

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
SAUL/ZILKHA ROOMS

U.S. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SECOND OBAMA
ADMINISTRATION: PRIORITIES AND REALITIES

Washington, D.C.
Friday, October 11, 2013

PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction:

STROBE TALBOTT
President
The Brookings Institution

MUHARREM YILMAZ
President
Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD)

Moderator:

KEMAL KIRIŞCI
TUSIAD Senior Fellow and Director, Turkey Project
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

ROBERT KAGAN
Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution

SOLI ÖZEL
Professor
Kadir Has University, Istanbul

TAMARA WITTES
Senior Fellow and Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: This is obviously a very, very high-class audience because usually at Brookings we have raucous meetings around here, and it's usually very, very hard to get everybody to settle down. So obviously, our guests are going to set a new standard of courtesy and attention, and we really appreciate that. I'm Strobe Talbott, by the way, I should introduce myself. It is my honor, and it has been for the last dozen years or so, to have as one of the great jobs in the world, and that is to work for Brookings scholars. And there are a couple of them here this afternoon, and I will mention them.

But it's also been my honor and pleasure over the years, going back to my days as a foreign correspondent, to spend quite a bit of time, both in Turkey and on Turkey. That part of my past has followed me here to Brookings. And one of the most important relationships that all of us at Brookings have with Turkey and with the private sector in Turkey, is with TUSIAD. And it's a great pleasure to welcome all of you, Muharrem and all of your colleagues.

We have had a number of meetings, both here in Washington and in Istanbul. In fact, I'm going to be enjoying your hospitality at the end of November. I think that everybody here -- and it looks like there are quite a few who are in standing-room-only positions in the back -- there are some seats by the way for those of you who don't

want to stand for the next hour and a half. Please come up into the front here. Don't be bashful.

We have an institutional partnership with TUSIAD, and particularly for those in the room who are not connected with TUSIAD, I just want to say a word about it. Because of TUSIAD's role as one of the most significant civil society organizations in Turkey, and because of its interest and expertise in subjects that we try to follow here at Brookings, we have strengthened that partnership in recent years. It has been particularly important to us in our Turkey program here at Brookings. We're now lucky enough to have -- thanks to the support of TUSIAD, a TUSIAD senior fellowship at Brookings. And Kemal Kirişci, who is over here in the corner, is the incumbent in that position, and you will be hearing from him of course during the discussion today.

We also have a series of publications known as the *Turkey Project Policy Paper Series*. I almost tripped up on that, but it's already something that we have good reason to be proud of. In the most recent paper, you'll have a chance, if you haven't seen it already, to read our other Kemal, Kemal Derviş, who has written an article on the implications of what we hope will be the transatlantic trade investment pact for Turkey's relationship with the rest of the transatlantic community, and, of course, with the United States as well.

Today's conversation could hardly be more timely and

important. Both because of the topic, which is events in the greater Middle East, and also because of the unique importance that Turkey is playing in that area, and being affected, I might say. So both actively and passively, this is a subject of immense importance to Turkey; and therefore, of immense importance to the United States given our longstanding NATO relationship with Turkey and the conviction of so many of us in this country. And I might add, even though we don't have a party line on anything at Brookings, we are very much into healthy and civil disagreement. I think that there are a couple of subjects where you wouldn't find very much disagreement at the Brookings Institution, and that is the importance of Turkey as a major European country that should have been long before now, part of the European union. Not that the European Union is at the top of its brand at the moment, but that's another issue that may or may not come up in discussions here today.

Going back to the situation in the Middle East -- and we have a number of our experts here on that -- all of us in this town and on this side of the Atlantic are aware that while Turkey has tried to play a role throughout the area 360 degrees, it is particularly preoccupied, as is the United States, with the situation in Syria. My friend, Osman Boyner, was mentioning to me as we were just coming in here, the effect on the Turkish society and Turkish economy of a great many refugees that have come over from Syria. And of course the dangers go far beyond that, as we all

know. And you have experienced some of those dangers as well.

We have a terrific group of scholars who are going to be speaking to you today. For those in the room who don't know the rich program that our TUSIAD friends have had here in Washington, they spent some time this morning with the new assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs I guess is now the full title. Victoria Nuland is a foreign service officer, which is to say a professional diplomat who has served both Republican and Democratic administrations, and who I worked for back in the 1990's when I was in the State Department. She was my single, most important, most influential, and most valued colleague in my own eight years trying to contribute to the foreign policy of the United States.

Brookings is very much a family affair, which is one reason that I'm very glad Mrs. Yilmaz could be with us today. It's a family affair in another respect, which is having spent some time this morning with Victoria, you're going to spend some time with Mr. Nuland -- no, I'm sorry, his name is Bob Kagan. Yes, right. Bob Kagan is a senior fellow here. I think all of you know of his work on the changing nature of the international system. He's also an historian. He is hard at work on the second volume of an extraordinary history of American foreign policy with the provocative title, *Dangerous Nation*. He may or may not have reason to allude to that in the course of what you hear from him.

Tamara Wittes is the director of our Saban Center on Middle East studies here. Soli Özel, you all know of course. He has been a friend to many of us, and I might say in my own case, a mentor and teacher over the years. I have already introduced Kemal Kirişci. So Muharrem, I would ask you to come up and formally get us going here, and I look forward to being present for as long as I can. (Applause).

MR. YILMAZ: Dear guests, on behalf of TUSIAD, I would like to welcome you all to our joint conference with the Brookings Institution. The Brookings TUSIAD program on Turkey started in 2007. We have been able to see on many occasions, the impact it had on Washington's perception of Turkey. I would like to thank all of those who have made this cooperation possible, fruitful, and promising: President Strobe Talbott, Ambassador Mark Parris, Ms. Fiona Hill; Mr. Ömer Taspinar, our former Washington representative, Mr. Abdullah Okurs; and our current representative, Mr. Baris Ornarli.

This year we decided to take this partnership to a higher level by establishing the Turkey forum that is directed by Professor Kemal Kirişci, who also holds the TUSIAD chair at Brookings. We greatly value the relations between the United States and Turkey. In fact, all our efforts as TUSIAD since our decision to open a representative office in Washington, focused on this call. So far, some progress has been made to diversify Turkish/American relations and move them away from an

explicit concentration on strategic issues. But there is more ground to be covered.

Dear guests, as this panel will discuss, a new phase in world politics is opening. The United States is approaching the world with changed priorities and policies' adjustment. Those shifts reflect more limited resources. As a new world order is arising, it is our view that the United States and Turkey should work evermore closely to attain their common strategic goals.

Lately, there have been many disagreements between Ankara and Washington. These disagreements should not hide the commonality of interest that exists between us. For us, the right track is our western alliance and the values we share with its members. A secular and democratic Turkey enriched the role of law and fundamental rights and freedoms are secured is indispensable for us.

