

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

REFUGE and RESPONSIBILITY: THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS in 2016

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. JONES: Good evening everybody, and welcome to Brookings, or at least Brookings offsite. My name is Bruce Jones. I'm the vice president for Foreign Policy, and it's my pleasure to welcome you here this evening for what I believe will be an important set of discussions tonight and tomorrow in this forum that we've entitled, "Refuge and Responsibility: The Syrian Refugee Crisis in 2016.

Tonight, we're going to start with the Syrian Crisis itself. It's now in its sixth year, and has created one of the largest forced migrations of the post-Cold War Period, and posed a deep challenge to the international humanitarian system, and I would argue to the moral fiber of the west.

It's a crisis that's displaced half of Syria's population. Five million refugees have flowed into neighboring countries and beyond. Several hundreds of thousands compelled to make a perilous journey to Europe in search of refuge and in search of rights.

And the world continues to search for answers in how we respond to stem the violence in Syria, to help the flow of people seeking safe have, to support those who have fled to neighboring states, and to help integrate those who have arrived in new countries and in need of help in European and American societies.

This forum is the latest in a series of Brookings efforts designed to advance better conversation and more constructive policy ideas to help educate the public around the plight of refugees and the advantages that refugees bring with them.

To offer innovative ideas for forward action, we've engaged in workshops and round tables in the United States, in Europe in an effort led by my colleague, Bruce Katz, working with European mayors and civil leaders who are at the front lines of the European part of the refugee crisis, and work by colleagues working on Turkey, Kemal Kirisci, and his a Turkish response. In every aspects of this issue, we've been trying to offer suggestions, create forum for debates, create forum for dialogue working closely with Syrian- American community leaders, Syrian refugees themselves in both private and in public events.

And I encourage you to go to the Brookings website to learn more about these activities.

In this forum, our aim is to continue to elevate the political and the policy discourse on the refugee crisis with a particular eye towards two events happening in September. One is the General Assembly's (indiscernible) plenary on refugees and migrants, and the other is President Obama's Summit on Refugees.

And tomorrow, there will be a number of officials from the U.S. Government to have the pen, so to speak, on the planning for that summit, who will be with us to listen as we debate and offer suggestions.

And the goal is to use the expertise that's fathered in the room today and tomorrow to identify key challenges and work through ideas to respond more constructively to the crisis. And all of you are from government, from the GOs, from civil society, from the academic sector, and you'll have a lot to share and to offer.

We'll work through several different areas or circles of concern. We're going to start tonight with the Syrian Crisis itself. Tomorrow, we'll look more broadly at multifaceted responses to assisting refugees. We'll have a discussion with Deputy Secretary of State Heather Higginbottom, who has the responsibility for integrating refugees in this country.

We'll work through the role of European cities in responding to the challenge, the front line states, and we'll look at the question of the international refugees regime as a whole.

For tonight, we're going to start at the core of the issue which is the Syrian Crisis, and recognize how tough this problem is.

I think it's easy when faced with a crisis of this scale, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the complexity, and it's extraordinarily important not to be, and to remember that human agency and action leadership can solve even the toughest challenges.

The scale of the crisis is not, in fact, unprecedented. We shouldn't forget the two-and-a-half million people displaced in Darfur and the Congo, four million people who fled, the refugees who

fled Rwanda after violence.

The international community has been faced with large scale of refugees before. It is possible to respond. It is possible to construct responses to these issues, and we want to explore that today.

There is no question, of course, that Syria stands apart in the tangled overlay of geopolitical rivalry, insufficient humanitarian response, the complexities of the region, and its extraordinary difficult mix of government repression, opposition, civil war, terrorist action that constitutes the war itself.

And unraveling that challenge, unraveling that web will challenge even the best statecraft and its sharpest thinkers. But the fact of the matter is we have four of them on state tonight to help us do so, and to help us think about this problem as a whole. I'm extremely grateful to all of them for being here, and it's my privilege to introduce them, and then I'll get out of the way and let them have a conversation.

I'm particularly pleased to welcome back to Brookings Senator John McCain, U.S. Senator from Arizona, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, and so can get a resolute voice on the need for further U.S. engagement and leadership on the Syrian Crisis from day one.

The Right Honorable David Miliband, President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee, whose organization has been the leading actor in responding to the refugees, and who himself has been a leading voice on the urgency of the issue, and in dealing with the broader international humanitarian challenge.

