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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Brookings. I'm Mike O'Hanlon, with the Foreign Policy Program. I have a great pleasure and privilege today of helping MC an event. We're really featuring the excellent work of friends and colleagues at the Pew Research Center, Bruce Stokes and Katie Simmons, who have put together a report that, if you've read your paper already today, you know something about already, because, in fact, they're getting excellent press coverage -- as they should.

This is a very important report on security in Europe, with a particular eye on the Ukraine crisis and what's going on with Russia, but, more generally, about the nature of the NATO alliance -- its commitments to its allies, to its various members, how it sees itself, and how it sees relations with Russia going forward more generally -- and, also, ideas and thoughts of Russians, and how they view their own circumstances and their relations with the West.

We have our colleague and friend, Constanze Stelzenmüller, also here by video. If you've been watching me look at TV screens more than you the last few minutes, it's because we're hoping our technology works. And she is kindly piping in straight from Berlin, so she, in addition to being German, wants to have her finger on the pulse of exactly how Germans may be viewing this report. Certainly, their views on European security and Russia are central in the report's findings.

If you've read the newspaper accounts so far, you've seen a number of dimensions of the study already mentioned, but central to the newspaper accounts was the finding that there is some ambivalence within NATO about to what extent the alliance needs to protect various allies militarily in the event of direct aggression against any of them.

I know we'll hear more about this. I'm going to read you one passage from NATO's Article 5 Central Treaty Pledge, which actually is the embodiment of this concept in just a moment.

But before I do, I want to make sure you're aware, there are a lot of other very interesting findings in this report which I'm not going to discuss. Katie and Bruce will do so in just a moment, and they'll each take about 10 minutes to 15 minutes to present their findings, before we then all assemble up here, bringing in Constanze and then bringing you. So, that's the basic game plan for the day.

But you'll hear a discussion of issues such as, how do Russians feel about their own economic and political circumstances? How do they feel about Vladimir Putin? How do they feel about the West? And country by country data on some of that, as well, and that's all very germane.

But we'll also discuss not just military responses by NATO, but economic responses of the type that are currently underway with sanctions. And as you know, the European Union has a very important decision to make within a couple of weeks on whether to extend the sanctions that are now being applied against Russia to try to pressure Vladimir Putin to comply with the so-called Minsk Agreement that would try to find a way out of this conflict. So, a lot of information relevant to that will be presented here this morning, as well.

I'm about to turn things over to Bruce, but before I do, as promised, let me read to you Article 5 from the North Atlantic Treaty document -- because it's crucial to our discussion, and I know it will come up. And the details are worth hearing and processing, because we say Article 5 as if what it means is so obvious to everyone that it's like Moses's 10 Commandments. But, in fact, there is a little bit more texture, nuance, and detail that's worth exploring. So, let me just go ahead and read the one or two long

sentences, and then I'll be out of the way.

The parties -- the allies -- agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. And consequently, they agree that if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the party or parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

So, I think you get a sense of what I'm driving at already with some of the nuance and complexity in this article -- perhaps a little more room for debate about just what it means than is commonly recalled or remembered.

But without further ado, let's hear from our colleagues at Pew. And please join me in welcoming Bruce Stokes to the podium.

MR. STOKES: Thanks, Mike. It's a real pleasure and a privilege to be here, and on behalf of Pew, would like to thank you for the opportunity to work with Brookings and to receive us in -- it's a great audience, and we're looking forward to the discussion we will have about this study. It's always a pleasure to see you, and Constanze is an old friend. And this will be a great discussion.

Just for those of you who don't know about the Pew Research Center, just to give you two sentences: We are a noncommercial, non-advocacy, nonpartisan fact tank in Washington. We do public opinion research and social and demographic research, funded by the Pew Charitable Trust, which firmly believes that good public policy comes from good information. And they have, for more than two decades, funded us to do work in the United States -- and, for more than a decade now, around the world -

- to look at public opinion in particular.

And this is the fruit of some of that research. We will, in two weeks, be releasing another survey on how people view America around the world, which we do every year. So, there's a lot of material going to be coming out from Pew that you might find of interest.

This particular survey covers eight NATO countries -- six in Europe, plus Canada and the United States, plus Ukraine, plus Russia. For those of you who care about these things -- and we always get questions -- primarily done by telephone, although in Ukraine, Russia, Poland, and Italy, done face-to-face. The survey is of the entire country, and the demography of the respondents reflect the demography of the country. So, if 51 percent of the population in a particular country's female, then 51 percent of the survey respondents are female. And the margin of error is about three to four percent, which is normal.

Now, as Mike said, the Washington Treaty that created NATO was signed in 1949. What you may not know is that at that signing ceremony, there was a band playing show tunes, including selections from George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. So, they played "I Got Plenty of Nothing," and "It Ain't Necessarily So."

And, as Mike said, Article 5 commits members of NATO to defend each other in case they're attacked. Well, I can tell you one of the takeaways from our survey is, it ain't necessarily so.

What we have found is that -- find the clicker here -- one of the key takeaways is that Americans are willing to defend their NATO allies. I can tell you, we asked a separate question -- the NATO allies expect us to defend them, and they aren't so certain they're willing to defend each other, including half or more of the populations in Germany, France, and Italy -- so key countries are not terribly committed to defending

each other.

As Mike said, we also surveyed in Russia in this survey. Katie will be talking about those findings in a minute. I'd say the takeaway from this is, we asked people about favorability of Russia and favorabilities of Putin.

The Ukraine crisis has been very, very good for Vladimir Putin. His favorability in Russia keeps going up, and people's view of their own country in Russia keep going up. And you'll see there's other elements in our questionnaire that get at rising Russian nationalism, which I think is quite interesting.

Mike mentioned the Minsk Accord. One of the challenges, we think, facing the Minsk Accord, based on our survey, is, we ask Ukrainians, how would they like the future of Luhansk and Donetsk regions to play out? And basically, half of them want a return to the status quo ante. They want Luhansk and Donetsk to return to Ukraine.

Over half of the Russians believe that they would like to see these two regions either become independent or part of Russia. So, on a very fundamental element of what we do about these two regions, at least the publics disagree pretty strongly.

Views of NATO -- we asked people and have, for the first time here, asked about views of Russia. And they see the Russians as a major military threat, a minor threat, or not a threat at all -- aside from Ukraine. In other words, we know they're a military threat in Ukraine. That's pretty obvious. But what about the broader threat?

Not surprisingly, the polls are quite concerned about Russia as a military threat. Notice that only 38 percent of the Germans are. They have the least concern among Europeans. We Americans actually have the second-largest concern about Russia as a military threat in this survey.

We asked people a variety of options about what to do about the Ukraine

situation. Clearly, one of the most provocative ones is, would you be willing to supply Ukraine with arms to use against Russia?

As you can see, down here at the bottom, basically a median of a little over half say, no, we don't want to supply the Ukrainians with arms. Only 50 percent of the Poles want to do that, which I found kind of interesting. I would've expected that Polish number to be higher. 77 percent of the Germans do not want to supply the Ukrainians with arms.

And notice that we Americans are the second most supportive of this at 46 percent. We're divided, really; it's 46 to 43. So, I wouldn't say that our public strongly endorses this.

We did ask people about other things we might do to help Ukraine. The option that gained the greatest support was, a median of 70 percent said we should give the Ukrainians more economic aid. That included 62 percent of Americans who supported greater economic aid for Ukraine. A median of 57 percent in the eight nations we surveyed say they would like to offer NATO membership to Ukraine. I can tell you, that's really not on offer from the major governments of these countries. But only 36 percent of the German public wants to give NATO membership to Ukraine. So, there is this reluctance in Germany in particular.

We also -- as you know, there is a question of, what do we do about the economic sanctions on Russia because of Ukraine? And a median of 48 percent said, let's keep them the same. People had the option of increase them, decrease them, or keep them the same. People basically voted to keep them the same. And, as you know, that decision has to be made by the end of this month. So, there seems to be a support in the public not to decrease them, but to keep them the same.