Dear guests, we are proud of the TUSIAD working joint program. I am confident that it will soon be the main source of understanding and analyzing Turkey's politics and its long-term direction. Already, the report of Professor Kirişci on the transatlantic partnership process is a major contribution to an important debate.

As I conclude, I am happy to announce an upcoming conference that TUSIAD will hold in Istanbul in December. We look forward to reciprocating Brookings' hospitality when we host president,

Strobe Talbott, and his colleagues in Istanbul. Thank you for your attention and enjoy the panel. Thank you. (Applause).

MR. KIRIŞCI: I would like to extend to you all a good afternoon. Thank you for being with us today. I'd like to thank Strobe and also Muharrem for their introductory remarks. And I need not say how exciting it has been so far for me holding this position and being part of the Brookings family as you said. I'm also delighted that we have received this TUSIAD delegation in full force. Washington D.C. needs such a presence.

I'd like to proceed to our conference. Strobe has already introduced the speakers. Bob doesn't need a major introduction, and neither does Tamara, but maybe some of you might not be very familiar with Soli. Soli is a very old friend of mine. We've come a long way in academia, and his ideas, his analysis of Turkish politics and foreign policy enriches not only my understanding of Turkish and regional politics, but also a lot of his readers and students. Soli is a professor at Kadir Has University right by the Golden Horn and works very closely with TUSIAD as well. He does have a column at a newspaper called *Haberturk*. Although reading you might get you into some trouble in Turkey at times. So far he's managed to survive himself.

Today's topic is U.S. global leadership in the second Obama administration: priorities and realities. I think as we are closing, coming to

the end of his first year in office, Barak Obama, clearly the United States has been facing a heavy agenda of foreign policy issues. The Middle East is certainly a very important, if not domineering part of the agenda. That agenda, I say, has very positive aspects to it which references have been made to negotiating the transatlantic trade and investment partnership with EU, and on the other hand the transpacific partnership with the Asia Pacific countries.

But beyond that, and maybe with the exception of the Israeli/Palestinian negotiations that is being led by our vice president, the head of our foreign policy program, who is on leave right now, I sometimes wonder whether we have much positive news coming out from the Middle East. You're well aware what's happening in Syria -- the humanitarian disaster there. Strobe has made references to the refugees. Actually, we just published with Elizabeth Ferris from the IDP program, a report on the humanitarian crisis in Syria and next week on Friday, we're flying to Turkey and to the border area to study the problem at a closer range.

But you're also aware that after the chemical weapons were deployed or used in the outskirts of Damascus, the diplomacy and the politics surrounding the crisis in Syria has taken an unexpected turn. At one point the expectation was that the objective was a regime change and may even -- military intervention at a brief moment was on the cards.

Today the emphasis is much more on finding a diplomatic

solution to the crisis, and this leaves the Turkish foreign policy in a somewhat difficult position to use a diplomatic word there and needing substantive recalibration. Although we do see signs of it at least on the horizon out there.

Egypt, a topic that I know Bob follows very closely, has again taken an unexpected turn earlier in the summer. Today you've, I'm sure read the news that the United States -- dare I say something undiplomatic, Bob, and say finally withdrawn part of the assistance, especially military assistance to Egypt. That's a challenge out there.

Depending on if you see the full or the empty side of the glass, what's happened at the general assembly of the United Nations with the arrival of the newly elected president of Iran and the prospects of hopefully some diplomatic breakthrough in U.S./Iranian relations, may actually open a new page in terms of the Middle East and especially in the polarization that has taken place there.

So with those remarks, I'd like to turn the floor to Bob Kagan, who is going to make his remarks about 15 minutes, and then we will turn to his discussions. Bob, it's a personal pleasure and honor for me to be here with you.

MR. KAGAN: Well, the feeling is mutual, Kemal. Thank you very much, and thank you to TUSIAD, and it's a real pleasure to be here.

I'm going to talk about America and the world, and less

about U.S./Turkish relations for a couple of reasons. One is that I'm not really an expert on U.S./Turkish relations other than sharing a love for Istanbul. But the other Strobe already mentioned, which is if I say anything interesting about U.S./Turkish relations, I'll wind up sleeping on the couch tonight and that's not my preference. We'll maybe get into some of it. I do agree on how important U.S./Turkish relations are and I did -- I will say I did spend six years living in Europe telling Europeans that they really should bring Turkey into the European Union which made me an extremely unpopular person in Belgium anyway. But I just want you to know, I did my best.

What I want to talk about today is relevant to Turkey, and particularly relevant to the Middle East, and it is the very interesting, I think, paradox that a United States that remains extremely powerful, and is in fact in roughly as strong a position internationally as it has often been throughout the past 60 years; nevertheless, is acting like a weak and beleaguered power in the international system. I think even when I say the first part, I probably get a number of puzzled looks, so let me just spend a moment talking about why I think that all this talk that we've had in recent years about the decline or relative decline in the United States, is really turning out to be a bunch of baloney, to use an international relations' term.

You know, if you look at the measure that people most

focused on, obviously when the United States was in the depths of the recession, which is when a lot of these theories were propounded, the United States was in relative decline. In fact, the American economy, although moving slowly out of recession, is doing fairly well. It has a reasonable rate of growth, lower than other periods, but certainly higher than other periods as well. But most importantly, when people are talking about the relative position of the United States, I think the general consensus among economists these days is that what you can certainly say about the United States is that it's doing pretty well in a pretty bad world situation. And particularly when you compare it to the famous bricks, the countries that were doing so well by comparison in 2007, 2008, and which gave rise to this whole notion of America's relative decline. If you think back on the book that Fareed Zakaria was famous for, *The Post-American World*, it was a post-American world because the bricks were rising relative to the United States. Well now we see, as a number of economists and some people at Morgan Stanley in particular have pointed out, that the bricks are falling on harder times. Their growth rates have slowed, and the general prediction is that their growth rates may fall to roughly the same growth rate as the United States. But of course the United States is a much larger economy, they have much smaller economies in some cases.

The exception to this pattern -- one of them is Turkey, I'm

happy to say that Turkish growth continues to be stronger. China may or may not get out of its difficulties, but in any case, it's no longer possible to say that what we've got is the bricks rising and the Americans relatively falling. That's just simply not the case.

In terms of other measures of American influence, again, if you look around the world and say, if not the United States, who? It's very hard to see who that is. I don't see China or India or Brazil stepping into a role of greater global involvement. No one seems to be -- if the United States is losing influence and is devolving responsibility as some claim, I don't see who's picking it up.

In fact, as far as I'm able to tell, when things happen today, it still is a result at some point of American initiative. Certainly there is pressure on the American military budget, but, of course, let's not forget, as people never tire of saying, the American military budget, even under the current cuts, is larger than the next ten military budgets in the world combined. Americans, for better or for worse, American fighters have tremendous experience, which most other nations don't. And there are new technologies. Again, and I say definitely for better or for worse, we won't maybe know yet, but the innovation of drones is going to revolutionize the deployment of power. And for the moment, the United States, and I say for the moment, has a near monopoly on that capability.