Leon Wieseltier, who is the Isaiah Berlin Senior Fellow in Culture and Policy of Brookings, and who has been a tenacious and eloquent voice in talking to the moral responsibilities of the West towards those in need, I think a particularly issue at the time of so much anger, and fear, hate, and hate-filled speech on this issue.

I'm reliably informed that it is also Leon's birthday so a particular thank you for making

the efforts.

And the conversation will be led by David Ignatius, who is the Associate Editor and columnist for the Washington Post, who will moderate the discussion, but who has been for many, many years one of America's leading thinkers on the Middle East, and whose opinion pieces have been a clarion call for more serious and more thoughtful action in the Syrian Crisis, and in the broader Middle East region.

As a reminder, this session is on the record. You can Tweet about it if you are so minded on #Refugee Crisis. Tomorrow, we'll be under the Chatham House rule, but tonight is on the record, and we look forward to hearing from you as well as from the panel.

So my thanks to the panel, and David, over to you.

MR. IGNATIUS: Well, thank you, Bruce. Our subject in this panel is the politics of refugees. It's a special privilege for me to be able to moderate a discussion about Syria, but as three of the people who I think have done most to keep faith with the Syrian people, with the dimensions of this tragedy since it began in Senator McCain, David Miliband, and Leon Wieseltier.

I want to begin with Senator McCain, and Senator, I want to begin by asking you a question that I think everyone in this room, many people around the country would want to put to you today.

After the terrible tragedy in Orlando Sunday morning, the presumptive Republican nominee, Donald Trump, in a series of statements, long one yesterday on television, said that there is a tremendous flow of Syrian refugees coming toward the country. that his rival, Secretary Clinton wants them to pour into the country, and then went on to reiterate what's been his call to ban Muslim immigrants. And he went beyond that and said that he wanted to suspend immigration from area of the world where there's a proven history of terrorism, which would mean all Syrians, all Iraqis, all Pakistanis if carried to its extreme.

And I just need to ask you with respect for your response to this. Are these statements in your mind acceptable? Is there a way in which you think they can be changed so that

your party and its nominee have a different place in this debate?

SENATOR McCAIN: Well, first of all, could I just say thanks to Brookings. I have so many old friends and enemies in Brookings.

(Laughter)

SENATOR McCAIN: I'm happy to be back in Brookings. It continues to be one of the really premier institutions, I think, that provides policymakers and others, in fact, makes policy in many respects it's a wonderful institution, and it's always, I'm always to be back.

I'd like to thank this individual, David, who I think has the toughest job on earth. Many people in this room have been to a refugee camp. It's heartbreaking. It breaks your heart. I breaks your heart to see a family that to sell their daughter because they can't live. It breaks your heart to see the conditions under which they survive.

This man has done a monumental, fantastic effort on behalf of refugees, and I just want to say thank you, David for all you do.

MR. IGNATIUS: Thank you very much. Thank you.

SENATOR McCAIN: And this man is not a writer. He's a poet. I know of no one who stands for principle and the things that I appreciate about idealism which Leon represents. He also stands for principle to the point where he would even leave a job. So I'm a great admirer of yours.

MR. WIESELTIER: Thank you for Trump.

(Laughter)

SENATOR McCAIN: That concludes my remarks.

(Laughter)

SENATOR McCAIN: Obviously, I'm in disagreement with Mr. Trump on the issue. I would just point out there are a couple of thousand members of the Muslim faith who are serving in our military in uniform. That speaks for itself.

I do believe that there is a certain amount of validity to making sure that people who come to this country as refugees are adequately screened. I mean, that's just an obligation that we

have.

I also know that Mr. Baghdadi is calling in young men as we speak giving them one of these that's encrypted and said get in the refugee flow and we will contact you, and you contact us, and we will try to commit further acts of terror in Europe and the United States.

It's true that General Breedlove, the head of our forces in Europe said that Vladimir Putin is using the refugee flow as a way to dismember the European Union. So when you look at the numbers, 4.8 million registered Syrian refugees. David will tell you all of these numbers.

Between 2011-2016, the number of Syrians applying for asylum in Europe was over one million. I went to Serbia about a few months ago, before the Munich Conference, and I saw this flow. And you know one of the things I saw that was interesting to me was the large number of non-Syrian refugees. Afghans, from all of the, all of the countries throughout that part of the world that want to get out of there.

So obviously, I disagree with Mr. Trump. But I also disagree when the president of the United States says that ISIS was a JV that couldn't wear Kobe Bryan's shirt. That goes down to me with the "We want peace in our time." A total, a total lack of understanding of what was going on in the Middle East. And those of us who, there were those who apologize for everything that this administration does, as Mr., the kid from National Security Council, talked about the echo chamber that was written about, yeah, written about how there's an echo chambers out there and they contact the pundits, and the pundits then reflect back.