The Article 5 question, in detail -- as you can see, 56 percent of

Americans say, we should come to the aid of a NATO ally if they're attacked by Russia. 58 percent of Germans say they do not want Berlin to go to the aid of a NATO ally if they are attacked by Russia. The Canadians are the second most likely to support a NATO ally. But notice that in Spain, it's divided. People are evenly divided on this issue. And in France, Italy, and in Germany, half or more of the public is not willing to live up to their Article 5 obligations.

One of the things that comes out of this survey -- which it'll be interesting to hear Constanze's views on -- is the real disagreement between the American and German publics on a whole range of these questions. And these are pretty significant differences -- 27 percentage points, 26 percentage points. These are huge differences.

Support for NATO sending arms to the Ukrainians -- 46 percent of Americans support that; only 19 percentage of Germans.

Support for Ukraine becoming a member of NATO -- 62 percent in the U.S.; 36 percent in Germany.

So, Washington and Berlin really do disagree on this issue -- or should I say, their publics disagree. The governments probably disagree less than their publics.

Another interesting finding here is a reconfirmation of the deep partisan divide in the United States, even on these issues. The partisanship on this issue is quite evident. We say that a majority of Americans are willing to defend their NATO allies. It's Republican Americans who are willing to defend their allies. Only 47 percent of Democrats are willing to do that.

We say Americans are willing to send arms to the Ukrainians -- or are, you know, divided on that issue. Republicans are not divided on that issue. A majority support it; only a minority of Democrats support it. And throughout this list, you see a strong partisan divide in the United States on these issues.

I'm now going to turn this over to Katie Simmons, to give you the results from Russia and Ukraine.

Thank you.

MS. SIMMONS: Hi. Thank you all for being here.

I will walk through our Russian views first, and then get to our findings from the Ukraine survey.

So, our 2014 survey in Russia last year was done right after the annexation of Crimea. And one of the major findings from the 2014 survey was that there was really generally positive attitudes in Russia about their country, especially compared with 2013. Country satisfaction had gone up to 56 percent, compared with 37 percent in 2013, and economic attitudes had jumped from 33 percent positive to 44 percent positive in 2014.

Come to 2015, just 12 months later, and we see that this positive attitude in the wake of Crimea is really starting to dissipate. Negative attitudes about the economy has jumped up to 73 percent, one of the highest percentages that we've gotten in over the decade of surveying that we've done in Russia.

We've also found that Russians are more likely to say now that Putin's handling of the situation in Ukraine is actually damaging Russia's international image. So, one of the big findings in 2014 was that we got a 43 percent plurality of Russians saying that Putin's handling of Ukraine was actually making the world more favorable towards Russia -- that it was improving their image. That percent is now down to 27 percent, and 37 percent say it's damaging their international image.

Moreover, we find that 45 percent of Russians say the Western sanctions are having a major impact on their economy. When we asked them what's the most to blame for current economic conditions, 33 percent named Western sanctions.

Another 33 percent named falling oil prices. Just a quarter say that it's government economic policies. This finding will foreshadow the slide that you'll see next about approval towards Putin.

So, what we found throughout this survey is that economic conditions, sanctions, international situation -- none of this seems to be affecting attitudes about Putin within Russia. It's really being transferred to the West. There's widespread anti-Western sentiment within the country, and the West is really being blamed for all of these situations.

Widespread majorities in Russia approve of Putin on a range of issues, both domestic and international. So, even though a widespread majority say that they are unhappy with the economy and the way that it's going, 70 percent still say they approve of Putin's handling of the economy. Even though we get a plurality saying that the situation in Ukraine is damaging Russia's international image, more than 8 in 10 say that they are happy with the way Putin is handling relations with the U.S., the E.U., Ukraine. And we get 33 percent blaming oil prices for their economic conditions, but still, 73 percent say they approve of Putin's energy policies. So, he's definitely escaping some of the blame for the situations that they're in.

One area where he gets lower approval, even though it's still relatively high, is on corruption. And this is an issue that's been a very big problem, according to the Russian public, for over a decade.

So, part of the reason we think Putin is doing so well still is that there's very much widespread anti-Western sentiment.

So, just in the past two years, positive attitudes towards the U.S. and the E.U. have plummeted by more than 30 percentage points. For example, in 2013, 51 percent of Russians had a positive image of the United States. Today, that stands at 15

percent. Germany has also been affected; 78 percent in 2011 had a positive view of Germany. Today, that stands at 35 percent.

NATO has never been particularly popular in Russia, but, even so, in the past two years, ratings of NATO have declined, as well.

We also find that 50 percent of Russians blame Western countries for the situation in Ukraine -- the crisis in the east. The Ukrainian government is a distant second, at just 26 percent saying the Ukrainian government is to blame. So, it's really the West is central in their attitudes about Ukraine.

Another 50 percent say they think that NATO is a major military threat to their country. So, it's very clear that anti-Western sentiment is very widespread in Russia and very much connected to what's going on in Ukraine.

Moving quickly onto Ukraine -- before I get into the results, I want to talk a little bit about how we did the survey this year. It was different than how we did it last year. Our survey is face-to-face, and, therefore, the security conditions on the ground and the political sensitivities meant that we were not able to survey Luhansk, Donetsk, or Crimea, as we were able to last year.

Nonetheless, even with excluding these areas, we still cover 80 percent of the Ukrainian population, and we still continue to get very deep divides between the west and the east. That was central to our analysis last year; it's also central to our analysis this year. This map shows how we divide the country into west and east; which oblast go in which region.

We also, due to our sample size this year, were able to pull out the three bordering oblasts that are closest to the conflict in Luhansk and Donetsk, and talk about attitudes among residents of those three oblasts.

So, one of the major findings of the Ukrainian survey is that faith in their

national government has really gone down. Majorities disapprove of Poroshenko on a range of issues -- on the economy, on corruption, on dealings with Russia, and on his handling of the crisis in the east. And this is true in both the west and the east. They both say that they disapprove of his handling of these issues.

We do find, however, that westerners are increasingly critical of the national government. So, last year in 2014, western Ukrainians, 60 percent said they thought the national government in Kiev was having a good influence on the way things were going in the country. This year, 54 percent say the national government is having a bad influence. This is a marked shift in just 12 months. They now join easterners in criticizing the national government.

When it comes to the crisis itself, Ukrainians very much want assistance from the West. 71 percent say they support getting economic aid from Western countries. 67 percent supporting joining the E.U., and we get support in both the west and east of Ukraine for both of these measures.

Where there's more of a divide is on the issue of NATO. 2/3 of Western Ukrainians support getting arms from NATO and joining the alliance, whereas just 1/3 of Eastern Ukrainians agree and say the same.

However, majorities in both the west and the east agree that they oppose joining the Eurasian Economic Union with Russia. And this is related to what we've seen in Ukraine over the past couple years with the onset of the crisis -- is increasing negative attitudes in Ukraine towards Russia.

So, we find that 72 percent of Ukrainians have an unfavorable attitude of Russia. And that includes a 61-percent majority of eastern Ukrainians.

A plurality of Ukrainians, 45 percent, blame Russia for the crisis in the east. That's the highest percentage.

And a 47-percent plurality of Ukrainians say that Russia is a major military threat to other neighboring countries besides Ukraine -- so, definitely, negative attitudes about Russia.

Nonetheless, when we ask Ukrainians, what's the best way to end this conflict? Is it to negotiate with the rebels in Russia, or is it to use military force to fight the rebels? A 47-percent plurality of Ukrainians say the best approach is to negotiate with Russia and with the rebels. They want to end it peacefully.

We do have an east-west divide on this issue. Western Ukrainians are much more likely to say they would like to use military force to fight the rebels. That's 31 percent. Nonetheless, negotiations still win out in the west. 40 percent say they would prefer to negotiate over using military force. Easterners are particularly supportive of using negotiations to end the conflict -- 56 percent. And those three regions that border the conflict -- 65 percent in those regions want to end this through negotiation.