So it seems to me by any reasonable measure, the United

States should not be a country that should be regarded as in decline, weak, incapable. Even when you talk about limited resources -- well resources are always limited. They're never unlimited. I think America has the sufficient resources to perform the role that it has played often in the past, and especially since World War II.

What's clear, however, is that American's don't feel this way. They don't feel that they have that kind of capacity. They feel like they are in dire straits. And, of course, when you're living through government shutdowns and this kind of nonsense, not to mention just emerging from recession, it's easy to feel that way. And, of course, there are other explanations for why Americans feel this way.

The obvious one that people point to are the unpleasant experiences of the Iraq and Afghan wars, which seem to suggest, as Tami has pointed out, the futility or the incapacity, even under circumstances of strength, to be able to succeed in those kinds of endeavors. That certainly is true.

In general, Americans, by the way, periodically go through bouts of declinism. Almost every ten years there's a perception of decline, so that's sort of typical of Americans. And then I would add, and I think quite importantly, the role of the Obama administration. Now let me hasten to say that even though I'm associated with Republicans -- although mostly I don't particularly like Republicans, but I, nevertheless,

am affiliated in some regards with Republicans, that despite that I've actually tried to keep a pretty open mind about the Obama administration. I've written some positive things about them. I was optimistic about Obama at one time or another. You can check the record. It's out there somewhere. Trust me.

But honestly as I sit here right now, I really believe that we've had a very, very poorly run foreign policy for the past six years. And I think it's probably at the end of the day, and I've tried to think about what it's all about. I really think it's because this president just doesn't care very much about foreign policy.

Now where this has had the greatest and most obvious impact, turning to our general subject, is the Middle East. Because here you have a situation where you have a series of historic events, convulsions. I'm not here to say which way the Arab Spring ends up. I'm not an Arab winter kind of guy. I'd like to be optimistic, but what's undoubtedly the case, is that we have had a moment here in that part of the world, just as we had a moment in Europe at one time. We had a moment in East Asia, and we've had a moment here. And the American response to this moment, especially if you compare it to the American response to a similar moment in Europe and a similar moment in Asia, has been really -- there's been no real American response. And it's not an accident.

President Obama came into office and made very clear to the American people that he wanted to pull out of all this involvement in the Middle East. There was a great, increasing belief that it was nothing but trouble, that there was nothing to be gained from it. After all, aren't we becoming energy independent and what have you, and why do we even need to be in the Middle East anymore?

And so at a time of great turmoil and crisis in the Middle East, crisis and opportunity, the United States has absented itself in a way that I think is almost unprecedented. Never mind that we have not provided the kind of economic assistance that we did provide to Europe after both World War II and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. But even sort of normal American kinds of influence have not been exerted. And Kemal mentioned Egypt, and Egypt is the most extraordinary case of underachievement by the United States that I have seen in quite some time.

You know, people who think that American has no influence, they want to laugh when you say, well your billion and a half aid to Egypt doesn't mean anything because the Saudis have ten billion that they can give them tomorrow. And the other Gulf states have billions that they can give them. That's always been true. The Saudis have been rich for a long time is my understanding. I'm not a Middle East expert, but I think the Saudis have been rich for a long time. They've always had the money out

there, but in my impression, the Egyptian military values the strategic relationship with the United States very highly. And if this administration had had the courage to put that relationship at risk in a serious fashion, I believe that we might not have had what we've had now. And we also say if the United States had used the influence it had when Morsi was president, to try to influence Morsi's behavior, and if the United States had used the influence it had when Mubarak was president, to influence Mubarak's behavior, to have him conduct a kind of opening that might have prevented some of the worst aspects of this revolution from occurring, we would be in better shape right now.

But this administration is so convinced of two things. One, that America really doesn't have the capacity to have that kind of influence -- and I won't even get into Syria, where I think they've shown that, again and again. But also that the American people don't want to have this kind of role and wouldn't support it.

And in fact it seems to me that what the administration has created, is what I guess they call a feedback loop. The American people send signals that they don't want to be engaged. The administration reinforces those signals and sends them back saying, right, we don't want to be engaged, and we couldn't do anything, which then reinforces even more strongly American public opinion.

And right now as Americans -- I hate to say this -- it's truly

unfortunate. Right now Americans look at the Middle East and their basic attitude is they should all just kill each other, and we don't want to be involved, and we don't want to get into it. And there's a very rising tide of Islamic phobia in the United States that affects Americans thinking about everything that happens in the Middle East, but none of which leads them to say, we need to be involved. And again, this is reinforced by the administration.

And so the net result is that a region that it seems to me, if history is any kind of guide, requires some kind of outside involvement, lest it erupt into complete turmoil, is now lacking that kind of outside involvement. Now I'm not here to say -- and I will preempt my colleagues to say, I'm not here to say that when American does get involved, it always does so brilliantly. It does not. And that's true of every part of the world that America's gotten involved with. America is a far from perfect, far from perfect deployer of its own power.

But nevertheless, I believe that in Syria, in Egypt, there has been a necessity for a stronger American role, and for all kinds of reasons the United States has not been playing it. It seems to me, if history is any guide, the only moment at which the United States will finally involve itself in a meaningful way, will be when it's become so awful, so disastrous, that the price of American involvement is going to be much, much, much higher. By the way, that's in keeping with the American character. We

stayed out of Europe for 20 years, and then had to go fight World War II. It wouldn't be the first time, but I wish that we would understand the stakes and understand the importance of getting America back into the game. I'll leave it at that.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Bob. I personally would have loved to continue to listen to your line. It's like music as one listens to you. I don't know if it's Chopin or Mozart, but I also suspect that many have this big question in their mind, what should the U.S. have been doing this far? But I'll let that question hang because I know Tamara is jumping up and down. You've made references to a period when Tamara served as deputy assistant for Middle East affairs in the Department of State. So I suspect she will have a few things to say and respond to Bob.

MS. WITTES: Sure, well I don't want to -- first of all, let me say thank you to TUSIAD, and it's really a treat for me to be here. To emphasize too that -- I'm not sure we're going to be perhaps point/counterpoint, because I think that a number of the points that Bob just made I would not quarrel with. But I do want to try and delve a little bit into the interaction between the domestic politics and policy environment here in the United States that the Obama administration is dealing with, and the realities on the ground in the Middle East today. The interaction between those two things and how it is that we are where we are.

