. What about the impact on foreign leaders and the way they approach, the way they assess Obama?

MR. HAASS: Well, again, I’d have two answers. One of the many reasons I didn’t like what happened with the IRS and AP situations is I think one of the most important things that makes our foreign policy what it is is not what it is we say. It’s not the talking points of diplomats, but it’s the example we set as a government and a society. And I didn’t like what I saw as abuse of executive power. In those instances I think it sends a bad message to the rest of the world. It makes it harder for us to go in and preach. So I just thought -- so I don’t like those sorts of things.

I don’t think, though, more broadly it weakens -- again, my hunch is where we often exaggerate the “weakness” of an American president, and virtually every president goes through periods of in his presidency where he is “weakened” by things domestic, this or that problem or scandal, political, personal, you name it, and in every case in my experience foreigners kind of deal with them pretty much as close as to business as usual. So I think we tend to exaggerate it much more than others do. We bring a lot to the table regardless of these situations.

MR. INDYK: Syed Irqal.

MR. IRQAL: Thank you. My name's Syed Irqal. I'm a Palestinian journalist. I want to ask you, sir, that you're saying that we ought to be withdrawing or scaling back engagement in the Middle East.

MR. HAASS: Yeah.

MR. IRQAL: But you're also suggesting that there are two pressing problems: Syria and Iran. I want to ask you where resolving the Palestinian-Israeli priority falls?

MR. KAGAN: Yeah, Richard. (Laughter)

MR. IRQAL: Where they fall as you being to, you know, scale back and withdraw. Where should it be on the priority? Thank you.

MR. HAASS: (Laughter) For those who didn't hear, there's the question about where does the United States addressing the Israeli-Palestinian challenge/problem fit in this? I would not say terribly high and the reasons are several.

Many, many, many books ago -- Martin, as generous as he was, didn't get back to that one -- I wrote a book about ripeness and the preconditions that need to exist before a diplomat is likely to experience success. And I simply don't see the prerequisites in place when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian issue or, more broadly, given a couple reasons. One is the nature of the region. You don't need me to spell it out to you to get what's going on in Syria, what's going on with Iran, what's going on in Jordan, Lebanon, essentially Egypt. Israel, both its distant and its near security environment has deteriorated markedly. And the

two countries with whom Israel has a permanent formal peace treaty -- I say format peace treaty, you know, Egypt is under a government, it's not clear what their political trajectory will be and there's obviously some concerns about Jordan. You've got still the divisions within the Palestinian world.

Plus within Israel itself you not only don't have a sense of urgency, but, more important, you've got a government that's not a peace cabinet. It's not a war cabinet. It's how do we get the orthodox to bear their fair share of domestic obligations cabinet. And it just doesn't seem to me that this is a cabinet that's going to be well positioned for tackling big questions of war or peace.

It's quite possible I'm wrong. As Bob would say, I'm wrong a lot on a lot of things and that's okay.

MR. KAGAN: I didn't say anything of the kind. (Laughter)

MR. HAASS: Just say I am wrong, though. Just say I am wrong and that there is -- and I hope I am and I hope that John Kerry by chipping away at this can make some real progress. I'd love to be wrong.

But then the question is how much of a difference would it make? And the question I'm thinking increasingly is would this be fundamental to the trajectory of Iran's nuclear ambitions and dealing with it? Probably not. Would this be essential to the trajectory of the violence going on in and around Syria? Probably not. Would it stabilize Iraq from going through a new wave of sectarian violence? Probably not.

And, again, I'm not saying it wouldn't be worth and it wouldn't be

wonderful, particularly for Israelis and Palestinians. Would it solve terrorism? No, because the terrorists, many of them, would go into overdrive because the compromises that would be inherent in any conceivable agreement would be anathema to people who don't want to see a two-state solution. They have no interest in a two-state solution, the most extreme terrorists.

