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MR. PUTIN: OPERATIVE IN THE KREMLIN (AND ABROAD)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WRIGHT: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Tom Wright. I'm a fellow at the Project on International Order and Strategy here at Brookings and it's my great pleasure and honor today to welcome you all here for the launch of Cliff Gaddy and Fiona Hill's book, "Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin and Abroad". Is "and abroad" added to the new title?

This book is a second edition but it's really a brand new book, actually, on Vladimir Putin. The first edition came out in 2013, which I read. It was really a terrific read, but given the events of the last 18 months, Fiona and Cliff added basically 60,000 new words to the book dealing with -- which in my world is a whole new book -- dealing with Vladimir Putin's foreign policy and world view.

Fiona is the director of the Center on the U.S. and Europe here at Brookings in the Stephen and Barbara Friedman Senior Fellow with the Foreign Policy Program. Before joining Brookings, she held various positions with the Eurasia Foundation and the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She also served in the U.S. National Intelligence Council on Russia.

Cliff is a senior fellow here at the Foreign Policy Program here at Brookings. He is an economist, and by training is one of America's leading experts on the Russian economy. He is a cofounder and senior scientific advisor of the Joint Russian-American Center for Research on International, Financial, and Energy Security, quite a mouthful, at Penn State University, and he has also held various positions at Duke, Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins University, and at various research institutes overseas.

Fiona and Cliff are two of America's leading experts on Russia, but also on Vladimir Putin, and they've been kept very busy over the last 12 months. I just want to

say a couple of words about how this book and how this project that they're working on fits into the larger work that we have ongoing here at Brookings.

At Brookings we're very interested in the big trends in the international order, what are those developments that are shaking the international order that really the U.S. has relied on since the 1940s for stability, peace, and prosperity and how should the United States and its allies respond to that. One of the major sort of developments has to do with the return of revisionism among some major states, the challenging of regional order in Europe and the Middle East and Asia, and the importance of powerful leaders like Vladimir Putin and the choice in agency that they have in shaping the future.

So, we really can't think of a better way to launch an overall sort of project on this, called "Order from Chaos", which is the title that we've given to a new Brookings project, to look at these dynamics of international order and how the West should respond, and that this event is the first event in that project, so we're very honored to have Fiona and Cliff here to speak about their book in that context.

As you probably know from reading the blog on the Brookings website, there's a robust debate at Brookings on Russia on how to respond to Putin on the crisis in Ukraine with many diverse views expressed, so hopefully when we get to the question and answer part of the discussion, there will be a lot of opportunity for back and forth and some of those important questions.

To moderate today's discussion we're delighted to have Jill Dougherty, who is a public policy scholar at the Cannon Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Jill is, herself, a leading expert on Russia and the former Soviet Union. In a three decade career at CNN she served as Foreign Affairs Correspondent, the Bureau Chief in Moscow and Moscow Correspondent as White House Correspondent and at the Woodrow Wilson School she's working on a project on Putin's control of the media, which I think we all agree is very timely.

So, with that I would like to welcome Fiona, Cliff and Jill to the stage. Jill will moderate the discussion and then we'll open it up to questions and answers, and if you would like to Tweet, the hashtag is #MrPutin, so pretty simple, so with that I'd like to thank everyone and we look forward to the discussion.

MS. DOUGHERTY: (Audio skips) -- the subject that I'm interested in, you know, in Russia, and I love this book. I love the first version of this book and I love the second version. It's really longer, more intricate, and in some ways -- and I think it delves even more deeply into who Vladimir Putin is.

And I know there are a lot of people out there who will say, you know, we can't really understand who he is, et cetera, but I think both of these experts, both Fiona and Cliff, have done a really excellent job of trying to -- with amassing a great amount of factual material, come up with the portrait -- a psychological portrait -- and also strategic portrait of what Mr. Putin is trying to do.

You know, I was in Moscow about two months ago, middle of December, right at the height of the crisis -- the Ruble crisis -- and I was reminded of something that is in this book, and I think was in the previous version, which described how Vladimir Putin's idea about the United States had changed, and I'll just read that -- I'll read from the book, very short, and then I will tell you what I heard in Moscow, which is absolutely -- this person, a Russian official -- probably read the book and was quoting.

But in any case, from Cliff and Fiona's book, "Putin's third, and so far, final conclusion that the United States was actively hostile, engaged along with its European allies in subversion, in covert warfare against Russia."

So, this was the evolution of how -- of his thinking about the United States.

Now, when I was in Moscow I talked to a senior official who deals with the Russian media, and that official said to me, and this is a quote -- we were actually

speaking English, which is a little different, and this person said, "What are we supposed to think? That's exactly what we think, that America did all this to Ukraine just to be bad to Russia. That's it. That's what we think."

So, it was so close, and I guess what I was struck with -- maybe, you know, we can kind of open up wherever we want to jump in, but what I was struck with on this trip, and obviously I've been to Russia million times, but I was really struck with the vehemence with which some officials and people even in the media were discussing their viewpoint of what the United States and the West in general are trying to do to Russia.

And so much of what we discussed, which sometimes didn't actually have a direct connection to Russia, was interpreted in Moscow as being precisely aimed at Russia, that the world -- essentially, everything that happens in it happens because of some purpose to get at Russia, get Russia, et cetera.

So, if we begin -- maybe let me ask you -- why did you feel that you had to rewrite and really add so much new material? Was there something that changed? Was there something that you understood better? Fiona, maybe you jump in and tell us why you wanted to revamp the book.

MS. HILL: Well, Jill, it was precisely because of these competing narratives, these very different narratives in Moscow, and actually much more broadly spread in Russia, from here in the United States. I mean, if all of us think back to a year ago, if we're all sitting here in February of 2014 when the crisis in Ukraine was unfolding, you know, at this particular juncture, we were actually be following the agreement that was brokered with some of the European foreign ministers that was supposed to keep Yanukovych in place there for almost the full calendar year for new elections.

We had a certain understanding of what was happening there. We saw this as a sort of spontaneous uprising against basically the mismanagement of Ukrainian politics by a leader who was very corrupt and who was trying to play West off against

East, was trying to get the best of both worlds with Russia and the United States.

But as we saw very quickly over the weeks after that with Yanukovych's flight from Kiev and then the reactions to this in Moscow, the clear shock that was reverberated around the Kremlin about how Yanukovych could be president one day and disappear and this agreement had been reached, and then this interpretation that started that Yanukovych had been toppled by the United States and also in cahoots with the European Union, and the narrative that was woven around that, it was pretty obvious that we were in very different places on the interpretation of events, and yet to us, to Cliff and I and to many of the people here who studied Russia, it was also fairly obvious why Russians and why Putin would have that kind of interpretation.

We felt that it was very necessary to expand out the book to explain why it was that we had these insights, why it was that actually just even a week or so before the annexation of Crimea, that we were able to say that we were pretty sure that Putin would annex Crimea, that Crimea would become part of the Russian Federation by various means, because it really did follow from the analysis and from the work that we had done on the first book, that it was really incumbent upon us to try to write this down, to try to get across why we had come to these conclusions for the benefit of others, and also hopefully then to provoke and encourage many of our other colleagues, like yourself, who are observers of Russia to help explain why we have got to this point of great confrontation, because if we thought back a couple of decades beforehand, we would never have anticipated that we would be in a state of pretty much a hot war in Ukraine with Russia.

Back in the beginning of the 1990s there was a lot of risks before 1994 of a blow up between the Ukrainian-Russian relations, before the conclusion of the Budapest Memorandum that has been so much in the news in the last year or so, but there was certainly an assumption here that that was at an end, there wouldn't be any

more confrontations of the kind of nature that we'd seen in the 1990s, and that the war in Georgia, for example, in 2008, was really an anomaly and we wanted to show that actually that was not the case, and in fact, we'd been building up to this point for some time.

MS. DOUGHERTY: And Cliff, you know, you're -- the area that you concentrate in a lot is economics and obviously we pay a lot of attention right now to the military aspects of Ukraine, but it really began, you could argue, on an economic premise of, you know, Putin's union, the Custom's Union, and concern about Ukraine moving West, et cetera. Was there something -- some insight that you gleaned when you saw what was happening in Ukraine as it began? Was there something that -- an aha moment where you thought, I kind of know where this is going?

MR. GADDY: Maybe not -- thanks -- maybe not, you know, so suddenly because like the book as a whole, like the first edition, Fiona and I have been talking about the subject of the book, Mr. Putin, since we met really for the first time when she first came to Brookings, so 15 years ago or something, and we wrote the first edition only concentrating on how he rose to power, how he maintains power, and the system inside of Russia. We didn't really talk about his view of the outside world.