I think we can all be forgiven if we arrive here in mid-October

in Washington with a real sense of whiplash about America's policy toward the Middle East. If you were to have taken a snapshot even six or eight months ago, you would have been talking about a pivot away from the region, a withdrawal, a desire to disengage, as Bob was describing. If you had taken a snapshot in late August or early September, only six or eight weeks ago, it seemed as though the United States was perhaps on the precipice of a new military engagement in the Middle East. And here we are in mid-October looking at a president who has committed himself to not one, not two, but three high-stakes diplomatic gambits in the region with Iran, with Syria's chemical weapons, and an effort to resolve the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

It's been an amazing seesaw. So how are we to understand this? I would agree with Bob that this was a president who spent his first four years in an effort to roll back in many ways an approach to the Middle East, that I think he said several times, he feels that he was elected at least in part to dismantle. An approach that was perceived by many here and by many in the region as overly military, too heavy of a military footprint, too much unilateral leadership, and determination of approaches by the United States. And as former national security advisor, Tom Donilon, put it in a speech to the Asia Society this spring, a region in which the United States was relatively over-invested as compared to other parts of the world like Asia. And yet, events in the region seemed to, in a

sense, drag the administration back in almost against its will.

Now it's certainly the case that events on the ground in the region have prevented a situation in which the United States could say this region is relatively stable. There is a defined order that seems like it will be sustainable. We can, therefore, turn relative attention and resources elsewhere. The region is undergoing a tectonic shift, and this presents a problem for the United States and for every actor in and around this region because for half a century, the United States has essentially been a defender of the regional status quo in terms of the balance of power and the dominant actors. And there is now no status quo to defend. So there's a basic strategic re-orientation that will have to take place, but at a moment when the trajectory of the Middle East itself is so unclear, it's hard for the United States to figure out what that re-orientation should look like.

Yes, the American public is tired. It's impatient. It's inward-looking. Yes, our resources are constrained. All of those things play a role. But I think that there's a third factor as well that has complicated America's approach to the region over the last couple of years, and in many ways will prevent the United States from disengaging in some of the ways that might have been expected. And that third factor is about America's relationships with key actors in the region. Precisely because the region has been so thoroughly upended. The regional order has been so thoroughly upended, precisely because there's no status quo left to

defend. It used to be that the United States and its major regional partners were very much on the same page supporting that same status quo agenda. At this time, I think there are some pretty fundamental differences between the United States and key regional actors in assessing what caused this earthquake? What are the roots of instability in the region today? What are the primary threats to us, to our partners in the region today? And what is necessary to return the regional order to some sort of stability?

I think there are disagreements between the United States and Arab states on those questions. I think we've seen those emerge in Bahrain, in Egypt. I think there are differences between the United States and Israel on some of these questions. I think there are some differences between the United States and Turkey on some of these questions. And I hope that we'll have a chance to discuss all of that.

But until those disagreements are resolved, not only will you see continued demands from the region for greater American engagement, but what you see is, I think, quite a lot of lobbying, of advocacy toward the White House about what view it should take of the region, what approach it should take. And those advocates are rarely unified.

It's notable to me in the face of these pressures, in the face of the turmoil in the region, and the threats that it's produced, where

President Obama has chosen now to place his bets. And let's take a look at the speech that he gave at the U.N. a few weeks ago. He set aside -- he didn't repudiate, but I would say he very clearly set aside the rhetoric that he enunciated in May 2011. The approach to the region that that speech laid out, which was one rooted in the premise that the Arab revolutions were driven by bottom-up demands for more transparent accountable, responsive government, in other words, for democracy and human rights. That the region had become unstable because leaders were not responding to those demands, and its stability would not return until there was more democratic government. That rhetoric was pretty much absent from the U.N. speech. And I think what we saw instead was a focus on nearer term goals, the protection of narrow security interests when it comes to Egypt, and advancing diplomatic solutions to these major challenges with Syria, Iran, and the Arab/Israeli conflict.

But it's interesting what the president achieved in making this shift. He took a moment of intense demand for a larger American role, demand and ambivalence, let's be very clear, but demand nonetheless, and he seemed to be saying three things I would say came up in that speech. First, to the American public -- I hear you. I'm not opposing you. I understand your mood, but that doesn't mean we can do nothing. If we do nothing, there are bad consequences and we can't afford that.

Number two, I think was a message addressed to the world at large, saying, I haven't changed. I still have a preference for non-military tools, and for non-unilateral approaches.

And the third message, therefore, to key international partners and members of the international community like Russia and China, was setting expectations. Saying, if you want me to maintain these preferences, and if you want me to restrain the aspects of American engagement that you say you found so troubling with the last guy, then you have to step up. This is not going to be a unilateral process. This diplomacy demands that we all pitch in.

I think those were the three core messages that the president sent in New York. The big question hanging out there, of course, will he pull it off? I said these are three high stakes diplomatic gambits. They are. They are all high-wire acts without a net. What happens if one or more of these diplomatic efforts fails to resolve the question to which it is addressed? Well, with Iran we know the answer. It's hanging out there, and it is repeatedly articulated. And it's a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

On Syria, the demands for American military engagement that were staved off by this U.S./Russian compact over chemical weapons, will immediately return fiercer for the intervening period of time. And on the Israeli/Palestinian peace process, I don't think there's an

answer that involves American military engagement, and I don't think there's a demand for that. But I think we can expect, that given the dynamics on the ground between the parties, even with the very careful lowering of expectations by the United States and everybody else for these talks, if these talks break down, if there is no political horizon for Israelis and Palestinians, we know what the trajectory looks like, and it is really, really de-stabilizing.

So just to end with this point, I think the White House would argue that they have been very disciplined and very restrained in maintaining their intentions and their basic foreign policy approach in the face of tremendous pressure. And this allows them to focus their attention in places where they think they can make a real difference. But these are high-risk endeavors, and should they fail, I think the administration is going to find itself without a lot of support here at home, and without a very strong foundation abroad for taking steps that it might then need to take to address the crises that will result. And I'll stop there.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Tamara. That was a very nuanced approach there, and many questions, many thoughts that we ought to bear in mind. As I listened to Bob, as well as Tamara, of course I couldn't help but look at these things from the perspective of Turkey. Especially when Bob was talking about the American tradition of involvement and how it fluctuates. The Turkish tradition was not to get involved in the

Middle East in any manner, maybe other than an economic one.

Whereas, with the Arab Spring or the tectonic shifts that Tamara made references to, Turkey or the Turkish government did take one mighty nosedive into it. And on Syria took a very categorical position on Egypt, took a very categorical position on Iran. It was always much more nuanced. I think it's a product of a tradition of long bi-lateral relations going back centuries. But these categorical positions that Turkey has taken, when juxtapositioned with the positions that the U.S. has taken, it looks like it has left Turkey a little bit out in the cold. And there are even references in the media saying the lone man out there.

And I think it's at that point that I should bring in Soli. Soli has been writing extensively on this, and I look forward to hearing his views. Where do we go from here in the case of Turkey? And how is Turkey going to respond to these three points, especially that Tamara has raise, three high-wire acts.

MR. ÖZEL: How should I know? (Laughter)

MR. KIRIŞCI: I know you're going to say Turkey's in one high, high, high-wire act.