One problem for these negotiations, though, is the findings that Bruce talked about earlier. There's a very deep divide between Russia and Ukraine over what to do about the Donbas region. A broad majority of Ukrainians want Luhansk and Donetsk to remain part of Ukraine, either on the same terms as before or with greater regional autonomy, whereas the Russians want the region to secede, either becoming independent states or part of Russia.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Well, first of all, let me say thank you again to Katie and Bruce. That was just riveting and extremely well-presented; very clear. A lot of information -- but, at least now that I've had a chance to look at it a couple of times, not overwhelming; four or five really central findings. I hope we can hit on those again, reinforce those, discuss those in some detail, and then look forward to your questions.

I also want to, again, welcome my good friend and colleague, Constanze Stelzenmüller, joining us, as you can see, electronically from Berlin.

And so what I'd like to do, really, is go straight to you, Constanze, with the first question being sort of obvious -- which is, how do we understand Germany's view towards the crisis we're in now with Russia? Obviously, there were some very striking findings -- perhaps not surprising to you, although I'll let you speak for yourself in a second.

But German public views don't seem to be inclined towards the use of military force if there were a Russian threat, even to a NATO member. Germany still seems to think -- or Germans still think that Russia's not a major threat to European security. More mixed on the economic sanctions issue; perhaps not adamantly opposed, but otherwise quite leery of policy ideas like helping the Ukrainian military. And just generally, I think the centrality of the reluctance to defend a NATO ally with force in these polls, where Germans were only, I think, 38 percent inclined in that direction, is somewhat surprising -- to me, at least.

So, let me turn things over to you, and maybe ask you to talk about -- beginning with the German reaction to these poll questions -- just how you view the findings.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Okay. Hi, everyone. Let me begin by asking whether you can all hear me loud and clear.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, yes; good.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Good. Because what I can see here in an office room (inaudible) Berlin is that there's always a little bit of a time lag between the sound and the picture. So, if you think I'm talking too quickly, just wave at me energetically.

Secondly, I would like to say it's a big pleasure to be doing this, even long distance. Brookings is working hard on its teleportation facilities, but meanwhile, I'm glad that this video system is working, because I had to be here in Berlin for a variety of actually really interesting security debates. And I've just come from Athens, and before that, I was in Sweden. And I'm going onto Warsaw. So, there's actually a lot going on here about all these issues.

But it's also a pleasure to be commenting on Bruce's and Katie's results, because I have, in the past, worked a lot together with Pew and with Bruce, and I have tremendous respect for their work. And I'm very glad that they did this poll, because I think its findings are very significant -- and, to some degree, I think maybe a wakeup call to many in Europe and in Germany.

And, in fact, I've just been at the seminar here where German officials were carrying the first reports, the first newspaper articles about your report, and were handing these out and looking rather concerned. So, you're already having an impact, if that's any relief.

Now as to the findings -- what is going on here? I think -- I'm obviously concerned at the German response, saying, you know, 38 percent only saying we should use military force to defend a NATO ally against Russia.

I think we have to take that one squarely on the chin. What that means is that the enlargement -- something that people like me have been saying for years, which is that the enlargement of the E.U. and NATO has surrounded Germany with friends, and has, for the last two decades, created a security illusion in Germany.

And a lot of average Germans, I think, aren't aware that, through the enlargement of NATO and the E.U., our security was hugely increased, but we exported our security problems to the periphery -- and that there is kind of a, if you will, lack of

empathy between ordinary Germans and, say, the countries on the periphery of Europe -- whether in the south, where there is now mass migration and a great deal of instability coming from the Middle East and Northern Africa, or from Russian aggression on the east.

So, to me, that's a concern, and I think it means that there is a deficit in public messaging from the government and from political elites in Germany making it very clear what Article 5 obligations mean, and that we are held to those. I mean, I'm old enough to have memories of the Cold War where that was very clear to everybody. And in particular, it was clear to all of us that because we were a Cold War front state, people would come to our aid.

So, I think, you know, this is the time when we come to others' aid, and, clearly, the German policymakers need to make a better case for that.

However, that said, if I may have two minutes more, Mike --

MR. O'HANLON: Please.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: -- I would like to do a little bit of context here.

I spend a lot of time talking to European and to German officials about these things, and I also do follow German surveys very carefully. And there are two things I'd like to add, in terms of context.

I think that public surveys in Germany show that Germans have become extremely distrustful of Russia. Distrust rates of Russia have never been so high. Germans are very concerned and very disapproving of Russian propaganda directed against Germany, against the E.U., and against NATO. In other words, they are deeply unimpressed -- and, in fact, alienated -- by Russian efforts to try and split Europe.

In fact, in much of Europe and in Germany, what's going on now is perceived not just as an aggression against Ukraine and against Ukrainians' right to

choose their alliances, but also against the European project itself.

There is also a great deal of support for economic aid to Ukraine and a great deal of support for economic sanctions (inaudible) and has been for a long time.

And much of Germans' disgust with Russian behavior has come both from the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 and the murder of Boris Nemtsov -- but also from the, you know, lying and bullying that Russian officials have been engaging with on the topic of Ukraine.

It is true that Germans are very concerned about the U.S. debate about our sending arms to Ukraine, but there is a reason for that that I think requires explanation -- which is that Germans -- and, I think, a lot of other Europeans -- are most worried that this will just be a quick fix -- in other words, a hit and run -- by America. You know, you drop the arms, you give them to the Ukrainians, and then you run away again and focus on something else.

That would be -- Germans and other Europeans are tremendously worried that this will just lead to an escalation that we will then be left to deal with.

And, as a final point -- forgive me if I say this, but, you know, sometimes we are also confused about U.S. policy. Remember Kerry's comments in Sochi, when Kerry went to visit Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Sochi 10 days ago, and there was a general impression -- and a great deal of worry -- that there might be some sort of an American-Russian rapprochement that would leave the Europeans pretty much out of the picture.

There was some relief when President Biden came to Brookings a week later and refuted much of what Kerry had said, point by point, but I'm not sure that that was reported here in the same way as was the Kerry-Lavrov meeting in Sochi.

So, there is confusion all around. I think what your survey says, Bruce

and Katie, is that there needs to be greater clarity on the part of public officials, and there is a messaging gap between the policymakers and the public.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Constanze, that was brilliant. Thank you very much.

Let me quickly make two other points that I should've made earlier. One is that Constanze is our Robert Bosch Senior Fellow here at Brookings, and has been just an invaluable addition to our team.

And second, I was able to hope that I was going to get reminded of the Twitter hashtag, which I've forgotten. But it is something to do -- what is it? #UkrainePoll is the -- so if you're not getting enough this way, and you want to get more later through Twitter, that's how you can find it.

I want to ask Constanze one follow-up question --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Sure.

MR. O'HANLON: -- and then maybe invite Bruce and Katie to comment on what they've heard from her, and then maybe have one more subject on the issue of Russia and Ukraine and how they're thinking about things, and then open up to all of you.

But, Constanze, I thought that was not only very insightful but very fair. And I want to actually defend Germany even a little more than you did, and invite you to respond -- not so much on the Article 5 question, although, again, you pointed out that maybe Germans need a little bit more empathy and awareness that now the frontline is further away, and feel like it's now their turn to help and not just be the recipient of security assistance.

But I also wonder if some Germans are aware that the nature of a possible Russian military threat to, let's say, the Baltic States would probably be a little more complicated, a little more ambiguous --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Exactly.

MR. O'HANLON: -- and, therefore, not something that we should just roll in the tanks. So, that's my first point you can comment on.

But in regard to two other aspects -- I wanted to put them on the table, and amplify them, and then invite you to respond.

One of them is the notion of arming the Ukrainian military -- obviously, a very controversial concept here. You alluded to it. The Kerry-Biden conversation has referred to it. You know, it's popular on Capitol Hill, especially among Republicans. President Obama seems unsure, and I think there's a pretty good case that if we give more arms to the Ukrainian military, Russia is going to intensify its role.