So all I'm simply saying, that if I'm wrong and the situation turns out to be much more ripe than I'm imagining, I don't believe it would necessarily make the Middle East a fundamentally different place at this stage. I think the sources of conflict and friction and instability in the Middle East are not inextricably linked or, in many cases, even directly linked to the fate of the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

Again, don't get me wrong, I would love to see there be progress there. I'm doubtful there will be. And even if there were, I don't think -- for a long time there's been a lot of people in our field, and Martin may disagree with me profoundly, but a lot of people in our field who have argued that this is the key to unlocking the Middle East. I simply do not believe that is right. Again, it's not an argument against progress, but we shouldn't exaggerate the positive repercussions of it if it were to happen.

MR. INDYK: Well, I would just say on that that progress on the Palestinian issue would make a lot of the other things we're trying to do easier to do.

MR. HAASS: Why?

MR. INDYK: Why? Because it would improve our credibility in the region. Because it would make it easier for Arab states to cooperate with Israel on strategic issues. But I didn't want to get into an argument with you about that. (Laughter) What I found was interesting about what you just set up as the three questions that kind of -- or the three criteria for whether you got involved on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and the answers to those were no, the answers to those are yes when it comes to intervention in Syria. Would it make a different on Iran and Iran's nuclear program? What were your other -- would it --

MR. HAASS: On that I'm not so sure. I mean, on that one --

MR. INDYK: Would it make a difference in terms of stabilizing the region?

MR. HAASS: Oh, okay. But two things. One, on the Iran nuclear one, I'm actually not sure. The argument is that if the United States does things in Syria that gives the Iranians a strategic setback in Syria -- I can argue that one round or flat. I could also see that make the Iranians more anxious to develop their nuclear. I just don't -- it's not self-evident.

Second of all, I don't think there's any chance that the diplomatic path in Syria can work now. If there's progress to be had in Syria that would have positive repercussions, as you suggest, it's not going to happen because of what's going to take place in Geneva. That's all I'm -- that's what I want to say there.

MR. INDYK: Okay. Tamara Wittes and then we'll go down the

back.

MS. WITTES: Thanks. Hi, Tamara Wittes from Brookings. Good to see you. A question for --

MR. HAASS: Doesn't the home team hold back, though?

(Laughter)

MR. INDYK: No, we've lined them up.

MS. WITTES: I couldn't resist the opportunity. A question for you about the domestic context for American foreign policy. I sense that you agreed with Bob's assessment of your book as, among other things, an argument for continued American leadership in the world.

MR. HAASS: I would agree with his assessment of the book is short.

MS. WITTES: But beyond the exhaustion after a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, it seems to me that these three least successful interventions you named -- Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan -- have led, for many Americans, to a sense not just of exhaustion, but of incompetence; that the United States just isn't very good not only at state building, but isn't very good at doing big things in the world. And if you look at the polls today, we see more isolationist, if you want to put a label on it, sentiment today in U.S. than we've seen since shortly after the Cold War ended. So I wonder if you can talk a little bit about, as you seek rebalancing, how do you make the case for continued American leadership abroad while you're responding to this demand for more

American leadership at home?

MR. HAASS: Well, I think where you began is exactly right, I think there is intervention fatigue. And if you look at the polls that is translated into a certain alienation or distancing from foreign policy in general. There's not a lot of things as less central to many Americans. No, and I worry about that. I worry that isolationism could grow in this context. And I think that's one of the reasons I'm always against overreaching is I think it inevitably or close to inevitably sets up this kind of a reaction. You kind of give foreign policy a bad name and then people are indiscriminate in their rejection of foreign policy. So I think it's going to take a lot of effort to sort of -- and we need to be out there explaining it.

I'm so old-fashioned, but I believe that the greatest classroom in America is called the Oval Office. And I believe -- I'm a great believer in fireside chats. I don't care if you make them a digital fireside chat, but fireside chats, to use it to explain and to teach about why American, say, presence in Korea, Japan, and Asia still is a strategic -- it's a bargain, and about why pulling back is really bad and how is it the world matters in so many ways. But I worry our schools aren't teaching it, quite honestly.