MR. ÖZEL: That's also true.

MR. KIRIŞCI: We should have a big net.

MR. ÖZEL: I'll try to speak to how I see Turkish foreign policy shaping or how it needs to be shaped in my view, and how

Turkish/American relations -- what kind of course Turkish/American relations need to take. But before that, I mean it's not always that I find the opportunity to say something about Robert Kagan in his presence. I'm just going to quote someone who I'm sure you know and maybe respect, and that's Zbigniew Brzezinski's latest book, *Strategic Vision* has a couple of passages that I personally like a lot.

Breskinsky says in the book at one point that no success at home can be truly comprehensive, if resources are wasted on debilitating foreign misadventures. And he's been a close advisor to the president to the best of my knowledge.

Then in what I consider to be a very poetic thing, and I think it speaks to the hubris of the Bush administration and those who intellectually supported that administration's policies. He writes, "States, like individuals, are driven by inherited propensities, the traditional geopolitical inclinations and their sense of history. And they differ in their ability to discriminate between patient ambition and imprudent self-delusion." This was, of course, comparing China and the United States, but, of course, I always took the imprudent self-delusion to refer to Turkey. But in this case as well, you never know how patient you should be about your ambition, and how much you can allow yourself to be self-deluded. And that is, in my view, something that both the United States and Turkey need to confront.

Now, when we look at American foreign policy -- again, as you said, six months ago we wished the world disappeared, then six weeks ago, okay, red lines have been crossed. We're going to deploy the full force of the United States, and then, but let me ask Congress. The moment anybody hears in the world the word Congress, I guess like you, it's like oh my God, okay. And then of course this speech which I personally found to be a seminal speech. I mean they falter -- everything that's said there, the premise is as you've explained, but it also set a new framework, and that I personally find very exciting.

Otherwise, I guess the rest of the world and most of the people in Turkey look at Obama's policy abroad, and there are really no surprises in our reaction. Cold words, Turks like everybody else want prestige, credibility, decisiveness or lack thereof. So for a lot of people in Turkey, the Obama administration with its willy nilly actions, with its indecisiveness, has really lost a lot of credibility. It has lost a lot of prestige, and my God, the world has no point of reference anymore.

I personally -- again this is probably a minority, I personally don't share that. And I'll look at it in a very simplistic way. However he may have come to that stop, the president did not want to get into a military engagement in Syria, and he's not militarily engaged there. He favored from day one, an opening with Iran, and now has one. Again, if these things fail, what he needs to do may be much more cumbersome for

the United States, and he may not find the political capital to pursue that. But from the beginning this is what he wanted to do, or didn't want to do, and this is where he finds himself.

I also find that part of the criticism addressed to this administration is a bit unfair. It infuriates us at times as well -- you know, why couldn't you have done this? Why couldn't you have done that? Why did you give the Cairo speech if you were not going to follow through and all that? However, my sense of what the Obama administration or the president himself tried to do when he came to power was to basically change the rhetoric, change the style of engaging with the rest of the world, and basically offer a hand to almost everyone -- to the Chinese, to the Russians, to the Middle Easterners, whatever. And I remember thinking at the time, well, he has made his offers. It looks genuine. What if people don't grab his hand?

And I think this is precisely what happened. Nobody responded. Everybody wanted to be a free rider. I mean the Chinese buy more oil from the Middle East than you do. Do they do anything constructive? No, and then I understand the calculation. Why should we be bearing the burden if that burden is going to be depleting our resources that really need to be replenished. Maybe we need more time to replenish them before we actually get engaged so actively in almost every problem. So I kind of understand the logic, although I am fearful of failures and

consequences.

So in my view, the president actually is doing what he had in mind when he came to power. He's bringing America's ambitions in harmony with its newly reduced capacities because the fact that you are in absolute terms the best endowed country politically, economically, and militarily. There are other forces that we did not really have to take into account in previous times that are actually capable of basically making your ambitions collapse, which is what happened in Iraq, kind of what happened in Vietnam. That is, you're not just dealing with states, you deal with non-state actors. And you deal with intangible things such as nationalism, and you really cannot run the world as in the 19th century at gunpoint.

He's revitalizing American power. For me that is welcome, for others it may not be. Now whether or not all of these trends are going to outlive his term remains to be seen. The result may be a consequence of his success or failure in these two issues he identified as his priorities in the U.N. speech. Again, like Tamara, I take that speech to be a very important speech and maybe full of traps too. And that's of course Iran and the Israeli/Palestinian issue.

Now, obviously the fact that I have a more positive view of where the administration stands on foreign policy, does not mean I think it's faultless. Needless to say, the Middle East is in a state of unraveling.

We can debate endlessly the role of the United States because of its wars and because, I think, of its long drawn out support of the status quo has played in this, but there's no point in getting into that.

Turkey, obviously, has been affected by what had happened, what is happening since the Gulf War of 1990/91 arguably, and certainly since the Iraq war, the environment has changed, mostly favorably for Turkey, but lately in a risk-producing way. Despite appearances, my view of Turkish/American relations during the turbulence of the past decade and a half is that relations were set on a strong foundation. In the decade to the eruption of Arab revolts in particular, and in spite of occasional moments of friction and tension, the fundamental commonality of interest held.

I look at three speeches. President Clinton comes to Turkey in 1999, gives this speech, we all loved it. Five years later President Bush comes to Turkey. He's supposed to be the non-Clinton. He gives exactly the same speech. Five years later President Obama comes to Turkey. He's supposed to be the non-Bush. He gives another variation, you know, he's more poetic, it's no longer strategic partnership, but it's model partnership. So at the end of the day, despite all the frictions, these things fundamentally held. Alright?

Turkey benefited immensely, in my view, from its alliance with the United States during that period, and surprisingly, it benefited

both from the failures and the successes of the United States in Iraq. The two countries succeeded in managing their relations well and mostly, not always, in harmony.

Since the outbreak of the Arab revolts, things have moved in the wrong direction. I would attribute this as much to Turkey's hubris, always a distorter of proper analysis, as the Americans know from the Iraq war, as to the indecisiveness of American foreign policy. In Turkey, I think we desperately, we're in dire need of a reassessment of our foreign policy. We have to really sit down seriously without getting into a blame game and reconsider how profoundly the environment has changed in which we are trying to conduct our foreign policy. And I think we should be downgrading the ideological driving force that has been, I think, sitting in the driver's seat for our (inaudible) conduct of our foreign policy in the year and a half.

Now I see in this country a mood of dismissiveness about Turkey. I personally think that is wrong headed. The country can actually make mistakes in its policies. It doesn't change the fundamentals of its being or its presence and of its importance, in my view.

Turkey will have to adjust itself to the fact that being right politically on any given matter -- and I think it was right to oppose the coup, whether or not one liked the brotherhood. I think it was right to want to get rid of Bashar al-Assad. By the way, President Obama said it even

before our prime minister did. Being right is not enough. To show to the world that you are right, necessitates the use of the right language, proper words, and management skills in diplomatic relations.