So, I'm not so sure the German position on -- its 77-percent opposition to this notion -- is so crazy. And I want you to comment on that.

But the last thing is also on sanctions. Because our German friends are not wimps, it turns out; they just have decided that economic instruments are a better tool for handling this crisis than military ones. And I say this as a person who's been privileged to visit German troops in Afghanistan, and seen them do a fair amount of complex and dangerous opposition to the Taliban, and in support of the Afghan government, lose several dozen troops along the way. And so I'm aware that Germany in the modern era is willing to use force at times.

But in this case, Germany seems to prefer using sanctions. And only 29 percent of the German public wants to decrease sanctions on Russia at the moment -- which is a surprising and somewhat hawkish finding.

So, I just wanted to invite you to comment on any and all of those points, please.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Will do.

I'll say two things before that, though. One, I'm really impressed that this technology appears to be working. This is quite remarkable in itself, I think.

The second thing is, I've been following the Twitter feed on this, and I've just seen my colleague, Jeremy Shapiro, posting a picture of this, with me as a gigantic head behind all of you, saying, "This is a picture that is likely to keep me awake well into my 60s." You know, my head is cut off of what I'm seeing, but I imagine it must be completely terrifying to have this huge German and a disembodied voice from the other side of the Atlantic. So, I apologize to all of you for that. That can't be helped. Maybe with teleportation, I will be reduced to normal size again.

It does remind me of the Woody Allen movie, though, with the enormous image of his mother floating over New York and hectoring him all the time. Sorry for that, everybody. We'll work on it.

But to answer Michael's questions -- hybrid warfare. Yes, there is a German assessment, I think, that -- and I've actually heard German policymakers say this to me -- that an Article 5 attack is the least likely event that we're looking at here. It would obviously be catastrophic. And I think most of the people who work on this, I think, would say, we would be there, you know, in an instant.

I mean, the Germans have been participating in all the reassurance planning, and exercises, and deployments around the Baltic. I've seen them now at conferences and in think tanks discussing these options. I have actually no doubt that our security forces would do what is necessary, when it was necessary.

But I agree with you, Mike, that what the Russians seem to be doing right now is something quite different. I think they'd quite like to keep us anxious about an Article 5 option in the Baltics, because, as we all know, the Baltics are so small that they would be very difficult to defend.

But what they're really doing is keeping us in a state of insecurity, ambiguity, heightened fear and doubt. And in a state that's, as one German policymaker said to me recently, is a little less than peace but not quite war. And what they're doing is twirling the knob there all the time and to different amplitudes, so that we keep having to react to different forms of pressure and different forms of prodding, as though Moscow were using a knitting needle, trying to probe European national and multilateral weaknesses all the time.

And that is indeed something that NATO is not equipped or even tasked to do, to respond to that. This is a question, I think, where the E.U. comes into its own, and where European resilience, consensus, unity, sense of purpose, and, of course, a sense of, you know, having a strategic narrative all become essential.

And I agree with you -- and thanks to you for mentioning it -- that the fact that we have had so much unity on sanctions demonstrates that Europeans have a sense of -- that they are under siege and under attack. And this is about Ukraine, but also about the European project itself, and that this is calling into question something that many of us may have come to take for granted, in a way that our parent generations, you know, who had experienced war, and horrific deprivations, and a horrific sense of guilt and responsibility, you know, may have not adequately, you know, passed on.

But now there is a real sense that this is an existential conflict and something where we really have to engage for a generation.

But, again, the tools are social, economic, political, and there, I would say that Europeans and, indeed, Germans are holding up quite well -- and in particular, Berlin right now is holding together a European consensus on sanctions. As we know, there are a lot of southern nations and a lot of eastern nations who are very vulnerable to Russian pressure and very vulnerable to blandishments. And I think, on the whole, on

that count, we have done quite well.

I think the big question for us all is, how do we stick to that? Because, certainly, the sense from Germany is, this has to be a long game; one we have to be very patient. And, of course, that kind of long consensus is vulnerable in all sorts of ways, and we are -- from what I've seen in the meetings that I've been to over the past 10 days, that is what people are working day and night now to figure out.

MR. O'HANLON: Excellent. I want to invite Bruce and Katie to respond, if they wish, to anything you've been saying. Then I've got one question sort of on Ukraine and Russia.

And then we'll, as I've said --

MR. STOKES: A couple of things -- for those of you who don't know Constanze, she is a huge movie fan. No matter when you hear her speak, there will be some allusion to some American or European movie. She's a great student of film.

A couple of points -- her messaging point, I think, is interesting. If you look at the demographics of the response on the Article 5 question, it is primarily German women, not men, who are unwilling, or reluctant, or whatever to rise to the Article 5 obligation. And interestingly enough, young Germans are more willing to do this than older Germans, as are young French, more than older French.

I frankly would've expected the opposite, but it may be that it's people 50 years of age and older who remember the Cold War. Obviously, younger people don't. And they say, "We never want to go back there," right? That was an uncertain time.

Constanze is right. In our survey in 2010, only 45 percent of Germans had an unfavorable view of Russia. It's now 70 percent. So, there is this growing sense of -- actually, that's down a little bit from last year in terms of unfavorability in Germany, but the trend is still -- the unfavorability is higher.

MR. O'HANLON: And it's the same in reverse -- Russian view of Germany.

MR. STOKES: Right; exactly. As I commented to you when Katie was presenting the data, the Germans may see themselves as the arbiter between the West and Russia, but it's not doing them any good in terms of public opinion in Russia.

But on your point, it is true that only 29 percent of Germans want to decrease sanctions. That's the highest level among the eight populations we surveyed. 25 percent of the French want to decrease the sanctions; 29 percent of the Germans. So, it's not, by any stretch of the imagination, a majority, but it is the strongest percentage among the countries who actually would like to do that. Again, most Germans want to keep them the same. I mean, this is the takeaway.

I think the question about Article 5 is the key issue that comes out of this, even though we're not analysts of Article 5. The question is, as both of you suggested, Article 5 was written for a "the tanks roll across the border into Berlin" or "into the Fulda Gap" or whatever, and we have to make a decision overnight about what to do. It's going to be a hybrid war, potentially, in the future, and that, by its very nature, lends itself to a political debate about what we do before we do it.

And these findings suggest that political debate could be fairly contentious in a number of these countries -- because if you have half or more of the population who don't want to go to the defense of their allies, and it's kind of dubious about whether this is really war or not -- this is really the Russians' aggression or not -- then we're going to have a political contestation that I think Article 5 may not have been designed to actually address.

MR. O'HANLON: Katie, anything you want to add on that?

MS. SIMMONS: Yeah. So, you can see the lack of clarity about who's

responsible on our question about, who do you blame for the crisis in eastern Ukraine? And, actually, Germans are much less likely than other NATO publics to say Russia is definitely the one or blame or is the main culprit; it's just something like 29 percent. They're also more likely to blame either Ukrainian separatists or the Ukrainian government.

So, there's much more confusion there about what's actually going on in eastern Ukraine -- which might help to explain this reluctance to do something or to punish Russia for what they're doing. We see the same thing in Italy. They're much less likely to blame Russia solely for what's going on in Ukraine, and so that may lead to some of this reluctance that you see on their part.

MR. O'HANLON: So, let me start with you, Katie, on my last question, and then, Bruce, you may want to comment -- Constanze, as well -- and then I'll open it up.

And in the presentations you both did -- but especially you, Katie -- on Russian attitudes, there was almost nothing good to latch onto. But there was maybe one glimmer, and I want to ask you about that.

But if I go through the recitation -- I mean, Putin's popularity is ridiculously high. Russians are feeling good about what he's done for them -- or to them, or however he's managed to portray it. Obviously, he's hijacked the instruments of state media, to a large extent, to do this and squelched the opposition.