And from the time we published the first edition we said to ourselves, you know, we've got to do something on Putin's relationship with the outside world, and we had the idea we would write an article, we had a proposed title, it was called, "The American Education of Mr. Putin". That ended up being the title of a chapter, which you -- that was what you quoted from -- but then we broadened it to include his view of all of the world.

And we're thinking about this already, mind you, in late 2014 -- sorry, late 2013 -- the first edition was published in 2013, and these events begin to unfold in Ukraine in real time as we're thinking about this, and that's why we decided to make it

this extra part on the book.

And this economic aspect is only one of many dimensions that we started to look at because there's some of the sense that after this enormous boom in Russia, up to 2008 as oil prices just kept climbing and climbing and climbing, and the Russian economy is all about oil -- when oil goes up, the Russian economy booms, when oil prices goes down, the Russian economy is in recession, and that's what we have right now, despite the sanctions, it would have been in recession anyway because of the oil price.

And I think that what -- you know, in line with what we wrote in the first edition of the book, this notion of Putin as "the State-ist" -- you know, we had these six identities, and the State-ist was one of them, the man whose mission is to save the Russian state, but the survivalist, the man who thinks in terms of worst case scenarios, how do we protect this country against all the ills that befall it, whether they be just unpredictable and uncontrollable or whether they be by design by our enemies, we have to protect and make Russia protected.

And after 2008 and the crisis, Russia falls tremendously, the economy is in bad shape. It then rebounds as the oil price goes back up, but we have this feeling that a lesson was learned -- that's one of our themes for Putin, he learns lessons, he looks at history, he looks at his own actions and he looks at what happens and he draws lessons, and the lesson he drew from the crisis and then the global financial crisis and the recovery was, you know, maybe it seemed like when the whole world was booming that the winners in global economic competition would be the ones who grow the fastest. But I think now the view has changed; it's going to be the ones who survive the shocks, the negative shocks, and that's when we started to pay a lot of attention to Putin's focus on the Eurasian Union, not as a competitor to the EU as some people have said, not an attempt to become this great world power or even regional economic power, as a mainly

defensive mechanism, a way to protect the Russian economy in the event of a new global crisis.

And to just wrap this up quickly, you know, in Putin's mind, you can just imagine how this spins out. Okay, I'm trying to defend my country, I build up this Eurasian Union, we're minding our own business, Ukraine obviously is the lynchpin of the whole thing, it makes no sense without Ukraine, such a trading partner for Russia. Just when I'm trying to do this, here come these Europeans, here come the Americans, of course, who really control the Europeans, and they snatch Ukraine out from under me. Oh, this is clearly a hostile act. This is not just accidental, as the Russians would say; this is a hostile act.

And from there you can see how the whole idea gets, you know, meshed into what Fiona says is the narrative, and of course this is not the only thing. Point is that a lot of other things somehow are interpreted in this way.

MS. DOUGHERTY: You know, there's another narrative and as I was reading -- last night I was going back to a few sections that I had actually marked up, one of them, on page 283, Putin -- this really shocked me -- again, I'll read this -- "Putin warned about having 25 million Russians and Russian speakers stranded in other countries after the fall of the Soviet Union." And I thought, well, of course he did. That was the raison d'être for going into Ukraine, and then I read when he said that, 1994 he said that.

So, here we have -- I mean, this opens up a whole possibility of discussion, but I was quite surprised, actually, that he was talking about that until I started thinking, wait, he's been talking about that for a very long time. The Soviet Union falls apart and all of these Russian speakers are left like scattered chaff in the former Soviet Union and that's a problem and it's destabilizing.

So, tell me a little bit -- tell us about that. Were you surprised that that

had been -- that that goes so far back into his intellectual history?

MS. HILL: Well, that's actually an interesting quote because the reason that we stumbled upon this was many of you might remember Timothy (inaudible) Nash had an op-ed in the New York Times in which he claimed that Putin was a sort of a nationalist since sort of time immemorial and he used this quote from 1994 as proof of this, but he didn't actually say where this was from. And we discovered that it was actually from a meeting that Putin had attended when he was deputy mayor of Moscow at the (inaudible), which is a foundation --

MR. GADDY: St. Petersburg.

MS. HILL: -- St. Petersburg, sorry, when he was deputy mayor of St. Petersburg at a meeting that was hosted by a German think tank and foundation, the (inaudible), back in the 1990s. Now, I've actually taken part in some of the (inaudible) meetings as well and they're basically -- what they do is they bring together experts and political leaders from, you know, Germany and then with whatever counterparts of the issue that they're dealing with.

In this case, Putin was there with a lot of other Russian political figures and what was extraordinary about this was not that Putin was there but the fact that everybody was saying the same thing. So, Timothy (inaudible) Nash picked up on this as kind of proof that Putin was this rabid nationalist, but the point was, if you looked at the transcript, the (inaudible) are really good -- they're very German and they keep, you know, really good records, you can go online and, you know, kind of look through all of this -- you can see exactly who said what, and basically it wasn't just Putin, it was every other participant at this conference was talking about this problem of the collapse of the Soviet Union and then the tensions that were there.

And strangely enough, it was at another meeting hosted by the (inaudible) in the spring of 2013 that I participated in when it became very evident there

was going to be a blow up over this issue of the Eurasian Union and the European Union because the participants from Moscow are just like Putin way back in 1994 were just as vehement and just as unified in their perspective about how this was a major threat to Russia's interests.

So, Putin laid out there -- you know, sentiment was common to many of the people, so the larger point of all of this is, he's not an anomaly either. Many of the points and the sentiments that Putin has, we tend to sort of think that this is him thinking this, but this is really a much broader base across many of the political spectrums in Russia who have these same kind of views, and they're very deeply ingrained.

MR. GADDY: In fact, at that very meeting the quote that Putin had -- he wasn't, by the way -- he was a very junior figure there and it was one of the few things that he dared to say, and he apparently said it very sort of straightforward and quietly, but he -- as Fiona said, other people said literally the same thing he did. The message was not -- because it was said by liberals, by, I think, people we would consider as sort of pro-Western or at least reasonable people in Russia in the 1990s, they were simply warning that something bad is going to happen here, you can't just leave all these people out stranded in these other countries. You have to -- you know, I think one of them said, you know, people make their -- we may have -- we or you -- we think tank type people may have plans for how this is all going to evolve, but people make their own choices and, you know, popular sentiment does it.

But I think that's a very important point that Fiona makes that even then you see his ideas today evolving from something that was not quite then what it is today. Because this is a really important point we make in the book and that's why we call it the American Education of Mr. Putin in that chapter and the other chapters do the same thing. We go back and look, what was he thinking as far as we can trace it back, in the '90s and 2000s and how has that evolved, because in your quote in the beginning you

talked about this as yet third and final phase. Well, that means there's a phase one and a phase two.

Putin had, we think, pretty different ideas about the United States before 2013 and '14.

MS. DOUGHERTY: I do want to get into that but I just want to ask one more question about this because that idea of protecting the (speaking Russian) -- the Russian world -- is crucial to not only what's happening in Ukraine, but the fear that Vladimir Putin might exploit that in order to take action -- aggressive action -- in other parts of, let's say, in Europe or maybe even Central Asia. So, it's an important concept.

I mean, at that point he was laying it out, albeit in, you know, nascently, laying it out as a problem, but was he making that link to say, "And we have to protect them"? Did it get to that point or was that later?

MS. HILL: He wasn't at that point in the 1990s, but this is also a period when under Boris Yeltsin, where the whole concept of the idea of the near abroad was being generated. So, Putin was saying these things in a context where many other Russian politicians were actually talking about the right of Russia to protect the interests of Russian speakers and ethnic Russians. There's actually a distinction there because a Russian speaker can be someone of some different self-described ethnicity, but have Russian as their main language.

And there was also the idea of compatriots, it's a very complicated word in Russian that was being put forward at the time. It was really anybody who felt some kind of affinity to the center during the Soviet period. It could be anyone, you know, basically an Armenian or a Georgian or a Tajik or other background but who felt that their real cultural affinity was with the Russian language and broader culture and maybe also the religion.