A good starting point in the bilateral relations, in my view, would be to acknowledge once again that the goals for the two countries remain common. Both countries want to get rid of al-Assad clan. We may not agree on who should replace him. Both countries wish to avoid an Iran that has nuclear weapons. Obviously, on methods we have differed more than occasionally. And obviously, bring to closure the Israeli/Palestinian issue.

And that brings me to my final point. When we deal with the foreign policy of any given country, most of the time, not always, domestic politics do not really get in the way. Okay? Even in Turkey where 80 percent of the population seems to be against the conduct of policy vis-a-vis Syria, the government still continues in its wrong-headed way. But nobody thinks of the Turkish parliament or Turkish public opinion to drastically reverse or to be an obstacle to the conduct of Turkish foreign policy.

In the United States the equilibrium in your domestic politics, the power of certain lobbies or segments of the foreign policy making apparatuses, institutions, and whatever, is so overwhelming that even when the country tries what the rest of the world might consider the right

path -- let's say in the Israeli/Palestinian issue, and of course Brookings has that thankless job of doing what nobody else would have done before, it is very difficult to count on the United States on the Israeli/Palestinian issue. It is very difficult to trust that the United States can actually go in one direction without being restricted because of its domestic politics. And the same fear personally I have, and I think I shared this with many other people around the world, not just in Turkey, the same thing may play out in Iran as well.

So the cautionary remarks that you made, Tamara, I think hold, not because the United States does not have the capability of conducting these policies correctly, but domestic politics may get in the way. I'll stop here.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I warned you about Soli, but I must also confess that I do agree with a lot of the lines he has shared with us. Maybe one point I'd like to add from the Turkey perspective is that -- Soli, I don't know if you'll agree with me, there is the beginnings of an effort to adjust to the changes that have occurred in the Middle East, or an effort to adjust Turkish foreign policy, especially on Syria, maybe to a lesser, invisible manner on Egypt as well. And I'm also tempted to argue that that adjustment is not only a response to maybe the U.S. or the international environment, but also a response to that so-called bottom-up process. Maybe public opinion doesn't still play the role that it plays here in the

U.S., but there are also other domestic interest groups that have expressed one way or the other, their discomfort with the foreign policy that unfolded until very recently.

We still have 20 minutes for debate and discussion. I thought, Tamara And Bob, the way we could do it is take questions and then maybe also put your responses together for the benefit of those who are with us. Yes, the floor is yours. Steve, you're right in the front, but let me first take a question from the back and I'll come to you. Alright? You are strategically (inaudible). Yes, I'm leading from behind.

MR. LOCANDRO: Hello, my question is directed --

MR. KIRIŞCI: Please your name and also some background, institution. We have a tradition at Brookings that the person who takes the floor shares their name with us, and their institutional affiliation.

MR. LOCANDRO: My name is Kula Locandro. I am a Mexican citizen, and I was just interested to come here to understand more about international politics and the Middle East. I do not come from a specific institution.

So my question is, what is the influence that public opinion has in the Middle East in terms to try to change the discourse of public opinion inside the public and inside the media of Turkey? So how does other Islamic or Arab states -- the way that they feel, and the way that they

create a sense of public policy regarding public opinion, what is impact it has in Turkish politics. Thank you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Okay, thank you. Steve, let's take three questions. Steve.

MR. LARRABEE: Steve Larrabee, the RAND Corporation. Bob, I agree with a lot of what you said. I think the declinism is overdrawn, but I also think that you've drawn a little bit of a caricature of the Obama administration. I think Tamara has added some useful additions. After all, I mean, when you think -- the Obama administration inherited a certain situation. It didn't create the problems in the Middle East and, in fact, those problems in some ways, in many ways, were created by the Bush administration's views on democracy. And then they were very surprised to find that when they promoted democracy -- for what I think was good reasons -- then Islamists and others that we didn't like, used the electoral system to their advantage.

The point is that by the time the administration came into office, the Obama administration, there was an awful lot of broken crockery, and a lot of things were under assault. They inherited that, and I think in many ways they did a fairly good job. Where I would agree with you -- where they fell down really is in Syria, where I think they really should have been much more active much sooner. What they did was leave the political vacuum for the Jihadists to take advantage.

But on Egypt, you know, most of your Republican colleagues would say we should have supported Mubarak and the military. And you say, well we should really withdraw most aid, if I understand you from your writings, but I think the military in Egypt had decided to do what they were going to do, regardless. And they would have continued on their path, pretty much as they did. So I'll stop there. But it just seems to me that if you look at what the Obama administration has tried to do, I think it has a better record than you give it credit for, but the thrust of the criticism I agree with.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Steve. One more question maybe. Yes, in the middle there.

MS. WILLIAMS: Hi, my name is Audrey Williams. I'm from the Stimson Center, and I really enjoyed the talk here today. I find it extremely interesting, and I had a question about -- specifically about the U.S.-Turkey relationship. I didn't hear as much talked about with the recent negotiations between Russia and the U.S. Turkey was left out a little bit, and there was a lot of perception, especially on Erdogan's part that Turkey didn't have as much of a role initially in this whole diplomatic solution in Syria. And I wondered if the panelists could talk a little bit to that recent dynamic in the Turkish/U.S. relationship, and also if that has any implications in terms of how Turkey is going to start changing its foreign policy, or how that kind of affected Turkey's whole approach to

Syria and to U.S. relations in general. Thank you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Well, I see a question for each speaker here, but maybe we should start with you -- your response to Steve and then Tamara and Soli.

MR. KAGAN: Well, I agree, Steve, that obviously the administration inherited a lot of difficulty in the Middle East, including effects on America's image and including America's public opinion about involvement, etcetera. Although I would also say every administration inherits the garbage that the last administration left for them. The Bush administration inherited a situation which ultimately led to the 9/11 attack.

MR. LARRABEE: They needed a bigger garbage bag.

MR. KAGAN: Well, that's your opinion. You know, there's a lot of wreckage that most presidents leave for each other. But more specifically, on the question of Egypt, if you wanted to tell me that they left a mess in Iraq that he had to deal with, and he left a mess on the peace process that he had to deal with, I would be more sympathetic. But Egypt I don't agree with. For one thing, Bush didn't set off the Arab Spring. I mean that happened in Tunisia. Unless you want to give him credit for Iraq somehow setting off the Arab Spring, which I know a lot of Bush supporters want to do. But I'm more skeptical.