So, it shouldn't be all viewed necessarily as a pure referendum on whether, over time, people will look back on this period as something that was really good for Russia. I know a number of Russians who are both -- you know, will defend Putin, but at the same time, express this lurking unease about what's happening to their country.

So, my guess is, we shouldn't take any of the poll numbers too literally, perhaps. And, by the way, one thing that occurred to me -- you know, where is George W. Bush when you need him to boost American popularity? I mean, throughout the entire period of the early 2000s, Russian views of the United States were far better than they are not. But I actually just put that in as a little humorous aside.

But the one thing, the one glimmer of hope that I saw in that -- and I'm sure Putin is aware of it; whether he's read your poll already or not, he's certainly aware of this general reality -- Russians are not happy about the economy. And it doesn't really matter that they don't blame him yet -- or arguably, it doesn't matter -- because it's a reality, and it's a 70-percent plus reality, right? And it's headed in the wrong direction, and there's no particular sign of that easing.

And Putin may not be the most brilliant long-term strategist, but he's enough of a tactical politician to know where this could go. And the fact that he's currently 85 to 90 percent popular and deflecting the blame to the West and to oil prices doesn't mean he'll be able to play this game forever, and convince Russians that it's really not his fault.

So, I guess that's a bit of an opinion camouflaged as a question, but -- and not camouflaged very well. But do you agree with that assessment? There's any potential hope in seeing just how dire Russians understand their economic circumstances to be? And perhaps that opens up some flexibility in Putin's mind that he can't afford to go down this path too much further.

MS. SIMMONS: I think it's probably going to have to be something about "wait and see." So, I think next year's survey will be very interesting -- to see if the impact of the economic ratings will start to affect Putin's ratings.

We definitely did see an effect of unhappiness with Putin, and the

protests, and the legislative elections in the 2013 survey in Russia, and people's confidence in Putin had gone down a little bit. Dissatisfaction with the country had gone way up. So, we definitely do start to see an effect of those unhappiness with what's going on in the country on his ratings.

Even still, in 2013, 69 percent had confidence in Putin at that time to do the right thing in international affairs. So, even in that very unsettled time, his ratings were still pretty high. So, we'll have to see where this goes with the economy.

Also, if the economy improves somewhat in the next few months or -- and there are signs that it's not as bad as everybody thought it was going to be, or if oil prices go down -- it may not have the impact that people are expecting it would have.

MR. O'HANLON: If oil prices go up.

MS. SIMMONS: Oil prices go up -- excuse me. They're already down.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Bruce, you want to comment on that issue?

MR. STOKES: No, no, it's fine.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay.

Constanze, anything to say on that point, or shall we go to the audience?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Well, I just wanted to make a final point on the sanctions. You know, it may be true that we have the highest number of those saying we should decrease them, while we still have a, you know, I think, ¾ majority saying we should stick with them as they are.

Also, keep in mind, if I may say this, that we're probably paying the highest price, and the German industry is paying the highest price in Europe for sanctions. And, certainly, Europeans are paying a much higher price than Americans. There are now reports here, by the way, of American companies actually breaking the

sanctions, and, you know, running around them.

So, I would say that 70 percent --

MR. STOKES: We're shocked that there's gambling in this establishment.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: -- for sanctions is a pretty good result. Sorry?

MR. STOKES: We're shocked that there's gambling in this establishment.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Absolutely, I know.

MR. STOKES: Just, by the way, I --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: It's not as though German companies have never done that in Iran, right?

MR. STOKES: No, no, no.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Exactly.

MR. STOKES: But one thing that -- to follow up on Constanze's point -- I mean, we also have to remember -- and this is what's striking in our survey -- every year we look, we expect it finally to change a generation after the fall of the Wall. There are two Germanys, in terms of public opinion. It is Germans in the east who are much more likely to say, decrease the sanctions than Germans in the west.

And you see this on a lot of these measures. So, we're really hearing two voices from Germany; just like in the United States, we're hearing two voices from the Republicans and Democrats on a lot of these issues.

MR. O'HANLON: But East Germans are softer on Russia than West Germans?

MR. STOKES: Yes.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yes.

MR. STOKES: Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: Interesting. Okay, what I think what we'll do now is take two questions at a time. Please wait for a microphone. Identify yourself. I'm assuming Constanze will be able to hear you. If not, we'll repeat your question for her. We'll find out in just a second.

So, we'll have -- we'll start here in the front, and then we'll work back. So, we'll take these two questions to start, please.

SPEAKER: Judd (inaudible), documentary filmmaker.

I was intrigued by the seeming contradiction between the number of Germans who have a negative view of Russia and the very small number who think Russia is a military threat. Am I reading this correctly? Is this a contradiction?

MR. O'HANLON: Great question.

And then one more, please, and then we'll go to responses.

MR. BARRON: Hello. My name is Otto Barron. I'm from the German Embassy.

I have a question to Bruce about the methodical question about the survey. What do you think -- to what extent the findings of your survey are influenced by media and the way in which media was reporting about the conflict in the recent years? I mean, we all know that Russian media is obviously controlled by states, or the Russian participants are highly influenced by the Russian media.

But there's also an issue in Germany. There was a discussion about the German media reporting in a rather subjective way and an anti-Russian way.

So, have you considered this issue when you were conducting your survey?

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Why don't we give that question to you, and then we'll go to Constanze on the other question about Germany?

MR. STOKES: Frankly, we don't. We do not do that. I mean, sometimes, in some surveys in the U.S., we have asked people, you know, what are you listening to, in terms of your -- what do you read to get your news -- and then we try to look at that. But we did not in this survey, so I really can't comment on that.

And do you want to --

MS. SIMMONS: I mean, in general, you do find that people's media sources affect the answers that they give on a range of political issues. We found that quite a bit in our American surveys at the Pew Research Center. We unfortunately don't ask a media consumption question on the German survey, but it would be a fascinating thing to look at -- as well, something we'd be interested in doing in Ukraine, to see who's watching Russian television versus not, and how does that impact the answers that they give?

MR. O'HANLON: So, Constanze, did you hear the questions, and can you respond to the first, please?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Sure, I did. Everything is working just fine. I'm still amazed.

But let me talk about German media consumption, if you didn't ask that -- again, something that I'm really interested in. And I've asked my German friends here how Russian efforts to insert themselves into German public debate space have fared. You know there were reports last summer that the RT wanted to have a huge presence in Berlin; was hiring 60 journalists, that Sputnik and (inaudible) were moving there, and so on.

And from what I've been hearing, they have ended up with much smaller

operations than announced. And most people, I think, think that what they put out is a joke. You know, there are German language shows on RT, but they're not very popular, and they're also not as full coverage as some of the English coverage is. And what there is is, to most, you know, reasonably sophisticated German media consumers, mostly laughable.

The other thing that people do notice is that German social media websites and, of course, the comment spaces of our traditional media web pages have been flooded by trolls; so has, in fact, the Chancellor's website -- to the point that, actually, the Chancellery cut these off. And they're immediately recognizable, because these people don't speak German that well or write German that well, and you can always recognize Russian syntax and Russian spelling. For example, by the absence of definite articles. I mean, that's a dead giveaway.

So, frankly, I would say that effort, you know, from all I see and hear, hasn't been going very well.

Now on the question of our documentary filmmaker about the contradiction between negative views of Russia and perception of a nascent military threat -- yes, that is very much a contradiction.

But the thing is -- let me repeat that if you sit in Berlin, you see the Russians doing so many other things, you know, aimed at social cohesion, aimed at increasing national populist movements across Europe -- including funding fascist parties. Where the Germans have no sense of humor whatsoever, it is really shocking to us that they would fund the French Front National and get away with this.

There is so much sort of attempt at inserting, you know, Russian actors into the economic space or political bullying that that is -- and it's so visible and palpable that you certainly get the sense that that is the much more immediate thing we have to

deal with.