And at that period in the 1990s, when Putin was making this statement in

1994, we had already had a shift in Russian thinking. There was a lot of tension already under Boris Yeltsin, there was a number of conflicts that were already raging across the former Soviet Union on an ethnic basis. This is the backdrop of Nagorno-Karabakh and the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia, we had already had civil war in Moldova, in Georgia, you know, so it was also against this backdrop this dispute between Russia and Ukraine about the Black Sea fleet, and there was all these kind of questions about what would happen to this whole space given this division of people and people who still had an affinity with the center.

And what's interesting about this is we flash forward to the annexation of Crimea. We quote in the book a former colleague who happened to be in Dushanbe in Tajikistan when Putin made his big speech annexing Crimea, and a number of Tajiks were running around saying (inaudible) -- Crimea is ours -- they were celebrating the annexation of Crimea and our colleague said, hang on a second, you're Tajiks. What's going on here? Crimea hasn't been annexed by Tajikistan.

But it was a sort of a feeling that a historical wrong from the period of the collapse of the Soviet Union had been rectified. Many Tajiks were still experiencing a great deal of Soviet nostalgia. And of course Tajikistan sends a lot of migrant workers into Russia and many Tajiks actually hold dual nationality of Russian and Tajik, but it's that kind of sense that the roots of this are in that collapse of the Soviet Union with the populations being divided by borders and this sort of feeling of this sort of nostalgia for that common state that Putin has expressed so many times.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Fiona, you started to talk about the United States and the evolution in his thinking that he didn't always think that this was, you know, a force that was engaged in subversion, et cetera. Could you run us through that, I mean, going back to early Putin?

MR. GADDY: We'll qualify by saying we don't think he thought that.

Who knows what he really thought?

MS. DOUGHERTY: Or maybe not to that degree.

MR. GADDY: But that's been part of our exercise is to try to, as best we can, relying on different sources mainly on what he himself has written and said, also trying to, if we can, and I think you can to some extent, distinguish between cases when he seems to be speaking honestly and spontaneously, I guess, and the stage -- probably the majority of his appearances, which are very staged and well prepared.

But here's the point, that there's no evidence of any sort of the kind of vehement anti-Westernism, anti-Americanism even that you might say that he's displayed lately since the conflict in Ukraine we can find, in what he was writing and saying about the 1990s.

First of all, Putin just doesn't know anything at all about the United States. He probably never met an American. Maybe we're wrong about this, but we don't have any evidence that he met an American before he returned from Dresden, from his stay there as a KGB agent, to come back to St. Petersburg to be a sort of reserve agent placed at Leningrad State University, and then of course as he becomes deputy mayor of St. Petersburg where he has to suddenly deal with a lot of American business people, because that's his job. His job is to interface with Western business people and investors and the economic and business climate in St. Petersburg, and so he's brokering deals, he's giving licenses, he's doing all kinds of -- he's a fixer.

And there he's dealing with Americans and we try to document that. But throughout the 1990s and then as he comes in to positions of power, first as prime minister and then as president in 1999 and 2000, his attitude is very clearly that all we want from the United States and the West in general -- but it's always the United States that's the leader -- just leave us alone. And it's almost a conciliatory tone that, we get it, you tried to help us in the 1990s all these advisors over here trying to fix our economy.

The problem is, you just didn't understand Russia.

Now, Putin's not the only guy who had that attitude, a lot of Russians of all stripes had that feeling and didn't really hold it against the West for trying to help, it's just, you don't know how to do it because you're not Russian, you don't understand our system, you're just screwing things up.

But there was also this attitude -- very important -- from Putin that -- and stated explicitly -- we Russians, we Soviets, we screwed up, we're the ones that caused this problem. We created the Soviet Union, the Communist Party, all of that, we screwed up our economy, we screwed up our society, we almost destroyed values, we tried to repress the church, we screwed up. So let us fix it. So, basically, our problem, we'll fix it. Thank you very much. Just stay away.

Then I think that a turning point happens as he comes into power, he is, I think, under the impression that what he's going to do will be more or less welcomed by the West because one of the main tasks he has or main challenges he has is Islamic terrorism and -- in Chechnya, of course, and I'll let Fiona talk about that because it's important how that experience of fighting the wars in Chechnya and then how the West responded changes his attitude. He becomes very cautious. And the 9/11 happens, oh, maybe this is a new chance, finally the West will realize, Islamic terrorism, it's what I've been trying to tell you, it's a big deal, why don't you listen to me. Oh, no, don't listen again.

So, again, what's going on here? And I think that gradually you get a sense that from more indifference to a sense that the United States is just incompetent, it just doesn't -- you know, it means well, maybe, but it just doesn't know how to deal in foreign affairs, economic policy, whatever, until gradually -- and this is really the important chronology that you can start to follow closely from, say, 2008 in Georgia and so on, that, no, this is not just -- this is not just incompetence, this is something directly directed

against Russia. And when he tips that balance, maybe in a sense he does it, he then falls in line with the mainstream of Russian thinking. He was, in a way -- I mean, this may sound provocative -- he was more pro-Western, less anti-Western than the majority of the Russian people. He may still be today for that matter, but he sees, I can tap into this very easily and that's a no-brainer for him, just to tap into all this nationalism and extremism on that side, anti-Westernism. But I think the Chechnya experience, which Fiona knows very well in many dimensions, is really critical, how the West responded to what he did.

MS. DOUGHERTY: I would be interested in that because that debate has always been that Vladimir Putin felt that the West did not take it seriously that Russia was involved in fighting terrorism, not just an internal uprising among the Chechens, et cetera, and I remember so vividly when he came into power the first time, I think it was 2001 we had a meeting with him at the Kremlin at the library, there were some -- about six or eight Western journalists and we sat there at a round table, I sat right next to him, and it was fascinating to see him, and he totally lost his cool when he began to talk about Chechnya. He was furious. And I will never forget that moment. He's a very athletic kind of -- at that point, live -- less live now, but very athletic person and you could almost see the rage boiling.

So, take us through Chechnya.

MS. HILL: Yeah, again, this gets back to different narratives of events because most people in the United States saw Chechnya as evolving, first of all, in the context of all the other conflicts that broke out after the collapse of the Soviet Union. People are always saying that the collapse of the Soviet Union was relatively peaceful. Of course it was not. They're making that in comparison with Yugoslavia.

But in actual fact, the wars in Chechnya were the largest military conflicts on Russian soil after World War II. And as bad as things are in Ukraine, and I don't want to make spurious comparisons here, they've got a long way to go before they get into the

realm of these two really brutal wars in Chechnya.

But the first war certainly started off at the back of an ethno-political conflict. There was not really much of a dimension of religious extremism back when (inaudible) basically was the head of Chechnya, he famously didn't really know how to pray properly, he hadn't read the Koran and there was a lot of, you know, kind of embarrassment when he tried to give a slightly Islamic tinge to his self-declared Republic of Chechnya. It was very much more on an ethnic basis. And dating back to the long history of Chechen and other North Caucasian resistance to the expansion of the Russian empire.

And we never really kind of brushed up that narrative as the conflict unfolded, because Putin comes in in the second war with Chechnya, he comes into the presidency in '99, 2000 when the second war has basically erupted, and what we saw in Chechnya was the same cycle that we've sadly seen elsewhere in the Middle East, where a conflict that was much more of a sort of a political civil war, say for example in Syria, or an ethno-political conflict, the kind of -- the nature of the conflict we saw, say, in Georgia or Nagorno-Karabakh, starts to take on more religious extremist tones, particularly because of the larger international environment.

And so, when Putin looked at the second war in Chechnya, he saw that also through the lens of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan where in Afghanistan too, the Mojahedin, over time, became more extremist. Of course we know that was the spawning ground of Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, and also in the late parts of the first Chechen war there was a lot of probing by people like (inaudible) and others in Chechnya to see if that could become, you know, a recruiting point, a focal point for this kind of broader terrorist campaign.

Some of that is very well documented, including by one of the Chechen leaders, Aslan Maskhadov. There's a very good book of interviews that Nick Dunaloff

from Northeastern University, a prominent journalist, has helped put together of interviews and tapes that Maskhadov sent out to his representatives in the states talking, in fact, about these attempts of others, how to penetrate the Chechen movement.

And Putin, of course, was coming out of the background of the KGB and the FSB and like in intelligence services anywhere, they'd been penetrating the Chechen insurgent movement. So, they were well aware of what was basically happening there and Putin was starting to trace these linkages with the broader terrorist campaign, but from the perspective of the U.S., this was just another round, certainly initially, of the conflict that started off in a very different place, another of the conflicts that we saw with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

So, Putin got very frustrated with the United States in particular that we didn't see the way that the conflict from his perspective had morphed, because of course there was still this ethno-political division, frankly Chechnya asking for exactly what Putin is purporting that Crimea has asked for, for self determination, but in fact there was also something else going on there, and of course we saw in the second war in Chechnya, just the kind of larger dimensions of the struggle and the way that terrorist groups had also penetrated this.