But on Egypt -- by the way, my Republican colleagues are dead wrong about Egypt, and I think that this administration's actually

followed Republican policy toward Egypt and also by the way, Israeli policy toward Egypt pretty consistently, except for the period of the Morsi rule. But, you know, I'm sure Tamara would say this from having been inside the administration. I can say it from having followed this issue really closely. There was a moment in the Mubarak period when I believe if the administration had managed to convince Mubarak, using the necessary pressures, I think, would have been required, even to hold a reasonably fair and open parliamentary election, that Mubarak might have actually survived the turmoil that came. The fact that he tightened up in Egypt and then started talking about how Gamal was going to be the next leader, and then he got sick, I think a lot of Egyptians just said no. This cannot happen. And that was the moment when an administration, which has a lot of influence with a guy like Mubarak -- just the way Reagan did with Marcos, the way Gaston Sigur did with the South Koreans and said, you know what Mr. President, now is the time for you to make this move.

They didn't want to go near it. So they did nothing until it was already too late. And the notion, by the way, that we could have supported Mubarak, at that point he was already gone. He lost that country. We didn't push him out. Then I would quickly, just to say, when the SCAF was in power, we did nothing to make sure that they did what they needed to do when they were at a very tenuous position. When Morsi was elected we didn't use the influence we might have had. We got

very close to Morsi. The administration's policy in Egypt has been whoever's in power, that's our buddy. And they've never wanted to use their influence to put any pressure on.

Now, finally, with the Egyptian military -- I know that the administration thinks that the military was going to take over no matter what they did. But the military counted on the fact that the administration would do exactly what it did, which was nothing, when they did the coup. The military read the administration perfectly. I don't know, and you don't know what would have happened if Obama had called al-Sisi and said, "I am going to cut you off the minute you do this," and had really meant it. I think that they might have -- and by the way, this was the worst possible outcome. The best outcome was the Muslim Brotherhood loses the next election. That was the best outcome, and that's the outcome that was in America's interest. I believe would be in the Egyptian people's interest and that was not what the administration was capable of doing. You can't blame all that on George Bush. I'd love to blame everything on George Bush, but, you know, George Bush can be blamed for everything that's bad that's happened in the world, but not Egypt.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Bob, the examples about Mubarak and Gamal, and then also about al-Sisi were great examples. What could they have done with Morsi?

MR. KAGAN: Morsi was in a weak position in Egypt

because (a) he didn't control the military. That would be the weakest aspect of his position. I think he was a very, unfortunately -- you know, he wasn't the right man for this job, and he thought that because he had a majority he could do whatever he wanted.

I think that we had the capacity to put public pressure on him, private pressure on him, as well as aid pressure on him. Can I guarantee that he would have, therefore, done the right thing? No. What I know is that we didn't do any of that.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Tamara, I know you're --

MR. KAGAN: Yeah, please defend the administration.

MS. WITTES: As Bob knows well, this is not an arena where I'm going to defend the administration. But let me do add one dimension, because we've been talking here about pressure and about sticks. And I think that -- Bob, as I understood your initial remarks, part of what you were saying was that it's a failure by the administration to invest in certain ways that then creates a greater cost to be borne down the line.

MR. KAGAN: Correct.

MS. WITTES: You know, I had a professor in college who, you know, wanted us to work on our public speaking and take risks in the classroom. And he would always say to us, "Bleed a little now, so you don't hemorrhage later." And I think this was more or less the thrust of your remarks. And I would argue that not only was pressure not exerted

in certain ways, but that the previous administration and the current administration at critical moments failed to make investments that could have pulled, that could have been a magnet to pull Egypt in the right direction.

President Obama in May 2011, promised the Egyptian government a billion dollars in debt relief. The president -- and it's not all Obama's fault. Part of it gets back to the domestic politics that we've been talking about. The president also proposed a Middle East incentive fund in January 2012, of 770 million dollars. Now that's not a lot of money for the whole region. But neither of those initiatives went anywhere, both because the administration did not push them hard enough, and because Congress was in no mood to appropriate new money. You're talking about the difference between the U.S. response to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the U.S. response to historic transformations in the Middle East.

We had opportunities, even to leverage relatively modest resources together with others, to make a positive difference in this region, and we fell down on that. I understand that as of now, the United States alone has spent a billion dollars on humanitarian relief in Syria, and we couldn't muster anything close to a billion dollars in our response to four historic Arab revolutions.

So I think we just have to recognize, not only the failures to coerce, but the failures to use carrots in creative and effective ways as

well.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Tamara, would you mind also maybe reflecting on the question that came from our Mexican friend about public opinion, and especially in the context of the way the way the public expressed itself in Egypt. And in a way, inadvertently maybe, paved the way to a coup, rather than to what Bob would have preferred -- an election less than a year down the line in Egypt.

MS. WITTES: Sure, well look, I think you have several effects simultaneously. You have mobilization of the public in Egypt, in Tunisia, and elsewhere on a mass scale that had not happened for a long time in the Arab world. And with the revolutions, people had a sense that what had seemed impossible, was possible.

And I think that having pushed out Mubarak in February 2011, having in the view of many Egyptian protesters, forced the SCAF to yield power to Morsi in June, 2012. The Egyptian public was very ready to believe that if they weren't happy with President Morsi, they could go in the streets and force another change.

And indeed, many of them when you say today, you know, but look what you've done. You've thrown yourselves into the lap of the military and internal security services. They say, "Don't worry. We can do it again." They have great confidence that as mobilized as they are, and as effective as they've demonstrated in bringing down governments, they'll

do it again.

Now, you know, given the trajectory in Egypt today and the re-emergence of this security state, one can only hope they're right. So I think that's one dimension, and that certainly has a demonstration effect, and I would love to hear from you or from Soli, how that might have affected the public protest that we've seen in Turkey this year.

But we certainly saw the effect elsewhere in the region, including in Israel, which saw a massive social movement emerge in the summer of 2011 in a very unexpected way and change Israeli politics. So there's no doubt that public opinion, the public mobilization, the public sentiment is having an impact. But I wouldn't argue that there's a uni-directional impact. I think it's quite complicated. Egypt today is a very divided place.

And I think too, that the lessons others take away observing those manifestations can differ. In Jordan, I think they've looked at what's happened in Egypt, and they say, "Okay, we don't want that." And so, yes, there are continued demonstrations in Jordan against raising the fuel prices and things like that, but it's of a completely different order.

MR. KIRIŞCI: And Syria is an even worse reference point. Soli, there was a question on Turkey and the U.S., but I think you can reflect on the others as well.

MR. ÖZEL: Well, when are we ending?

MR. KIRIŞCI: We still have five minutes or so.

MR. ÖZEL: Well, Turkey was left out. I mean it's not that it felt left out. I think it was left out. Ultimately, the United States and Russia have managed to come to some kind of understanding. Whether they'll carry through remains to be seen. Remember, that at that point when the president was still in the mood of attacking, without asking Congress, Turkey actually presented itself as a voluntary ally to whatever kind of coalition would be pulled together. At the end of the day, no coalition was put together, and the president took the diplomatic route and since Turkey wants immediate relief from Pasha's presence in Damascus, obviously it also felt disappointed.