Now, we are winning. We are winning? We are winning when we see that this attack in Orlando, when we see people who are coming over to the side of radical Islam who are being either indoctrinated or contacted?

So we've taken back half the territory, but we haven't taken back most of it. We haven't taken back Raqqa, but we've taken back one hell of a lot of desert, my friends. So that's a success?

This administration will go down in history. I just want to give you one brief comment.

We had it won. We had it won in Iraq and there's numbers to prove it thanks to David Petraeus, and the surge. And we left. And we left without leaving anybody there, and those of us predicted exactly what was going to happen. I wish I had been wrong.

And so then we saw Al-Qaeda move over to Syria which became ISIS, which then obviously you know the rest of the story.

Why do we have these millions of refugees? It's because of a failure of this president's policy, who somehow believed that if you leave conflicts, conflicts end.

And again, we've got this echo chamber out there of the pundits, who whatever they do, whatever this administration does, oh, that's great. We're winning. We're doing fine.

I mean, the quotes that I was going through today is amazing how well we're always doing, and yet we've got five million refugees, we've got unknown thousands dead, tortured, and yet, this is, we're doing fine.

And I strongly object. And I think history will show very strongly that when this president came to power, you look at the map of the Middle East, and look at a map of the Middle East today. That's all you have to do.

MR. IGNATIUS: If I just with respect to follow up and ask you, the comments about the JV we're familiar with, and obviously were grossly mistaken, the questions that so difficult --

SENATOR McCAIN: And the job of the president of the United States is not to be grossly mistaken, by the way. Go ahead. The question I think that this audience would benefit from hearing your views about is what to do now.

We are in a moment where the politics of fear are clearly being demonstrated, and I just, I want to ask you to think about that.

And what an alternative path is that is not about the politics of fear, but about security.

SENATOR McCAIN: The alternative has been and will be you've got to kill them. And you gotta take Raqqa back. And then you work on the, and you're going to kill them there, or you're going to more Orlandos. It's that simple, my friends. One place or the other.



They have a base now that by the way, they've got a chemical weapons factory, among other things, where they're sending these people out all over the work and metastasizing. So you kill them there. And then you have to go through this long process of delegitimizing this Islam, radical, the president refuses to call it, Islamic terrorism that is being fed by a whole lot of factors that David can address a lot more adequately than I can, and you go through that long struggle.

But to think that you're not going to, that what we're doing now incrementally, every time you turn around maybe there's a relaxation on the rules of engagement, maybe there 50 here, 75 there, a hundred there. My friend, I'm old enough to remember another war where we did exactly that and lost.

So you gotta go in with whatever force is necessary and kill them, and get rid of them, and then you go through the long process of trying to stop the metastasizing that's going on as we speak.

And this is the same administration, by the way, that said we had to pull everybody out because we couldn't get a status of forces agreement with the Iraqi parliament, so we can't stay. Sorry.

Anybody heard anybody in the administration call for a status of forces agreement with the Iraqi parliament today? Hell no. It was just a camouflage, a charade, and an excuse for getting everybody out. I've got lots of quotes of the president of the United States.

"We're leaving behind the most prosperous, most democratic, freest Iraq in history." Are we really? Was that what we left behind? And do I feel upset about it? Yes, I feel upset about it because I know too many families of members whose sons died fighting in Iraq and all of it came to nothing because this president wanted to pull everybody out after we had won at great cost of American blood and treasury.

MR. IGNATIUS: I just ask one more question of the moment.

SENATOR McCAIN: We do have two other guests.

MR. IGNATIUS: Well, I will take certainly to them. I just wanted to, in the aftermath of

Mr. Trump's comments about flows of, vast flows of refugees coming to the U.S., there was a reference to hundreds of thousands of refugees coming to the U.S. The numbers that I've seen say that from October to May, there were 2,805 Syrian refugees that were admitted, which is fewer than one-third of the 10,000 that the president had said that he would accept in this fiscal year.

So I just want to ask you as one of the leading people caring about this issue whether that rhetoric isn't inflated and inflammatory, and the wrong thing in the moment?

MR. McCAIN: Well, obviously, his numbers were wrong. But let me give you the numbers that are right. 4.8 million registered Syrian refugees. Total numbers of Syrians applying for asylum in Europe was over a million. UNHCR projects 1.19 million people in need of resettlement.