So, a great source of frustration and anger for Putin that we weren't able to find a common position on this, and he thought that Chechnya would eventually be factored in by the United States into the sort of greater war on terrorism, but we never accepted it as that.

MS. DOUGHERTY: You know, just a little choreography here. We were going to talk for about a half an hour. We're getting close. I just want to ask one question and then we're going to open it up to questions and we'll finish at 4:00 p.m.

Cliff, you know, I think you were both talking about misperceptions that the West has, and there are many, about Putin. But, you know, one of the biggest, if you

were to walk outside and ask an average person in Washington, you know, who is Vladimir Putin, what makes him tick, the first thing they would say is a KGB agent. It's the very first thing that everybody seems to know.

And this is such a -- maybe simplistic question, but to you, what are the biggest misperceptions? And is just that he's a former KGB agent a misperception or maybe a -- not as subtle interpretation of what makes him tick?

MR. GADDY: I'll say a few words and then Fiona should say something as well, because who he is and what his identity is is -- it's not simplistic. You can't just put a one word label -- kleptocrat, autocrat, KGB agent, whatever. That's why we, as a starting point not because this was the final word or it's comprehensive, but we chose those six identities that we developed in the first section -- the State-ist, the man of history, the history man, the person who uses history, the survivor, the outsider, the case officer, and -- what were the other --

MS. HILL: Free marketeer.

MR. GADDY: -- free marketeer, but the point is the first three have to do with his goals. The last three have to do with his methods, so it's kind of ends and means, and the methods, that's the case officer the KGB operative, the title, the free marketeer is, in quotes, is his perception of what a free market or what capitalism is. And the outsider is his ability to look at things and analyze them. They're very closely connected, by the way, with his identity as the case officer or the recruiter, the field officer, all of those talents.

His KGB background, though, it really is very important, but it's also important to recognize that is, in itself, complex. He's not the guy -- at least not only -- what do we know about what he was doing in the KGB? That's part of the problem. So, you have to reconstruct it on the basis of what KGB officers, operatives do in the particular KGB that he joined. So, we have a lot of discussion about understanding what

the KGB that Putin joined or was recruited into. It was a special phase of the KGB when there was a sense of trying to at least not replace the purely physical, coercive, repressive methods of the gulag and basement cellars at the Lubyanka, but compliment them, at least, with some more sophisticated ideas about how to control individuals and control masses, and this happens to have a long history, by the way, in Russian Secret Services, which is fascinating in itself and it's something that resurfaces.

So, Putin is a guy who has been taught and trained how to analyze people, individuals especially, and how to control them without necessarily resorting to overt force. There's always the threat of force. And yet it is more a sense of psychology, and that's why when Putin was asked, and he talks about this in his autobiography, he's been asked maybe even at that press conference you referred to, but he's been asked by people repeatedly, what is this about the KGB? What good is that to be the leader of a country? I mean, what did you get in the KGB that has served you as head of this country, head of state? And he always answers with one, maybe two answers. In the KGB we learned how to work with people.

In the English language edition of his biography they translate that as personnel relations, or something, it's a weird thing. Working with people is a code phrase from Yuri Andropov's KGB, this sort of new "enlightened" KGB that concentrated on, if you like, preempting social discontent, right, don't -- it's very inefficient to wait until people revolt and then just go and arrest them all and send them to the gulag. Couldn't we do something to prevent that from happening? Well, to do that, we have to understand what their concerns are, what they're thinking and, you know, nip it in the bud, figure out ways and different ways to control it.

That, we think, really, really captures something very important about Putin and there are many aspects of his KGB background that we find application -- it's something that's very important for how he deals in foreign policy.

MS. HILL: Yeah, I mean, one of the things that Putin does is he plans for contingencies, which is also something that he would have learned in the KGB. You know, if you're launching an operation -- I mean, we've all seen the Hollywood movies -- something always goes wrong, even for Tom Cruise in "Mission: Impossible", they have to improvise. And so, I mean, basically, even at lower levels you know that events are going to throw you off and you might not get the information that you need, you know, you might have some flawed analysis, the whole operational playing field may change, circumstances change, people also react in ways that you don't necessarily expect. You have to be prepared for that. You have to basically have backup plans.

And that's what we see with Putin now in the case of Ukraine. You know, every time something happens, he does something unexpected, you know, from our perspective and we're always complaining he doesn't have a strategy. It's because we can't figure out what he's doing, you know, because he does have a larger strategy. He's trying to maximize his position. He actually, you know, kind of, I think, hinted at this in the last couple of days on some of his observations of Ukraine. He tends to look at everything in chunks, you know, each individual phase of an operation, you might lose some, but you might win some.

Remember, if any of you have seen this quote that he had from his trip to Hungary when he was asked about this war or battle in Debaltseve in Ukraine, he said, "Well, it's tough to lose. You know, sometimes you just have to accept that", something along these lines, and he often, you know, makes these kind of comments, I mean, this kind he sees a win here, but he's often been asked about -- you know, 9/11, for example, where reporters have said to him -- you know, Russian reporters -- well, of course this was all just a plot by the United States to stage an attack against itself, and he always says, rubbish, you know, you couldn't possibly do something like this. I know from the operational perspective -- obviously running through his mind all the operations that may

have not gone according to plan.

So, we make a mistake if we don't realize that, you know, he plans for these contingencies. It's something that's part of his training to prepare for.

But there is one element where, you know, the guy on the street does have it right about the KGB operative in the mind because Putin is unique as the leader of a modern state, and in fact, maybe even the leader of a state historically. It's very unusual to find someone who's risen through the back corridors of the intelligence services to the top of government. Putin's always making comments about Judge Bersenia having become president after being head of the CIA. Well, of course, he was a political appointee, it wasn't like he started off in the CIA. And the talk about Yuri Andropov, who we keep talking about, who was the longest serving head of the KGB, but Andropov was also from the Communist Party. He was an official. He had many of the different positions. It wasn't that he was also started off as a KGB, he didn't start that as the first part of his career.

And what Putin has done then is create a system in which he's fused intelligence with politics, with military insecurity issues and economics at the very top, and that is really what is unusual about this political system, it's the system we describe at the beginning of the book, but it's one that we've really now seen come into, I guess into its big moment now in international affairs because what we see on the ground in Ukraine now is clearly a covert operation in many cases. I mean, there's a lot of denial and kind of stepping back, but even Putin himself is hinting at this. There's lots of discussion about the war in Ukraine becoming a training exercise. There's all kinds of things going on, all kinds of inferences and references and Putin seems to be relishing the operational perspective of this. He's literally being quoted at times by his press secretary in the Kremlin of overseeing everything in an operational perspective.

So, we're really now seeing the operative abroad come into being and I

think, you know, just in some of these quotes that he's actually relishing the fact now, to some degree, that, you know, kind of he's one step ahead of us.

MS. DOUGHERTY: I think this is a good moment to open it up to questions. So, I see one gentleman right here in the scarf. If we can get a microphone down there.

And if you could, again, I'm sorry, identify yourself, keep your question brief so we can get a lot of questions in.

MR. COULTON: David Coulton -- there's no speech coming. It was a wonderful presentation. Thank you. I was wondering how the panel would react to a couple observations, quick ones? One, in 1990, '91, '92 the Soviet and then Russian general staffs were consumed with the notion of foreign nationals. The first chief directorate, the second chief directorate were consumed with the notion of foreign nationals so that someone like Putin showing up at an ersatz, German, stiff-tongued meeting bringing this up rather than being exceptionable, given the aquarium that he was swimming in -- if you know the aquarium -- no pun intended, I think is not only unexceptional, it's probably to be expected.

Second, Cliff, god bless you, the dismal science is a tough slog, but I would say that the crisis wasn't really the trigger for Putin's recalculation. They ran Yanukovych as a special operation in 2003. Pavlovsky was there when he was an insider. We all laugh at Sergei Markov maybe now, what he was, but back then he was an insider. They ran the party of regents. They created the fake construct of the Western fascist. They hired the people to play act and they lost that campaign and figured they lost it because it was a special operation. They wanted that seat because Kuchma was more independent than they liked.