And then as the president of Turkey has encountered while he was in New York about ten days ago, there is this incredible pressure on Turkey about allegations concerning Turkey's tolerance for Jihadist groups in Syria, which also alienated Turkey from the rest of the allies who also would like to see the end of Bashar al-Assad and his regime.

So in that sense, this is the kinds of positions that Turkey will have to really come back from, and that is why I think we need to have a different type of dialogue. There are clashes of interest between Turkey and the U.S. Turkish and American interests are not identical. One should not expect those interests to be identical. We have a 900, 600 mile border with Syria. You don't. You may not care about it. We have to.

I think we mismanaged the Syria policy, but I see no reason as to why Turkey and the United States cannot have a different type of dialogue, having learned from the mistakes of the past.

MR. KIRIŞCI Thanks, Soli. We still have a few minutes. I think I can take two very quick questions and then turn to the panel. Right at the back, and then maybe one from the right-hand side there.

MR. SHORE: My name is Steven Shore. Mr. Kagan had made the analogy about our alleged wonderful success with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and against our alleged failure with the Arab Spring. But isn't that analogy fundamentally misleading? The Reagan administration was actively involved in de-stabilizing the satellite countries, although the speed with which these fell, took the first Bush administration by surprise. We had no anticipation of the speed of the Arab Spring. No known cooperation with potential partners, and policy obviously was being made on a daily basis, rather than in accord with any strategy, unlike the case with Eastern Europe. And even Eastern Europe has Hungary, which was not exactly today a democratic model.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Kathy, at the far end, a brief question behind you. No, not there, far end, far end, I'm sorry. I promised him. He's been very patient.

SPEAKER: Thanks to the panelists, appreciate it. There's a scene from *Godfather III* that comes to mind in this regard of U.S. foreign

policy. Mike says, "Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in."

MR. KAGAN: It's the only scene from *Godfather, Part III* that anybody even remembers.

SPEAKER: Interesting that you should comment on it Dr. Kagan, because this question is for you. To the extent that the president has had advisors, political scientists, historians -- Bob Dallek comes to mind, Dr. Goodwin, Doug Brinkley, to the oval to counsel him essentially on foreign policy, have you been in the wing chairs between Lincoln and King to talk about U.S. foreign policy, and if you haven't, how would you counsel him? Thanks.

MR. KAGAN: I have, but he hasn't listened to me.

MR. KIRIŞCI: There was another question there about --

MR. ÖZEL: Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Arab Spring.

MR. KAGAN: Yeah, no, I mean I'm not, I don't want to make any grand claims for -- I just do think that when the Berlin Wall fell, it was regarded in the United States and in American foreign policy circles, and in the two administrations that were at least intentionally involved in it, as a significant moment that required, you know, massive attention by the U.S. government.

MS. WITTES: And Congress passed within six weeks, significant support.

MR. KAGAN: Major aid and the fact -- I mean I can go down the list of things that you said. The fact that we were sort of involved in de-stabilizing, although I think the Polish solidarity movement would want to take most credit for what happened, and the people of Germany who tried to get through Berlin probably took most of the credit. But we also de-stabilized the Middle East too. So I would say that that's true. And the fact that Hungary is not a good democracy now, which doesn't discredit -- you know, I didn't realize perfection was our goal in foreign policy.

I would take even gross imperfection, actually. But I don't think there is any question that there's a major distinction in the way we approached these two problems. And again, Tamara knows better than I do, having been in the administration, but, you know, for those of us who met with the administration officials again and again and again, at every meeting they said, we know, we've really got to get a grip on this thing, and we've really got to completely rethink, etcetera, etcetera. And it just never happened.

The world's a busy place and life is complicated, but if you want to -- I think it is just very easy to draw a distinction between the way the U.S. government organized itself to deal with post-Berlin Wall Europe, and how they did not organize themselves and devote the kind of attention to the Middle East.

And again, what is surprising? The president wanted to get

out of the Middle East, not get deeper in. He would have had to turn on a dime, and that's not an easy thing to do.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Tamara and Soli, maybe one final word.

MS. WITTES: You know, I think there's one other point that's worth raising as we think about the U.S. role in the region and dealing with the Arab revolutions, which is that -- and Bob got it just a little bit in his response to Steve earlier. These events were driven from within the region. These were the result of social and demographic and economic trends in the Arab world that had been building for at least a decade, if not more. And if you think I'm just saying this now in a self-serving way, you can go and look at the things I was writing in 2007 and 2008. I wrote an entire book arguing that the political economy, the model of the Arab Republic was breaking down.

So I really think it's important that we not overstate the role of the United States, of any particular regional actor, any external actor in what happened. This was a bottom-up process that was a long time coming, and by the way, it's not done. Those trends still exist all across the region, and they will continue to drive politics all across the region.

And what that means to me, is that although a lot of opportunities have been missed in the ways that Bob was describing, there are still opportunities for the U.S., for Turkey, for others who care about the fate of this region and care about stability in this region, to act in

ways that can support, I think, positive outcomes and shifting where possible toward a positive trajectory.

So I would just argue that we acknowledge missed opportunities and errors, but that we focus in a forward-looking manner and commit to not missing any more.

MR. ÖZEL: I'll pick up from this because one of the things we don't talk -- or I don't see in the American debate, is how weak all states were already before the revolutions because of the longevity of all the dictators. Regimes and states have been collapsed onto one another, and they lost legitimacy. And this issue of legitimacy will haunt all the other remaining ones. What makes this difficult to the extent that Syria -- which starts as a domestic matter turns into a regional confrontation and kind of a global one. The Saudis or whomever have the money for the moment, interact with these crises with no regard whatsoever that institution building and state rebuilding are essential, if we're going to get out of that without massive chaos.

I'm not sure that the United States can actually convince all the actors. I really don't think it can determine how things will go, but there must be other ways of looking at the issue and design policy accordingly.

I may have misheard -- not misheard you, but you may not have had enough time to put it in a more complicated way, but I'm afraid

that those who blame the administration for its failings, and there are plenty, do not take into account those underlying factors which nobody can really correct. So to look at the Middle East with the old paradigm will lead us to misguided policies I'm afraid. That's all.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I'd like to conclude by making one remark of mine which kind of builds on Bob's, Tamara's and Soli's. When I look at the Middle East and compare the Europe of the 1990's, central and Eastern Europe, it's not just states were weak and institutions were collapsing. I think in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe the economies had collapsed too. There were no economies left.

So to come back to Tamara's point about still opportunities being out there, I think as we look at those opportunities and beyond them, one should start to think about how to jumpstart the economies of the Middle East. And bearing in mind that demographically, the Middle East is still challenging and still young. It has pluses and minuses.

With that, I'd like to bring this conference to an end, thank Bob, Tamara, and Soli, as well as the whole audience here for your engagement. Thank you very much.

* * * * *

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