You know, a 10-second thing on what's near and dear to my heart. You know, we have all these requirements for STEM subjects, for teaching the basics of expression, thinking. Right, great. Math, science, great. But then when budgets shrink and you load on more specific requirements you get a crowding out. So what are the big losers? Civics, social studies, art,

music, physical education. But I worry, yeah, in particularly about the fact that we don't teach civics nearly as well as we used to where you can graduate from 99.9 percent of the colleges and universities in this country without having a required course in some of the basics of our political system or about the world. The degree of -- the diluted quality, if you will, of distributional requirements and such is that you can graduate in ways that really do not prepare you for the world you are about to enter. We call it commencement. Every once in a while I challenge the whole idea. So one of the ways you make up for it is from the Oval Office.

I actually liked the President's speech a lot the other day at NDU. I know a lot of people had criticisms of some of the specifics. What I liked about it, I thought it was what is one of the best moments of his presidency where I kind of thought he was thinking out loud a bit and showing some of the tradeoffs and some of the considerations. This is tough, this is important. Here's kind of where I'm leaning, here is what I'm thinking, and so forth. I liked it. I wish he would do that on a regular basis on a range of subjects, whether it was entitlements or why the world matters and so forth because I worry. I mean, your point is well taken. And I think you see in the Republican Party now you've got schools of thought, as well as the Democratic Party. You don't have a consensus in either party. And actually the foreign policy debates, I don't know if you agree with this, don't really line up well across party lines. It's a lot like you don't have a Democratic foreign policy or a Republican, but within each you've got tendencies in schools.

MR. KAGAN: That's been true for a long time, I think.

MR. HAASS: Yeah.

MR. KAGAN: Yeah.

MR. HAASS: Yeah, I think you're right. And I worry about, though, that the one that is "isolationists," I know it's a loaded word, minimalist, choose whatever word you want, I worry that that is gaining ground.

MR. KAGAN: If you've read Rand Paul's speech or his speeches, I wonder what you would differ with given what you've just said. What would you say differently than Rand Paul has said?

MR. HAASS: Well, a lot about -- there's, for example, a tremendous bias against American forces around the world and bases and things like that. I mean, and that's one of the place I -- I don't know if you get it, but whenever I do radio kind of talk shows and all that, a lot of questions are like, well, why do we still have any forces in Europe or why do we have forces in Korea or in Asia? Why do we need so large of a military? I mean, some of the basic sort of questions. Why do we still have these obligations, alliances, relationships? And I just -- so I think, you know, some of what he says is okay to question some of what we've done, yeah. And he has some doubts and all that and is asking some useful questions, but I just think that entire approach just goes ways too far.

MR. INDYK: Let's go down to the back, please.

MR. JOSEPH: Thank you, Martin. My name's Edward Joseph

from across the street at Johns Hopkins SAIS. Richard, if I take one of your key points correctly, you say that what we should focus on more is shaping behavior or worry more about shaping behavior of countries outside of their borders as opposed to inside.

MR. HAASS: Correct.

MR. JOSEPH: And you cite Iraq and Afghanistan, I believe, as cases in point to support your general thesis. But if we look at Afghanistan, wasn't there another lesson? Didn't we in the early and mid-1990s turn our back on Afghanistan, focus on domestic priorities? And then, in turn, internally, quite internally, the country became a haven for terrorists. We got hit. And in addition, didn't we learn that issues like treatment of women are not just sort of aspirational, nice, humanitarian goals, but, in fact, have important security consequences for us? So that's the first question.