Davis Miliband can tell you all those things. Those are millions of people that have gone to Europe in the words of Breedlove (indiscernible) member of the European Union. And those people are fleeing not so much ISIS, as Bashar Assad with a thing called barrel bombs, and killing them wantonly, now with the Russians doing the same thing.

And every time the Russian could escalate, our Secretary of State flies over to Moscow with his begging bowl and tries to get some kind of concession from his buddy Sergey Lavrov.

So is there a refugee problem? Yes, sir. There is a huge refugee problem, and it didn't happen like an earthquake or a thunderstorm. It happened because of failed policies after we had it won.

(Applause)

MR. IGNATIUS: So I will take Senator McCain's invitation, or insistence, and turn to David Miliband, the head of the International Rescue Committee, and somebody who is, as Senator McCain said, involved in so many of the good things that happen to try to protect and save people's lives.

And David, I want to ask you another political question because that's what we've been asked to talk about, the politics of refugees.

In your home country originally, you're now living in New York, but in Britain next week

there will be a referendum on whether Britain should exit the European Union. And immigration and refugee flows are from everything that I read are an increasing issue in that debate.

So I want to ask you first to tell us about Brexit. Do you think that it's possible that the withdraw vote will succeed. And second, if you could talk about how a politician can speak to this issue in a way that is humane, that accords with the values that you have, Senator McCain has, Leon has, but isn't political suicide?

MR. MILIBAND: Well, first of all, let me say it's an enormous honor to be not just here at this event, but on the panel with the three gentlemen, who are here with me, all of whom in their own ways have made a distinctive contribution to the global debate about some of the most profound foreign policy issues that the country or the world faces.

And maybe as the non-American on the panel, I can also help you recognize as a predominantly American audience something special about the strands of opinion that are represented on this panel here because what you see is not every stripe of American opinion, but some of the most distinctive principled, engaged, globally-engaged strands of American life, and the fact that they're brought together in an institution like the Brookings for this kind of dialogue is what I think makes America special. One of the things that always make American special.

And I do want to salute the different ways in which all three of you have helped shape global, not the global date on just about the current issues, but over the decades.

I'm here because the International Rescue Committee is in the unusual position of being both an international humanitarian aid organization in 30 or so countries around the world, and a refugee resettlement agency in 29 U.S. Cities.

So we work in war zones. We work in fragile states. We work on the transit routes, including in Europe where refugees are, and we work in the U.S. And maybe in the course of the discussion, we can pick up some of the issues about refugee resettlement here because the blessings of geography mean that the refugee resettlement debate in the U.S. can be of a completely different kind when it comes to refugees from the Middle East than in Europe.

The blessings of geography mean that you're able to organize a pipeline of people to come to this country with vetting and preparation of a completely different kind than is open to European counterparts.

In terms of the question that you asked, I can only answer it as an ex-politician, not as a politician, but some traces of my former existence will hopefully find their way into the silky prose that I can deliver.

MR. IGNATIUS: They just did, David. Thank you, David.

MR. MILIBAND: On the question of Britain's position in Europe, I would say that it's (indiscernible 17:47:21) with eight days of the campaign to go. The point about referendum unlike an election is that there are the inherited traditions, and muscles, and reflexes that people bring to the polling stations when they're voting in a general election between Republican and Democrats here, but Labor (indiscernible 17:47:39) the U.K.

So everything is to play for. The fact that 30 percent of the people haven't made up their mind I think is true in this case. The fact that the debate is now extremely spirited is also true.

And I would say there are two or three things coming together. One, this takes us into rather different territory from tonight's debate, but frankly, center right and center left all around the world are being challenged by globalization in very fundamental ways, and we can come back to the ways that that's happening. But I would argue that the social order is being uprooted by globalization, and issues of inequality are being raised by questions of globalization, and the two come together in debates like that that we are having in the U.K.

It's important not to duck the immigration question, which is an important question in the minds of man U.K. voter. I think it's important to put in a coda though. One of the things that I will be saying in the course of the next hour is that the immigration debate and the refugee debate both suffer when they become the same debates.

Immigrants are leaving their country of birth to see a better life. Refugees are fleeing from their country of birth for their life. There are rights from refugees and obligations on states

towards them that do not exist in respect to the immigrants themselves or states towards immigrants, and that is for a very good reason.

If you are fleeing for your life, you are owed different obligations, and if you're simply seeking a better life, and we can come back to that, I think that it's also important to say that the question of Britain's place in Europe is one that challenges left and right in politics.

My politics, I'm on the center left of politics. My party has had a history of being confused, divided on the European issue. Today it's united.