And if you look at what the general staff said, you looked at what Petrachev said from 2005, '06, what Putin said in Munich was as clear as day, it should

have surprised no one. He had been saying that from 2005 in the White House with Hadley-Bush.

So, my point to you --

MS. DOUGHERTY: We don't have a lot of time, so if you could ask the question.

MR. COULTON: So, my point is I don't necessarily believe that Putin changed because of the economic crisis. That geopolitical point of view -- and finally, with Fiona, I think the evidence is still out that even with this operational background that he's a planner. I still think that he is improvising. Only four people allegedly knew he was going to annex Crimea. I think he's taking temperature reads, as Cliff said, he's looking at people, he's taking Merkel's temperature, and I think we have to deal with an improviser rather than a long-term planner. Thank you.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay. Who wants to go first? Cliff, maybe you start with the --

MS. HILL: Actually, I'll jump in because actually I don't think anything that you've actually said actually is in contradiction to what we just said here because, I mean, part of the art of dealing with events is to improvise and basically to gauge other peoples' reactions.

So, I mean, this is more the axioms of Lenin, if you kind of recall, you know, if you push forward and you get resistance, you step back. If you don't get any resistance, you kind of press forward. So, it's all gauged on reactions.

I mean, one of the shticks by this point, you know, is Putin and judo. I mean, think about judo. It's all done in successive bouts and, you know, kind of over the course of tournaments and you have to size up your opponent and you basically have to find leverage and weak spots and be able to push their strength against them, and that's exactly what Putin is doing.

But it doesn't mean that there's an absence of strategy there and I think that this is kind of where we have to be very careful because once we make those kinds of assertions that he's only just a tactical opportunist, you know, we basically then kind of miss the larger point of what he's trying to do, which is to always kind of gain advantage and to keep defending and pushing Russia's positions and interests and he will do it by whatever means are possible.

And improvisation, I mean, it's a great thing, I mean, otherwise, I mean, we're not very good at improvising. We're -- the sanctions haven't had the effect that we wanted them to have. They haven't changed his behavior, although they've had a lot of pain, they've changed them to maybe try to approach his goals by different means and then we come up -- well, the next thing we come up with, oh, lethal weapons, then, let's try that. So, we have a big debate about that. But we haven't come up with a comprehensive strategy, so by, you know, kind of accusing him of not having any strategy and blaming him for being actually a very good tactician, which is very popular in Russia, you know, kind of where are we? You know, so we might have some kind of grand strategy or kind of grand idea, but we're obviously not very good at improvisation and that's, again, you know, where Putin seems to have the edge on that.

And that's kind of really the point we're trying to bring out here that, you know, kind of you can plan strategically, you don't have to have a big strategic plan, but you can think about all the things that you might do if you don't get the reaction that you expect, and that's kind of one of the things that he tries to do.

SPEAKER: (off mic).

MS. HILL: Well, he's certainly trying to reverse the course of what he sees as Russia's losses, and that's what I mean about defending Russia's positions. I mean, this gets back to, you know, the points that you're making about the early 1990s. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction in Russia across the board with Russia's

position, a strong feeling of humiliation. And it came out in deals and people like Gorbachev even, you know, kind of in the position that he had in the early 1990s talked about this weakness of Russia, the humiliations, Russia being pushed into a corner and having to play second fiddle.

And in the 1990s, that period from '92 to '94, there was an awful lot of tension, as I've mentioned before, there were a lot of conflicts, there were a lot of questions about the future of the Black Sea fleet, there were a lot of tussles with Ukraine. And there was certainly kind of a feeling then that Russia didn't have the capacity to really kind of push back in the way that it wanted to.

So, then, if you kind of fast-forward to the point that you were making about Yanukovych, it's certainly the case that Putin thought that he had his guy in Yanukovych. This gets back to the point that Cliff was making about targeting individual leaders. It's not just Yanukovych, it's more broadly and it includes our own leaders, you know, and leaders of European countries, trying to figure out who they are about, exactly taking their temperature, looking at where their vulnerabilities and weaknesses are and where their strengths might be and then how you're going to actually try to maneuver them, you know, getting back to Cliff's point about working with people into a place where you want them to be.

And Yanukovych was great, you know, from Putin's perspective, up until he just wasn't because Yanukovych mismanaged basically the governance of his own country. There's no question about it. Yanukovych proved to be somewhat inept about the way that he was governing Ukraine and he played off or tried to play off Russia against the U.S. and Russia against the EU and he failed. Eventually his bluff was called both by the EU and by Putin in Moscow, and as we've heard now, there's lots of great articles about this in the Financial Times and in the New York Times getting behind the scenes somewhat, you know, he's -- basically his whole power base just disappeared

beneath him as it happened so many times, you know, we've seen across Eastern Europe and many other settings, and then he takes off and apparently he's still hanging out somewhere on his friend's couch in Vuhlehirsk or wherever he is (inaudible).

You know, so basically, as Putin said, he had no political future, but that then meant that Putin had to do something more drastic, a contingency plan. And that gets to a point about, you know, keeping your intentions very close. This is exactly, you know, kind of another thing that Putin learned.

(Inaudible) anybody what you're going to do. I mean, this is kind of -- everybody talks about Russia having a weak hand. Well, you can play a weak hand very effectively if everyone else shows you their cards. But that's kind of what we do when we say, here they are, (inaudible) at Brookings. All of our debates (inaudible) on the table. I'm sure there's lots of people here sending not just Tweets, but notes back home saying, oh, they're thinking about this.

You know, we're in a transparent environment, so we lay out all the time what we're thinking about, we debate lethal weapons to Ukraine, we debate all the different points of our strategy. Putin doesn't tell anybody anything. He has people coming in, and that's it, it's the element of surprise. It doesn't mean to think that you're not thinking strategic, it's just why would you tell people what you're going to do? Then, you know, you give them the chance to get one step ahead of you.

However, I have to say that, you know, kind of a week or so out it became obvious, certainly to me and Cliff, that they were going to annex Crimea because, you know, back in 2008 there was an awful lot of pressure put on Ukraine, a lot of questions raised about the Black Sea Fleet, the Sevastapol, the long-term lease questions that Russia had on the region and there was a lot of threats put on the Ukrainians then. So, it was obvious that when we got to a crisis point that something like that would happen and there's a few people in this room that will remember that I

predicted it at a lunch a week in advance.

Now, I can't say I can predict that way -- that was the only one where he'd sort of shown his cards and I'm afraid he's now got them, you know, quite close to his chest.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Cliff, that was a lot of material, but do you want to jump in?

MR. GADDY: No, no, let's go --

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay, let's go into another question. Let's see, sir, right there?

SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm Josef (inaudible), European Politics (inaudible). For me this partly is an unsettled frontier conflict between the European Union and Russia focusing on Ukraine that you deal with in the book and also in this article in the Post. And then -- because there was an agreement, okay, no compromise between President Clinton and President Yeltsin that some former members, even some former members of the Soviet Union and the Baltic Republics, but also Poland, Hungary, et cetera, would become members of NATO and the European Union.

But nothing was explicit about the others and then -- so, but I'm wondering, wouldn't it help from the West, so to speak, the U.S. and the EU, to clarify that Ukraine will never be a full member state of the European Union or of NATO and the best way to survive for Ukraine is to become, say, federal inside and neutral outside?

MS. HILL: Let me jump in on this because this is a very sensitive issue and actually Cliff and I don't necessarily always see eye-to-eye on this one either. So, we'll have a little -- you know, duke it out here, just to liven things up. Just because we write books together doesn't mean we always agree.

The issue of federalism of Ukraine is particularly sensitive and I know that you come from Spain where it's a big debate and, you know, it's a big debate also in

the United Kingdom with Scotland and the rest of the UK, ad this was very much on the cards for Ukraine in the very early 1990s. Many of you here in the audience who are familiar with this will remember there was -- after the collapse of the Soviet Union when Ukraine was first constituted as an independent country there was a debate about whether Ukraine should be federal because of the divisions -- ethnically, linguistically, and the history of Ukraine being, in many respects, a divided country just like Poland, bits of Ukraine being under, you know, Germany or the Austria-Hungarian empire, (inaudible) Poland, you know, and Polish lands at different times.

And there was a firm belief that's been, you know, kind of expressed in many other countries that, no, Ukraine should be a unitary state and that really there should be political provisions put in place to build upon that.