And the other thing is, again, you know, I have to take your survey numbers at face value, but my sense from all my conversations here is that an Article 5 threat is unlikely for the simple reason that, if it happened, we would be there in a flash. That is what we've been preparing for, for the last 15, 18 months, you know. Everything is geared towards responding to that in the appropriate and timely manner.

I mean, it may be that the public would be terrified. And keep in mind -- again, I'm old enough to remember this -- we were a front state during the entire Cold War, and Germans like me grew up with a sense that if there was an Article 5 situation, we would have three weeks of conventional warfare, and then somebody would use a nuclear weapon -- by which time, we would be rubble -- all of Germany.

And that's a fear that Germans have grown up with that is, I think, deep in their political DNA, and that is one of the reasons why they are so concerned about keeping a dialogue, you know, bandwidth open at the same time that they're actually standing up to Russia.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Let's go to round two, and I think we'll go to the middle section. So, I see a gentleman -- silver hair, very distinguished-looking -- and across from him, another silver-haired gentleman (inaudible).

MR. SZABO: It's very deceptive (inaudible).

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Michael, we'll come to you, too -- silver hair (inaudible)

MR. SZABO: Hi -- Steve Szabo, Transatlantic Academy.

It's interesting. There's a couple of danger signals in the U.S.-German relationship in this data. I was thinking about the Allensbach poll --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Steve -- hi, Steve.

MR. SZABO: Hi, Constanze.

The Allensbach poll a couple of months ago found what you found -- that, basically, very negative views on Russia -- but a sense that Russia's a rising power. That came through in the Allensbach poll. And given that and looking to the uncertain American role right now, it does open up the possibility that the Germans are going to have to see this and say, well, maybe the balance of power is beginning to shift.

And, also, Constanze -- I mean, Jeb Bush was just in Berlin, and as your polls pointed out, the Republicans are a much harder line on this whole issue of military force and so on. So, do you see a real possibility here of some serious breaks occurring in the next six months because of this division over military force?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

We'll take one more question -- in the green sweater -- yes.

MR. WINTERS: Hi -- Steve Winters, a researcher.

I'd like to direct this to Constanze. It's so great that you're over there and finding out what the current thinking is. I've read some comments. I mean, you mentioned Kerry and Sochi, and how that might've been interpreted or misinterpreted. Also, some people with the visit of Merkel and Hollande to Moscow led to some similar confusions.

So, the question is this: There's certainly -- we can see some strident voices -- or perhaps a hardline position among the German politically elite to President Gauck for many months now. It's perhaps mentioned in that regard. The Defense Minister, very strongly so -- pro-NATO, very strong. But is there any other side, or is this a 100-percent consensus, and everybody's on the same page as von der Leyen?

MR. O'HANLON: Constanze, would you like to start? And then we'll go

to the panel up here.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: All right; okay. Let me go backwards from this. Where are the different factors of German public opinion on this?

I think what I've seen is a really quite significant shift in German public opinion over the last 18 months. As I said, I see the reasons for that in the MH17 downing and the murder of Boris Nemtsov, rather than what's going on in Ukraine -- although, you know, it's become clear, even to the last Germans, who is the aggressor there, and that there has been a great deal of prevarication and outright lying by Moscow over this.

So, there's no longer any debate in Germany about, you know, what is actually happening -- which I think is helpful.

But it's important to say, there are a couple of groups -- there are two other groups that I think were, for a long time, advocating dialogue -- skeptical of accusations of aggression against Russia, and that was the German Social Democrats and the German business community -- at least parts of it.

And in both those camps, you can see -- I mean, for those of you who are really, really interested in the (inaudible) you know, send me an email, and I can direct you where to look or what to read.

But senior Social Democrats have come out against the old elephant (inaudible) of their own party, such as Erhard Eppler or Helmut Schmidt, indeed, who's now 95, who have urged Social Democrats to be nice to Russia, and those younger senior Social Democrats -- "young" being, you know, between 50 and 60, which is young by German standards -- have actually come out not just in public, and at party conferences, and meetings, where I've heard them, but also in writing -- including in English -- saying that this is unacceptable, and that Social Democratic Party needs to

consider and reconfigure its commitment to aus politik, and, you know, have greater empathy for Eastern European democratic and transformational movements, and less, you know, unfounded empathy with an aggressive and weak Russia.

In the business community, something very similar has happened. You have the famous Eastern Committee, the (inaudible) which represents German business interests in Russia -- which has always been, you know, loud in advocating a softer line, but which has been firmly, you know, told to toe the party line, not just by the Chancellery itself, but also by the leadership of the German Federation of Industries.

There is a clear closing of the ranks there, in an attempt not just to not damage the German government's negotiating position and posture vis-à-vis Moscow, but also so as not to frankly damage their own reputation -- as happened, for example, with the famous visit of the Zeeman's CEO, (inaudible) to Russia, for which he was roundly -- and deservedly -- criticized in German media.

So, that is my answer to that. In other words, I think that there has been a moving together of the camps in German public opinion. And there is, I think, a very widespread sense that what is happening in Russia is very detrimental to Russian civil society itself, and we are -- don't forget this; I think this is something that Americans don't notice so much -- we, of course, see Russians moving out of Russia and moving to Europe and to Germany.

There has been a massive influx, not just of Russian capital -- or an outflow of Russian capital from Russia -- but Russians are buying real estate and buying apartments in Germany, coming to Berlin. And these are not just wealthy oligarchs; this is the middle class that thinks, you know, this country isn't safe for their children anymore. And that is something that we do see.

Then, Steve Szabo, on the Allensbach poll -- Russia as a rising power --

I don't know, you know. I read the Allensbach poll. There were a lot of questions about distrust of Russia, which seemed to me to be pretty stark. And if Russia is a rising power, I would say it's a rising power in only one way -- in that it seems to be more and more willing to act as a spoiler and as a challenger to Western attempts at maintaining a liberal and open global order.

That's something that Germans feel very, very strongly about, because we know that our, you know, welfare, prosperity, and our legitimacy are founded on us being, you know, particularly after our terrible 20th century history, on being a liberal and open society, and engaged in global trade, and engaged in preserving Europe -- which is the key source of our power.

So, I really -- you know, I just don't really buy the theory that we think of Russia as an alternative to European unity.

Now there's a lot of confusion about American posture. I'll come to that in a second. And there is -- I think it was still a great deal of flirting with China, but that's another story, and perhaps beyond the scope of this conversation.

But on the American posture -- again, I would really -- I've been trying to listen to this very carefully and get a sense of what Republican positions on Europe are, and it's not clear to me that a President Jeb Bush would have the same kinds of European and alliance policy that his father, Herbert Walker Bush, would have had. I have my doubts there, and I think those doubts are shared by many in Europe. If the message from the Republicans is another, that's great, but I'm also not sure that Jeb Bush's representative for the current Republican field, frankly.

MR. O'HANLON: Bruce or Katie, any comments to make?

MS. SIMMONS: I don't know if you want to talk about the results on Russia versus U.S., or --

MR. STOKES: Well, I -- one thing I think we all have to remind ourselves is that even though this survey shows -- and other surveys have shown -- that there are differences between Americans and Germans about a number of these issues, we Americans, I think, need to remember, as Constanze has indirectly pointed out to us -- Germany has a different history. They have a different geography, and they have a different economy. And we have to at least take that into consideration when we look at these differences.

You know, one can excuse the Germans for their differences or still be critical of their differences, but the point is, we can't forget, as Americans, that history, and geography, and economy matter.

And on the point of whether the Germans would pick Russia or the United States if forced to choose -- actually, in March, we did a survey in Germany, and we asked the Germans that question. And overwhelmingly, they picked the United States.

Now to be honest, one out of five Germans volunteered they'd like to be someplace in the middle. That's a pretty large volunteer number -- because when you don't give people the option, and they have to actually assert themselves -- "No, no, no. I don't like either one of those options; I want a third option" -- that's fairly large.