Second, I was glad you raised Pakistan and the concern there. Of course, you made the point that neither support nor pressure seems to have worked. My boss across the street, Vali Nasr, might differ with you in that in his book *The Dispensable Nation*. But more importantly, if the expected withdrawal from Afghanistan leads to a collapse of the Karzai regime there or a collapse of Kabul essentially and it becomes a haven for the Pakistani Taliban to destabilize Pakistan, a country, as you noted, that is pumping out nuclear weapons, would that change any of your thinking? Would that change any of your thought about what our interests are, intervention, adjusting the rheostat?

MR. KAGAN: Got it. Thank you very much.

MR. HAASS: I want to take the second one first because I'm glad you asked it. I find that argument always striking, which is a generous word, that -- because here what have the Pakistanis done? They have now, for decades, provided a sanctuary to essentially to destabilize Afghanistan in order to steer it in a direction that they deem desirable. Among other things, they have allowed the Taliban to flourish. Some of the Taliban that flourish have their eyes on Afghanistan, some of them have their eyes on Pakistan, in part because the border doesn't matter to a lot of those people for all sorts of historic reasons.

So then the argument is that we now have to stay the course in Afghanistan, so the destabilized country that's come about, in no small part because of Pakistani behavior, might threaten Pakistan? I find that rich. So we're supposed to be more worried about Pakistani stability than the Pakistanis are and try to deal with it? Good luck.

Look, I don't have any brilliant ideas about Pakistan. And, you know, I'm always reminded of Harold Brown's old comment about the Soviet Union during the Cold War and he once said, you know, about the old arms race thing, when we build, they build and when we don't build, they build. And that's sort of how I feel about Pakistan. When we sanction them, they go ahead and do their nuclear thing and they support terrorists or tolerate them. And when we provide massive amounts to aid, they do the same thing. This to me is a -- it's a weak state. It's not a failed state, it's a weak state. It's a potential failed state.

But even if it doesn't go that far, it's a weak state.

As I said before, it's got the greatest concentration of terrorists and the fastest-growing nuclear arsenal in the world. It's been a democracy. I'll give you a slightly post-Westphalian analysis here. It's been a democracy in name only for most of its existence, but just that. It's got powerful security forces that have their own -- and then you've got large parts of the country that are really beyond the authority of the government. So it's -- but the idea that we now have to stay the course in Afghanistan, at the same time they continue to do things that destabilize Afghanistan, in order to stabilize Pakistan? That's gone way beyond that. Quite honestly, I think we're kidding ourselves if we think that Afghanistan is the key to the future orientation or stability of Pakistan. Pakistan is the key to the future orientation and stability of Pakistan, not Afghanistan. And I just think in Afghanistan we've got to be modest.

And I don't think, by the way, you know, who knows, but I think the Taliban will make some inroads in the South given the Pashtun associations and the rest. But I think there's enough now that's happened there and enough of a decentralized quality. I don't think you have "the fall of Afghanistan" or anything like it. The idea of turning away, again, it's a question of degree.

You know, after the last Soviet forces left Afghanistan, if my memory serves me right, it was February 15, 1989. It was actually three weeks into 41's presidency. And, you know, you could argue that the United States could and should have paid more attention. Fair enough. And I think there may

or may not have been some things we could have done that we didn't do. So I think the argument is not to ignore these situations, but like everything else, it's the question of how much involvement, what kind of involvement.

So I'm not saying that we should walk away from Afghanistan. I think we should -- I would favor one thing in Afghanistan I wish we'd done in Iraq, which is keep a residual force. I actually would like to keep a force of 10, 15,000, whatever, Americans there to help train, help advise. I think it makes a big psychological and political presence. We should continue economic aid and so forth. So I don't think we walk away from it.

But we've got to avoid these all or nothing choices. We've got to also come up with forms of American involvement around the world that we can scale. And something like that, that's closer to being scalable and also with an element of offshore counterterrorism, if need be, with drones and special forces. That's the sort of thing I would for Afghanistan in the long run and I wish we'd done it in Iraq.

MR. INDYK: Bob? I think this is going to have to be the last question.