Now there is a debate in Ukraine about decentralization because there was a feeling that in trying to consolidate the country that there might have been too much over centralization -- this is exactly what's going on in the UK and Spain, as you're well familiar, particularly in the UK under Margaret Thatcher there was a hyper centralization and although the UK is a very small country in comparison with Ukraine, it has also a very complicated history and now we're in a debate about decentralization, less (inaudible) federalization and maybe even independence on the Scottish front.

So, the debate about Ukraine is how to decentralize and Putin is now trying to play into that debate, and of course this is an incredibly sensitive -- and Russia itself in the 1990s -- remember, Boris Yeltsin was forced, himself, after the succession of Chechnya, which is again getting back to that point about how we misread, you know, kind of the progression of events in Chechnya, to conclude bilateral agreements on autonomy, just like Putin is now proposing that the Donbassa do with Kiev with a whole host of different republics, with Chechnya for a time, but with Tatarstan, and all kinds of Russian regions.

This is Yeltsin when he said, “Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow.” These were incredibly unpopular and they weakened the Russian state and basically Putin came in and tried to put an end to them, so he’s now playing in the debate in Ukraine that was exactly the debate that was playing out in Russia in the 1990s.

The Ukrainians should decide that for themselves just like the UK and Spain and everyone else should decide that for themselves, in my personal view.

The other issue about, you know, kind of Ukrainian status should also, I believe, be put off for the future while we deal with this issue of the conflict. We shouldn’t be conceding anything, but that’s, of course, leads right into the heart of the debate where people were talking about, you know, the option of now Ukraine going into the Austria (inaudible) mentioned Finland, but now we’ve moved on to the kind of (inaudible) status of Austria during the Cold War.

But in any case, Cliff, you might have a slightly different view of that.

MR. GADDY: I’d rather talk about Putin. I don’t want to talk about Ukraine.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Actually, yeah, because there’s so much really great stuff about him personally, but let’s -- we’ll take one question here and let’s try to keep it a little brief because, boy, our time is going too fast and there’s a lot to talk about. Right here, please.

SPEAKER: Thanks so much for a great presentation and (inaudible) former Georgian ambassador to NATO and, Fiona, thank you very much for making this point. If there is any debate of the Ukraine sides or European or NATO or (inaudible) future, this debate should be taking place in Kiev and not in Washington or in Moscow and especially not between Washington and Moscow.

So, it’s Ukrainian’s fate and Ukrainian people should decide where they belong to, so otherwise, any other idea contradicts very much the European idea, per se.

But on the other hand, my -- I have a slightly different point. If you are an ordinary Ukrainian and if you have a chance to follow the debates, see some of the messages you can distill is that basically you are getting an agreement, which leads to the frozen conflict, this frozen conflict leads to the situation that you won't be able to get neither the European Union nor to NATO.

On the other hand you have a -- either German or European MPs who argues that we are going to defend NATO allies, but what happens beyond the NATO alliance, god help you, and furthermore, we are not going to give you defense capabilities as well.

So, do you think, Fiona, that it's kind of an implicitly new division line, which means that, well, if you are a NATO member today, there is still kind of an ironclad commitment of Article V. If you are not, we are not providing any defense capabilities or any assistance. How it should be interpreted by the ordinary Europeans, by the ordinary Ukrainians who are fighting today in the Bolsovo after the cease-fire agreement?

And you alluded whether -- what is the strategy today of Washington? How -- what are the bigger plans that -- not just to NATO alliance, but beyond the NATO alliance, which is Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Russia's neighborhood? Thank you.

MS. HILL: Well, this, of course, is the big question that we're all debating and I can tie it back to Putin so that I can give Cliff a chance to talk about this, because a lot of it comes down to interpretations of who Putin is and what he wants and, you know, what the implications of this are, and the reason they're having all of these debates that seem extremely confusing from the outside is that we haven't fully settled here, at least, on an analytical base for moving forward.

We definitely need a new strategy for dealing with Russia. The old relationship is clearly gone. There's nothing to reset back to and we need, basically, a realistic base for looking at where we go next, and obviously that involves a larger

strategy of how we're going to deal with Russia directly, but also in the broader region, including Georgia and then obviously the conflict in Ukraine.

But part of that comes down to, first of all, realizing the perspective of Putin and what we're dealing with here, and that's kind of really what we've been trying to push out in this book because unless you get that and you accept that that's the case or we have a different analysis of this that we can also have a consensus on, we're not going to be able to move forward because you have to be realistic about, again, what you're dealing with, before you can figure out what you're going to do and one of the whole purposes of Putin is to confuse the picture as much as possible.

I mean, one of the points that we make out in the book is that Putin makes it extraordinarily difficult to figure out not just what he wants and what he's doing, but, you know, who he is and what he stands for. That's great tactics again, it's just so that the rest of us spend our time spinning our wheels trying to figure this out rather than decide what we're going to do. It's a great way of deflecting, as a way, from strategy.

And one of the points that we try to make out in the book, and this is why I'd like to get Cliff in here, it's really about the way that Putin looks at the outside world. Putin doesn't believe that Ukraine, Georgia, Poland, for that matter, even France, you know, perhaps not even Germany, are really sovereign states. I mean, he basically believes that unless you can set your own economic, political trajectory, you can really defend yourself about having to run off, you know, to NATO or to the United States, then you are not a sovereign state and you do not have the right to decide your trajectory.

Georgia obviously experienced that in spades in 2008 and Ukraine is experiencing that now. That's the kind of message that he's sending and it's really the message that we're trying to fight back against. Here, in the West, we're not doing a very good job of it because we're not making it very clear, and we were saying that Putin has violated -- that Russia has violated the past Cold War agreements on no forcible seizure

of territory and on denying all of the countries their own free choice of association. Again, we keep muddying that message, but Putin actually rejects that.

Cliff, over to you.

MR. GADDY: Thank you. No, that's -- we've personally heard it repeatedly from not only Putin but other very high ranking Russians in private conversations, or at least not public conversations. Hard to imagine that even they would say this publicly, that there are only a handful of truly sovereign nations in the world, and it's a description of fact in their mind, not a moral thing about some countries that are inherently superior to others. It's history, culture, civilization, and capacity.

As Fiona said, a sovereign country, by definition, in the Russian mind, is a country that can defend its own sovereignty and you don't have some god given right to make all kinds of choices and expect them to be recognized. You have to be able to enforce them. And most countries, the overwhelming majority of countries in the world, don't have that capacity. Therefore, they are subject to pressure by someone bigger and stronger than they are to act not in necessarily their own interest, but in the interest of this big, more powerful actor.

And for the Russians it's just hard-nosed realism. Around them they have smaller states, none of whom are capable of defending themselves against Russia by themselves. Some have joined an alliance where they receive backing from the United States and other European countries in the form of NATO, but they have surrendered part of their sovereignty for that reason.

The EU is a surrendering of sovereignty. We know that. For us, that's fine. That's good. That's part of the rules of the game. But for the Russians, they will never be in that situation. Putin says this repeatedly. He said it just most recently last week in, I think, kind of spontaneous remark, he was at a trade union conference and he just made it clear that this is not -- this world order in which the United States sets the

agenda for everybody and defines what everybody can and cannot do, we will not join that. We, basically -- and other Russians have said it in other terms -- we don't want to be a Poland II, a country that's prosperous and all these measures you have about their liberal economy and so forth. That's not, for us, the essence. Poland is not really sovereign. They can't make these decisions on their own because they can't protect them.

And that brings me down to what Fiona said about Ukraine, it's just a matter of definition. Ukraine can't defend itself, so Putin has said, yeah, everybody has a right -- every country has a right to make any decision they want to, they can join anybody they want to. He said that. But they have to be aware of the consequences.

And that's not entirely wrong, by the way. You know, I'm really reluctant to get into all of this, but as an American, I don't think ally of the United States to whom we are committed to defend in the event of an armed conflict has the right to make stupid decisions that might cause us to have to go to war. We -- they have the ability to do it, but if they're in an alliance and they are putting at risk other countries, they have to think about that.

The problem is, our President, our leaders have never made that clear to our allies the way it was during the Cold War.

So, we're in this vague, non-Cold War Cold War in which we have allies and we have literal formal commitments to defend them in the event of an armed incursion, but we no longer have the ability to say, look, I don't think it's a good idea that you do this or that because you are, you know, causing their nuclear missiles to be targeted on us, not you. They don't care about you, they care about us, the United States of America. That's who all the nuclear missiles are targeted on.