But the point being, when forced to make a choice, Germans are very clear. They want to side with the -- they want to get closer to the United States, not closer to Russia. So, I do think we have to remember that, as well.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, let's do another round.

So --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Now --

MR. O'HANLON: Yes?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Michael, can I just add one thing?

MR. O'HANLON: Go ahead.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Okay. No, I'll wait. I'll wait. Sorry.

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah, okay.

We'll take these next two in the front, and then the round after that, we'll go to the back again. So, there are two hands here, around the fourth or fifth row on either side.

MR. SHEPPARD: Ben Sheppard, from George Washington University.

During the 1980s and early '90s in the U.K. -- and, I think, in other countries, as well -- NATO countries -- you had the Peace Through NATO organization -- a pro-NATO group that went to schools, went to the media, whereby it talked about the pro-NATO aspects and supported by the U.K. government.

Should we have some elementary advice like this now, to, as you said, Constanze, have a clear strategic narrative?

And, also, this would be important to send a clear message to Russia, so it doesn't misperceive what the NATO actions or inactions might be under certain circumstances.

MR. STOKES: Could I actually address that immediately?

MR. O'HANLON: Okay.

MR. STOKES: Because one of the things we did find in the survey -- we asked people about favorability of NATO, and, actually, it has come down dramatically in Germany since 2009. But we should be sure to also look at the U.S. numbers. There's still stronger support for NATO in Germany than there is in the United States. And ours hasn't come down; we've kind of always been around 50 percent. The Germans have come down pretty strongly, but they're higher than we are, in terms of favorability of

NATO.

But you're right; I mean, that's an interesting question. Constanze may have some thoughts on it. I don't know.

MR. O'HANLON: Why don't we add one more to the mix, and then we'll see where we stand?

SPEAKER: Hi. My name's (inaudible) and I work at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, and I have a question according to Russia's views of E.U.

Is there differences within E.U. countries -- the Russia views? Or did you ask how they view E.U. as a whole, or did you ask how they view different countries inside the E.U.?

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Great. So, we'll start with Katie on that.

MS. SIMMONS: Sure. So, just quickly, we asked, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the European Union? And so that's what that figure was -- the attitudes towards the European Union as a whole dropping from 63 percent in 2013 down to -- I think it was 31 percent in this year, 2015.

We did also ask Germany this year, but we don't ask other European Union countries on a regular basis. So, for example, France or U.K. We have in the past. Germany tended to get some of the higher ratings, I think, among the E.U. countries that were asked individually, but now you see, even towards Germany, Russians have really gone down in terms of their favorability.

MR. O'HANLON: Constanze, care to comment on anything, or shall we move on?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yeah, the Peace Through NATO thing -- you know, I think that this kind of, you know, going to school kinds of messaging -- I think that

today's young people are much more sophisticated consumers of government information than we were. I'm tempted to think, do you remember the duck-and-cover campaigns of the 1950s, you know, to educate the American public about what to do in case of nuclear war?

That kind of thing today, I think, doesn't work in quite the same way. What I would think is much more important is for governments, and government officials, and political leaders to be much clearer in their messaging about the value and purpose of NATO.

Remember, also -- I mean, maybe this is not so clear for Americans, but -- Germans and Europeans were told for 20 years after the end of the Cold War that territorial defense of Europe was over, dusted, and done with, and what we now needed to do was reconfigure all our militaries for out-of-area missions, such as Afghanistan.

I've just come from a Nordic security seminar here at the (inaudible) where the Swedes were saying, "We rebuilt our entire armed forces to make them fully interoperable with NATO" -- and remember, the Swedes aren't a member of NATO -- "and to make them completely focused on out-of-area warfare -- which means that we now have to, you know, upend everything we've done."

So, I think that European publics, including the Germans, I mean, can be excused a little bit if they're confused about what NATO is supposed to be doing, and how, in this kind of conflict, where it's not clear what the nature of a military threat from Russia would be -- particularly at a time when the Russians are, you know, playing fast and loose with different kinds of comments and threats, including about nuclear weapons.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to add one point here myself. And I know, Bruce, you may want to chime in here.

But I agree with this. And just to drive home the confusion about NATO's

purpose even further -- you can correct me in your comment here if you wish -- but when you asked the poll questions you did about NATO, and when we talk about this in our political debate, there is a certain disconnect, because -- not in the way that you're polling, but in the way people think about NATO and the options that we may be able to develop in the future -- because, on the one hand, you'll ask, well, should Ukraine be in NATO?

And on the other hand, as you commented yourself -- and I would fully agree with you -- actually, it's not a serious policy option in the near term from any political quarter, in any country -- except maybe President Poroshenko, but he won't be the one making the decision.

And so this crisis is not going to be solved by NATO membership for Ukraine. It's neither going to be solved nor exacerbated -- although, actually, the conversation about the hypothetical could, in my mind, validate Putin's thinking that, in fact, he has to oppose this, because if it's not an option now, it may be longer term -- or maybe that's the best thing we can do. You know, if you're a hawk, maybe you think that's the best thing we can do -- is to make Putin worry that the possibility of Ukrainian membership will actually grow over the long term, if he behaves this way, you know, towards a sovereign state right next door.

But my main point is that no one -- not Jeb Bush, not Marco Rubio, not John McCain -- no one within the United States debate that I'm familiar with is advocating near-term NATO membership for Ukraine -- which means that it's not an option that's going to help us out of this crisis. And therefore, perhaps we need to be more clear about that -- because there does seem to be ambiguity when we talk about it at times, as if perhaps it could be an option. But if it's an option, it's in the 2020s or beyond; not now.

Anything you'd add to that?

MR. STOKES: And the implication would be, if we did give them NATO membership, that they would then fall under Article 5, and they'd get the protection from the West. And we know from this survey that large portions of major countries say, we don't want to do that.

So, even if they support NATO membership for Ukraine, it would appear they're seeing it as a symbolic thing, not something they would actually have to back up.

In the United States, I mean, Republicans say they would put Ukraine in NATO. They say they would actually back it up with an Article 5 commitment. Democrats don't say that. So, it's a divisive issue.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Mike, can I add something?

MR. O'HANLON: Please. Actually, Katie wanted to chime in, then to you, Constanze.

MR. STOKES: Yeah, yeah.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Please, go ahead.

MS. SIMMONS: Really quickly, on the point of antagonizing Russia by having Ukraine join NATO -- or even talking about it -- it's very clear in the survey results, 83 percent of Russians oppose Ukraine joining NATO. And so it's definitely something that is very strongly held among the Russian public, that they don't want Ukraine to join NATO and become part of the alliance.

MR. O'HANLON: And just a point of clarification, before I go to Constanze -- you may want to comment on this, too.

As you know, the history of NATO's conversation about Ukraine and possible membership, you know, has had some conversation with it, and there were elements of the Bush Administration that were thinking this might be a good idea. And, Constanze, you can correct me if I'm wrong -- when this was really thought about in a

focused way by NATO -- I think in 2008 -- there was virtually no consensus in the alliance to move forward.

So, even if a Republican presidential candidate in the United States wanted to do it, he or she would have to persuade 20-some other NATO countries who are, I think, generally -- whether they would view it as symbolic or not -- generally more skeptical.

Anything you want to add, Constanze?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yeah. I think it's true that, at the Bucharest Summit of 2008, where the question of Georgian/Ukrainian NATO membership was discussed, ended with a completely ambiguous fudge of that question -- because alliance members were unable to disagree. And I think there's a feeling now that that was probably wise.

You know, NATO membership for Europeans for Ukraine is not as much of an issue as Ukraine's -- how do I put this -- allying itself with the West. That is something that a lot of Europeans and Germans have tremendous sympathy for -- and where there's a feeling that we have to exercise solidarity with this.

And in Germany, of course, you know, we owe the reunification of Germany and the security that enlargement created for us to the fact that Poles, and Hungarians, and Czechs, and, finally, the East Germans stood up and said, "We want to be free where we affiliate ourselves, and which alliances we choose." That, for us, was the most momentous political event of our lives, and that, I think, carries meaning for us going forward, and shapes the way we approach Ukraine.