MR. MALLOY: Yeah. My name is Pat Malloy. I'm a trade lawyer. I was on the Senate Banking Committee staff, general counsel and senior staff member for many years. And then I was on the China Commission. I remember you testified before our commission hearing up in the Council on Foreign Relations. So I'm very focused on the economic and the financial issues. And

what I see going on is that we've run about $6 trillion worth of trade deficits in the last 15 years and I think Americans don't think that economic globalization is working out for them, and that this is a very serious problem and that the government is not paying attention to this.

Much of the trade deficit is in manufactured goods as well and that their own standard of living is stagnant or slipping away from them, and they resent going over and rebuilding countries like Iraq and other places when they really feel the attention of the government should be here on trying to figure out how to make our own economy more competitive. So I'm just wondering if you -- your presentation has been terrific.

MR. HAASS: Well, thank you.

MR. MALLOY: But I just wanted to hit that issue.

MR. HAASS: Yeah, I'd say two or three things. One is that Americans tend to blame globalization heavily for, you're right, middle class incomes have stagnated for more than a decade now, a lot of jobs have been lost, probably permanently. The bigger "culprit" is technology. It's less to do with foreign competition than it is technology. Technology has just made a lot of jobs go away and they ain't coming back.

Second of all, economic globalization in many ways is a good thing: American exports. And obviously, you know, China's one of our fastest-growing export markets. So I worry what would happen were it otherwise.

Thirdly, American manufacturing's enjoying something a

renaissance, in large part because of new technologies, but also the cheaper energy prices. Transformation's the right word for oil and gas, particularly what's going on. And suddenly in the United States, and in some cases Mexico and it's hard to say where one begins and the other ends economically in some cases given how things are built, but manufacturing's coming back because the combination of we don't have to pay for shipping charges around the world. Natural gas prices are local, they're not global, unlike oil prices, so natural gas prices might be one-fifth, one-sixth, one-seventh what they are in other parts around the world. Labor costs are now beginning to go up in some other countries, so the differential there is going down. So this combination has made American manufacturing much better.

The problem is, in many cases, and the reason it hasn't helped a lot of people, one of the reasons, is that we don't have skill sets that match the jobs. And one of the things I talked about in the book and I feel powerfully about is we have an educational system in this country that essentially frontloads education, high school, maybe college, whatever. So you're done by the time, what, you're 22, 23. Well, then you've got four or five decades of life. There's no chance on God's green earth that the education you'll receive by the time you're 22 is going to be enough to see you through. Zero chance. You're going to have probably, I don't know, the average person, maybe 10 jobs if they're lucky in that time. We have to have capacities and mechanisms for constant retraining and re-education, for lifelong education. We don't have them.

And long-term unemployment's a real problem because the gap between what you have and what the market's calling for only grows every day you're out of a job. So we have got to begin to address in this country the skills gap. We have hundreds of thousands of jobs, by some counts even higher, going empty because we don't have Americans with the skill set that can fill them. We have got to then come up with -- either it's community colleges, corporate-community partnerships, lifelong education opportunities in order to get Americans to the position where they can begin to fill the jobs.

But I actually feel quite positive about the recovery our economy. And the problem, though, is going to be -- is technology, that we're going to -- I mean, even one of the areas I talk a lot about, which is infrastructure, a lot of infrastructure now is not guys out there in the streets with shovels. It's at a degree of high-tech because of modernization that the employment density, if you will, of infrastructure is much less than it used to be. Still will help us in unemployment, but not to the extent it would have decades ago. So it just puts an emphasis on education that's going to keep us high on, if you will, the global talent chain in terms of value added, and that's what we have to do.

MR. INDYK: Richard, thank you for coming back to Brookings where you're always welcome.

MR. HAASS: Appreciate it.

MR. INDYK: Bob, thank you for joining in the conversation.

(Applause)

Great book, great argument, a lot of wisdom. Buy it, especially if you're on your way to Chicago. (Laughter)

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2016