And I think that, you know, there's several elements to this. We do need to deal -- the United States and Russia need to solve the relationship between each

other. Ukraine will never be an economically prosperous, democratic, liberal, Westernizing, modernizing country unless Russia is moving in the same direction. That's just a fact. That's not a value judgment. You can talk all you want to about principles; that's just fact.

If Russia is opposed to Ukraine moving in that direction, since it is a threat to them, they will not permit it.

If I'm Ukrainian, I'm going to say, you know, maybe I need to make some choices here.

MS. HILL: This is where we have our heated arguments, as you can imagine, in our office because, you know, obviously the big debate is, how do we create the space for Ukraine, Georgia, and other countries to make that choice. And my counter argument is always, you know, basically about the fact that if we start to kind of feed into the idea that we should be the ones directly, bilaterally negotiating, which is actually not what Cliff is saying about carving up Ukraine, then all we do is we feed that perspective further on.

So, I'm completely opposed to any discussions, any kind of peace plans that we start laying out that suggest any kind of seeding of territory of Ukraine because you're feeding into this.

So, what we have to do is really devise a strategy -- we've got a wakeup call here. You know, and as Tom said in the introduction here, you know, the whole alter that the U.S. thought it was presiding over of the last 20 odd years is now in tatters and we now have got a wake-up call that we're going to think really hard about how we put that together going in and put it on to a different footing and we have to recognize that perspective, those statements of fact, as Cliff has said, that this is what Russia believes, and therefore we have to act accordingly. We have to think, you know, long and hard and very carefully about what we do, because Putin is not going to give us any breaks

and he's not going to give Georgia any breaks, he's not going to give Ukraine any breaks, because he sees this as a threat and he's basing -- this is why Cliff and I were so much opposed to some of our colleagues arguments about lethal weapons, because Putin is just going to escalate that into a spiral -- we're in an escalatory spiral right now -- and inflict more punishment on Ukraine to teach us a lesson.

Because this is really about the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Russia. I mean, unfortunately, Ukraine is getting clobbered because Putin thinks that the United States is a major threat, and this is a hot proxy role, this is why I don't like using the world Cold War either -- there is a hot proxy war going on on the ground and Debaltseve is one of the battlegrounds, and they're also engaged in a hot war in the economic and financial sphere with Russia and we're going to have to recognize that and basically start to proceed on that basis and figure out what we're going to do.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay, let's see, gentleman right here, quickly.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks very much. I'm Garrett Mitchell and I write the Mitchell Report and I want to pose a question to both Fiona and Cliff that is a question that I raised when you published the first book and because you've gone in greater depth and looked at him in broader perspective, and that is, is Vladimir Putin *sui generis*, or does he evoke the shadow of former -- are there others in any country, in any realm of the world, that the more you looked at this person he reminded you of or is he *sui generis*?

MR. GADDY: Certainly there are people that may be -- they are certain resemblances to what Putin -- what we seem to have as his goals for his country and for himself and also the way he acts, but we kind of got at this question about the uniqueness of his combination of a background -- the methods, the ends and the means, the means and the ends.

So, there's nobody that has this background that he has of the

intelligence operative.

And Russia itself -- I mean, he's the head of Russia and Russia is unique, it really is, it's not like any other country. Every country has obviously got unique features, but Russia seems to have more, bigger unique features than anybody else. And the one thing that is -- we always have to keep in mind is that to my mind there is no major country in the world that is as security-centric as Russia, where security is such an overpowering factor.

Everything changes in Russia when Russia feels under threat. You can look as an economist, I can analyze the economy and where the trajectories might be. We can -- Fiona can look at historical examples of figures who talk about -- Russian figures about the future of the country, you can look at ideology, you can look at pronouncements, and we make forecasts on the basis of where does it look like Russia is going.

But the geopolitical situation, Russia's relationship to the outside world -- very specifically what I mean by that is Russia's perception of threat from the outside world -- perception of threat, not necessarily objective -- what we would think to be a threat -- what they think could be a threat can change everything.

In 1928, I guess it was, when Stalin took over the Soviet Union once and for all for Trotsky, the Economist -- the same Economist magazine we have today, it didn't have these color covers back then, it looked like some kind of farm magazine or something on the front, it was just a bunch of text, but they had a cover and they had editorials, leaders as they have today, and they had one in October 1928 -- '28 I think -- "The Fall of Trotsky" and they analyzed the situation inside the Soviet Union as Trotsky has now been definitely removed from the position of strength within the politbureau and Stalin is taking over, and they analyze what this would mean for the future of Russia, and it is so perceptive. Boy, do they really understand, they know what Trotsky writes, what

he's doing, they know Stalin and where he comes from, and they make a forecast.

The forecast is: we bourgeoisie in the West should rejoice at the victory of Stalin because a Soviet Union, Soviet Russia under Trotsky would be a threat to the world because it's outward looking, expansionist, world revolution, you know, the whole story, and I wish I had the quotes exactly, but Russia, to the extent that it survives, Russia under Stalin, to the extent that it survives or lasts long will be a backward-looking, peasant oriented, stagnant Russia whose behavior will be of little or no importance for the outside world.

Now, that was an absolutely perceptive and correct analysis on the basis of what Stalin was all about and who he was versus Trotsky. What the editorial failed to recognize was, you know, Hitler, Nazi Germany, attack on -- so, my point is, that changes everything and in a much less dramatic, perhaps, form, it's done that repeatedly through history and that's what's happening now.

If you ever think that security is not foremost -- the foremost factor in Russian politics and Russian thinking, that's just because that's an aberration; it may happen for a few years, but it's an aberration. It's an abnormality and it will pass and we will have the Russia that we've always had, which is very focused on protecting itself and defending itself and of course imagining that the entire outside world is all about trying to attack Russia. And of course history has shown that, yeah, that's kind of true. So, there's enough there to keep it going.

The 1990s was such an anomaly, one of those historical anomalies. That was roughly a decade when the security centrism did not seem to run things and, I'll be honest, we have a lot of people in Western policymaking circles whose frame of reference for Russia is the Russia of this very anomalous Russia. It's not coming back anytime soon, I don't think, and we're going to live for a long time with the historical kind of Russia that's focused so much on protecting its security, and then that changes

everything. It changes economic policy, as it is now, in a fundamental way. It is really changing economic policy inside of Russia. And the conflict, the deeper it goes, the harsher our sanctions, the more Putin reacts and we react to him, and so forth, we get in a situation where the future of Russia is being put on a very different trajectory than it otherwise might have done had we not gotten into this intense conflict right now.

MS. DOUGHERTY: There's a question, gentleman right in the back with the blue tie. A little bit back farther. There we go.

SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible) and I'm a visiting fellow at the CTOR. My question about strategy and how to cope with Putin, we obviously know that in Russia there is a strong leader and leadership. Who should take the leadership in the West? Name a person.

MS. HILL: Yes, that's our dilemma, isn't it?

MS. DOUGHERTY: What about Angela Merkel?

MS. HILL: Yes, because I mean of course the West is a multi-polar, a multi-faceted, very diffuse concept and, you know, as we're talking here, historically in Russia the strong leader has always been a fact, even when the leader wasn't really physically strong there was always a sort of -- the establishment around the leader, be it the czar or the ailing general secretary always created a situation where it seemed to be strong.

So, this is the kind of -- this idea of a uni-polar decision-making point is the main thing that we have to contend with. And that is our issue.

Angela Merkel has played that role for the last year or so. That's actually been a quite difficult role for her to play because, I've made this comment in some other settings, that really Russia is very alpha male. It hasn't always been alpha male. It was once alpha female. There was Catherine the Great, but of course she was a German, so that's also kind of interesting.

It's been a long time since there was a German woman playing such an important role in interactions with Russia, and she became a Russian and we've forgotten that she was German.

So, anyway, but the point is that we have a very alpha male, very assertive, kind of intimidating kind of use of diplomatic language -- it's hardly diplomatic, actually. It's also a situation where there's very much in the interactions a desire on the part of Russia not to lose faith, to always score points. I mean, everything that Putin is saying is making it very clear that even on a diplomatic verbal sparring match he doesn't want to lose and he always wants to have the last word, he said he doesn't want to lose in this.

And he clearly thinks not very much -- let's put it slightly mildly about what I was really thinking that he must think -- about pretty much every global leader, I think with the exception of Xi Jinping, I don't think Putin has a great deal of respect for many other players. I mean, he may play with the idea of respect and kind of give respect to others, but it isn't -- he clearly doesn't think too highly of any of the leadership in the United States. I think he's made that fairly clear.