But most people think that NATO membership for Ukraine at this moment isn't the best way to achieve this, you know, but a slow and patient diplomatic effort that protects the Ukrainian transformational moment, as it were -- prevents it from

disintegrating -- and, as we know, that is going to take a huge effort.

I also wanted to say something that I presume has been little noticed in America. And, as we know, if it wasn't in *The New York Times*, it doesn't exist -- and that is the fact that Germany's Finance Minister and Germany's Defense Minister have said that Germany's going to increase its defense budget. The number I've been using is by six percent.

Now a lot of that is going towards personnel, but that is a huge symbolic act. That is something at which maybe two years ago, Germans would have been demonstrating in the streets. There would have been violent debates in the Bundestag. None of that happened. People are saying, yes, of course we need to increase our defense budget. Yes, of course something needs to happen there. And nobody is protesting against German deployments to the Baltics, and to Poland, and to the Nordic countries.

And really amazing things are happening there. German soldiers are being put under Polish command; Polish soldiers are being put under German command. None of this would have happened without what's going on in Ukraine.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

So, here's how we're going to finish up. We're going to take one more round with three questions. With any luck, each question will be directed primarily towards one person.

But in any event, I'm going to let the panel and Constanze add their concluding thoughts as they also answer your questions.

So, I think I see three hands in the back, more or less along a common row. I'm going to take those three. I'm sorry that I'm not inviting more women to ask questions, but I don't see any women's hands. But at least we have pretty good

representation here in that regard. So, one, two, three, and then we'll finish up.

SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible) and I have a question to Fräulein Constanze.

There is a great element of Russian propaganda war -- is the component which says that Europe specifically has no guts to fight; that Europe is a decadent society and so on and so on.

Unfortunately, many Russian opposition leaders share this point of view, and specifically they mention the fact that it's going to be almost a year since the Malaysian airplane was shut down. Internet is full of the proofs, evidences who done it. And so far, the Europeans have no guts to say who did it. And many Russian opposition leaders believe that they refuse to say it; the indictment is not there (inaudible) clearly who -- accusation.

And many Russian opposition leaders believe that it's because Western Europeans will never do this, because they don't want to spoil their relations with Russia, and they are simply afraid.

If you think it is not the case, please explain what's going on, and when the indictment is going to be voiced.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. And then we had the gentleman in the red tie, and then we'll go over to the gentleman in the blue shirt.

MR. MERRY: All right; thank you -- Wayne Merry, the American Foreign Policy Council.

I might know that, having lived in Eastern Germany, that that particular part of the German demographic is not just much less skeptical of Russia; it's much more skeptical of the United States.

The question I'd like to ask is whether the survey data gives any indication of European views about Ukraine -- not the war, but Ukraine's own prospects and European willingness to help pay for that.

You've indicated that the Ukrainians are increasingly skeptical about their own government. I follow a good deal of the European press, particularly the German press. I think there's a lot more reporting about Ukrainian problems there than there is in the American press. At the Riga Summit, I think we saw something of a return of what's been called Ukraine fatigue.

I'm wondering if your data show whether the European publics understand or accept that dealing with the problems in Ukraine is going to be essentially a European burden for a very long time and a very large scale -- because, certainly, here in Washington, while we may be more willing to defend our allies than they are to defend themselves, we really expect you Europeans to pay for Ukraine.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, and then the final question here.

SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible) formerly a pollster with InterMedia and working for Radio Liberty.

The Pew presentation started with a very, very interesting statement: Good policy comes from good information.

I find it a little bit strange that you present the results of people's public opinions in Russia as if it was a normal country. The reality today is quite different. We all know -- and the gentleman from German Embassy raised this -- Putin has full control of Russian media. There is no freedom of expression. There is a barrage -- Russian people are bombarded with a barrage of propaganda, creating an almost Stalinesque-like atmosphere of fear.

How can we present Russian poll results as valid? Getting back to my

first statement, the policy in the West is made largely -- is influenced by the polls in Russia. If these polls are not the polls that we hear in the West, how do we explain this?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

So, why don't we wrap up and also respond to these questions? Katie, would you like to begin? And then we'll work through Bruce, into Constanze.

MS. SIMMONS: Sure. So, I'll address the question about Russian public opinion. This is definitely a question we get about, how can you trust the results in Russia -- but, also other countries that we do around the world. We do surveys in China. We did surveys in Egypt. And so you do have to analyze the results understanding the context of the country and the public and what they are facing in their own country.

But we also do see, over time, that people have been willing to criticize Putin or criticize the direction of the country, and so maybe it is more informative that 73 percent say the economy is bad than 70 percent say they approve of Putin on the economy.

And so you need to take the results in a holistic view, and look at how things are changing over time -- because I think the relative trends over time and the fact that we've been doing this since 2002 -- and Putin's been very popular for most of that time, even before some of this -- the atmosphere has ratcheted up in terms of being less free and less able to express opinions. He's been very popular for a very long time.

And so it is a nationally representative survey. We do ask, you know, people across the country. It is face-to-face, so it's not that we're calling people and, you know, anonymous voice over the phone. They can see the person face-to-face. But it is something you have to keep in mind when you look at the results.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Bruce?

MR. STOKES: A couple of things -- on the downing of the Malaysian airliner. It's my understanding -- I was in Brussels last week -- that the Dutch government is about to release its report on this, and it's made people in Brussels very nervous, because they think it may be a very tough report. And it may open up this question of, okay, now what do we do, now that we've had the report from the Dutch government? So, that may be something to watch.

We have not asked people in Europe whether they understand that, at the end of the day, the Ukraine is their problem, not our problem. But I would also point out to you that we did ask people, do you want to give more economic aid to the Ukraine? And, basically, strong percentages in most countries say yes.

The only people who were divided on this issue at all in Europe were the Italians, and you can interpret that any way you want to. Maybe they decided they would prefer to have the money come to them, not to the Ukraine.

But the point being that there is support in Western Europe and in Poland to give more financial aid to Ukraine. There's strong support in the United States to do that. There's obviously debates about that, but it something that the publics are willing to do for Ukraine, and it'll be interesting to see what the governments end up doing.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

And Constanze, for the last word?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Okay, thank you. I'd like to begin by saying that this has been, I think, a really interesting way of doing things. I found it very informative to hear Bruce and Katie explain their poll numbers and to discuss the questions with the public. And thank you to all of you, both on the podium and in the public, for bearing with my disembodied presence at the back of your heads -- or at the

end of the room. That must be quite stressful, in many ways. It's probably least stressful to me.

Now I think I'm going to address, in particular, Mr. (inaudible) question. I am a little bit bemused by how much this willingness to go to war has become the ultimate and the only test of European manhood -- because, you know, this really isn't in question right now.

I think you'll recall the stories about the Russians having had to ground their strategic bomber fleet, because -- and this was reported even by RT -- because they were having too many operating problems, you know. I mean, this shows us that the Russian military might isn't really that great -- whereas we do see Russia acting as a social, economic, and political spoiler in many, many ways, very aggressively and very effectively in Europe. And we are combatting that. We're dealing with that.

I mean, I can only ask you, beg you to take notice of that. There is an enormous sense in Europe of being under siege; that this is directed at Europe, at our ability to help a country like Ukraine.

And if anything, I think it's making Europeans more determined. None of us want to go to war, because we all have memories of war that maybe, you know, some Americans don't have. And, you know, we know how horrific this would be.

But I also think that, if push came to shove, if there really was an Article 5 case -- which I do think is unlikely -- I think you would be surprised by just how sharp and how resolute European responses would be.

But, please -- just because that's not happening right now, don't ignore all the other things that we are doing -- and quite successfully.

MR. O'HANLON: Well, thank you very much, all the panelists. Well, all three of you, in your own way -- remarkable event.

And thank you all very much for being here. Please join me in thanking them.

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