Most of the European leaders he hasn't given much credence to. He plays with other strongmen -- getting back to the question about is he *sui generis* -- you know, in other settings, you know, he's just been cavorting with Viktor Orbán in Hungary, who was kind of a bit of a local strongman and, you know, there are many other instances we can think of.

But in terms of real respect of someone who could be an interlocutor, we're really very pressed, which again gets back to the strategy, I think we have to take this outside of the European diplomacy. We have to make it very clear about what it is that we really have as the fundamental basis of our disagreement with Russia right now, which is about the annexation of territory, the violation of agreements that everybody

agreed, including the Soviet Union and Russia too, at various points in the 1970s onwards, and to this violation of the principle of countries having a sovereign choice.

Now, even if Putin doesn't agree with it, I mean, there are plenty of other countries in the world who would actually like to have sovereign choice, not just the small neighbors of Russia, and who can accept that principle. So maybe we also have to engage more broadly within the framework of the United Nations and maybe the interlocutor -- we have to think about this very carefully. Maybe there's not one interlocutor but there has to be a series of this, and we have to think, again, very hard about this.

We're in a very difficult position, which, again, I think has been made very clear over the last week and, you know, certainly Angela Merkel and the other European leaders are starting to lose their patience with Putin as well. I mean, Merkel has said many times that Putin lies all of the time, which is another difficulty, so to find someone that Putin won't lie to is also going to be very difficult.

And the recent Minsk Agreement hasn't really helped on that.

MR. GADDY: I just want to underscore the point Fiona made -- that we made in this op-ed we wrote about arming Ukraine, we have an open transparent system, we have -- not only within our whole alliance, our Western community, but the alliance within every country there's different actors we have the right, and we do, express that right to have different opinions.

So, seemingly, we would always be at a disadvantage with a guy who nobody knows, he doesn't answer to a party, a parliament, a politbureau, nobody even knows what he's thinking. As Fiona said, that gives him an advantage.

So, our advantage can only be if we highlight the fact that we are very diverse and yet we still come together, unified on certain policies. So, we have to obviously find the ones that we can be -- we all agree on and we have to stick to them

and show that we have this unity. And if there are those in the group that aren't on board, probably just have to let them -- you know, make it clear, they're not representing the core of the Western alliance. And it will always be -- of course it will be the United States, it will be Germany, it will be other countries, France and Britain, hopefully, but it will especially be the United States, I think, and Germany, and have to stand together and as soon as there is the slightest sense of disunity there, then we're weak towards Putin.

But if we're united, then we are strong and stronger because we can show that you don't have to be an autocrat, you don't have to be just one guy to have a firm position. There's a lot more behind that because we have to find these positions around which we will unify, but we cannot sacrifice the unity because then we lose all chance of having any solution it seems to me.

MS. DOUGHERTY: We probably have time for about one more question, right here in the front, this lady.

SPEAKER: Thank you for the discussion and the debate. My name is Angela (inaudible). I'm a recent graduate from Georgetown University, so also hopefully Jill can allude to this question that I have, but with increasing restrictions to the press, bloggers, and the media, what can be done to overcome the restrictive laws that are being put in place and to ensure that the war in Ukraine is accurately characterized in Russia, and then hopefully we'll also be able to uncover on Putin his self.

MS. HILL: Jill, please kind of come in on this. This is definitely your area.

MS. DOUGHERTY: I don't think anything can be done to change internal Russian laws. I mean, they will take the laws that they think are important, that will have an effect domestically, and that is what Russians will have to deal with, and the Russian people will have to decide whether they accept those laws, whether they think

that they're good for the country, but I do think it raises the question internationally in Europe and the United States, how it responds, because I do believe that there is a very active effort by Russia right now to frame what is happening in the world, not only Ukraine, but to frame how the world works and what are the values and what are the paths that the world should follow when it comes to, you know, rights, what Clifford was talking about is very disturbing, actually, in terms of the sovereignty of certain countries.

So, these are challenges to the Western approach to how the world should function and how laws should protect international relations.

I won't get into a long discussion, but there is a lot of money and a lot of attention being paid and focused on that question right now. The question for the West is: how do you answer that? Do you answer it? How do you answer it? And how do you answer it when you want to respect the way that, let's say, the Western approach to the truth and to broadcasting and to the news? If you can lie, then obviously it's much easier, but many Western broadcasters say they do not want to lie. So, you have a very serious question of how you answer some of these narratives.

I do think that there is no answer; I've seen no answer by anybody yet on how to do this. I think maybe it comes down to individual countries or countries allied with a similar approach to the truth and to the use of the media to get together and decide, perhaps, that they can coordinate in some attempt to broadcast. But we're back to language issues, because a lot of this is going on in the Russian language, broadcasting back to Russia and to Russian speakers in these areas.

So, you do have a question of not only broadcasting in the standard languages but in Russian as well. That's probably kind of a broader answer, but I don't think at this point that there are. I think there's a lot of concern, but I don't think there are a lot of answers to how you do this.

Do you want to jump in? Maybe that's one of the last things we'll be able

to talk about.

MS. HILL: Yeah, I mean, I also have some thoughts on this. I mean, clearly, we don't want to go back to the Cold War approach of doing this, of kind of promoting, you know, our own informational warfare here. I think the best thing that we can do is go back to the principles and ethics of journalism, you know, that Jill and many of her colleagues have represented for decades here where we try to hold ourselves to the best objective ethical standards, which also means being honest with ourselves. I mean, we all have these sorts of sections in the newspaper about fact-checkers, so we have to be ourselves careful.

I mean, you know, coming from the UK I remember, well, just in the last couple weeks we've had the Fox News debacle of the gentleman saying that cities like Birmingham had no-go zones kind of with Sharia law, which is kind of an interesting perspective, and the British Prime Minister David Cameron said he choked on his porridge when he heard that, you know, kind of in the early morning.

So, we have to actually hold ourselves to some better standards of fact-checking before we say things. You know, we do try to do that here and on other outlets; people make mistakes, but we have to then be honest with ourselves if we've made them and that's actually part of the problem that we have because an awful lot of the goals of a lot of the programming in Russia, not just this very slick -- Jill and I were actually talking about this beforehand how kind of Hollywood-esque style has been really taken to great levels in Russia. I mean, it's all about entertainment, a lot of the news is about entertainment as well, which of course is where Fox and some of our other outlets have come through too, but we have to start sort of thinking about just the hard facts and alternative narratives of the kinds of perspectives and how we, ourselves, are honest about the mistakes that we make and about how, you know, often our narratives are wrong as well, which is a pretty tough situation to be in.

But we're actually about keeping everybody else on board with ourselves, standing up for our own principles and values. We cannot, as Jill said, really kind of parachute now in an informational war in Russia. We are not going to change the perceptions of Russians this way, but what we can do is reinforce our own principles and values and make sure that it's very clear that we do stand for something. Because, again, the goals of a lot of Russian programming and some of the things that we see on cable and, you know, is kind of around in hotels and everything, is to create moral equivalency, which is to throw back the flaws and the mistakes, which are multiple, of the United States and to push them right back at us and to show that we're no better than anyone else and sometimes we're an awful lot worse, and so we have to live up, in many respects, to our own principles in journalism, and, you know, across the board on that.

Cliff, do you have any --

MR. GADDY: Nope.

MS. HILL: No.

MR. GADDY: I agree.

MS. DOUGHERTY: I'll just end with, I think, Fiona made a very good point that I think oddly enough, it's not just let's say the hard military force right now, it's the power of ideas and values that has become central in this debate and in the debate between societies right now, or at least a Western viewpoint and a Russian viewpoint, and that gets into the realm of, I think, what your book captures so well, which is the ideas, the principles, and the beliefs of Vladimir Putin, although sometimes it feels kind of amorphous and not very well-defined and it's hard to understand, that that is in forming how he thinks and what he does and so values are an extremely important part of this debate.

And the emotional content right now -- that was one question that I was going to talk about but we're out of time, but that emotional content of communication

right now is very strong, domestically in Russia and internationally the pictures in the images that are played in the minds of people who live in those areas, in Ukraine and in Russia. There are movies that go on in the minds of people and in the hearts of people that affect their actions today, and that can be very dangerous, it can be very inspiring, but it can be very dangerous.

But I want to thank Cliff and Fiona for a really wonderful discussion. I mean, I think we could go on for hours more, but all you have to do is read the book.

MS. HILL: Thanks, Jill.

MS. DOUGHERTY: I highly recommend it.

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