MR. IGNATIUS: Much like Republicans.

MR. MILIBAND: In the 1993 election, Labor was against being, wanted to withdraw from the European Union. Now are 99 percent in favor. The right is now divided on the European question. So you can push harder on that if you want to.

On the wider question of how do, how should politicians and policymakers navigate these challenging waters, I would say three or four things are really important.

One, you've got to uphold what you believe to be the morally right things to do. And I think that's especially important when it comes to those who are fleeing for their lives. That upholding the obligations of states towards those who are fleeing for their lives is, seems to be the right thing to do, and an essential thing to state.

But it's not enough to state you're going to do the right things. You also, secondly, there's a really important issue of competence as well as compassion.

To be fair to the prime ministers of Italy and Greece for four years they've been saying to European counterparts there is a European refugee crisis coming, and we need it to be addressed.

And because of the Euro crisis, because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, European eyes were not on the refugee issue, and so Europe is not playing catch up, and it's much harder to play catch up.

Thirdly, and critically, burdens have to be fairly shared, and we'll maybe talk about the situation in

Germany which is playing a remarkable role in the midst of the European refugee crisis, but a big issue for Germany is whether or not there is relocation of refugees around the rest of Europe so that burdens are properly borne. And I think there is a fairness issue.

The fourth thing, just to repeat and to go back where I started, our experience in the U.K. is that when the immigration debate and the refugee debate become merged, which happened in the late nineties, it's very hard for the public to steer a course.

And I think that the fourth thing I would say about how politicians steer their way through is that they are avowedly clear that the obligations that exist towards orphan kids who are stuck in the fleeing Syria and different than the obligations to people who are fleeing from Morocco seeking a better life, and it's very important to uphold that.

MR. IGNATIUS: So Senator McCain quoted General Breedlove, our NATO commander, outgoing NATO commander, warning that these refugee flows explosion echoing from Syria, puts the European project at risk.

And that's the kind of thing that you hear in the Brexit debate except it's focused on Britain. That the future of our country, Nigel Farage would say, a campaigner for Brexit, future of our country is at risk. We have to fight for our country against this explosion of refugees and disorder.

And I want to ask you how you would answer that. If somebody came to you and said you're a former foreign secretary. You know about the, how would you answer that question put to you directly?

MR. MILIBAND: So Britain is taking, and I'm sad to report this, 4,000 refugees a year. That is the total number of refugees we are taking. I used to represent a constituency in parliament. By that number, it would be taking six Syrians per year. No one is going to persuade me that six Syrians per year in South Fields (phonetic 17:53:04), which is my constituency, is going to overwhelm, overrun the constituency.

What I think Farage though is saying separately is that immigration is overrunning the country.

Now, the answer to that is that net migration to the U.K. is 330,000 a year. But more

than half of that is from outside the European Union. So more than half of the people coming to U.K. are from outside the E.U.

And all those who are coming to the U.K. as immigrants whether from inside the E.U. or from outside, are coming because they want to make a better life for themselves.

The unemployment rate among immigrants is lower than the national average. 2.5 percent of European immigrants are on benefits in the U.K. More than half of those coming from within Europe leave within the year. That's why they don't have a national insurance number.

So the first thing I would say to Nigel Farage is an old, Senator McCain's former colleague, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, you're entitled to your own opinions, but you're not entitled to your own facts. And we cannot give out, I mean, fact-based policymaking is really important to (indiscernible 17:54:11).

And I think the second point that is relevant to this debate is that there are choices that British governments can make, and frankly, governments anywhere in the world can make, that are based on the choices that are available to them. And (indiscernible 17:54:20) in the European Union does not push the continent of Europe further away.

In fact, it will lead to the British border guards currently being stationed in France who do customs checks who do customs checks, withdrawing to the British side of the Channel.

And there is a really fundamental debate here I think, which is about whether or not the western world, which has been the authors of globalization, whether or not we now turn our backs on globalization.

And I think you've got to take on this argument at its core. And at its core it's about whether or not we have a choice about being part of the modern world or not.

North Korean is trying to be separate from the modern world. I don't want Britain to turn into North Korea.

MR. IGNATIUS: That sounds like a good slogan.

(Laughter)

MR. MILIBAND: No. But the --

MR. IGNATIUS: We're not (indiscernible).

MR. MILIBAND: In the end where the Farage arguments, where the Brexit, you tighten the economy, you reduce immigration but you'll create a black hole in your public finances.

As soon as you put the black hole in public finances, you'll be cutting back further, and you'll be saying, hand one, we still got too many immigrants. You're on an absolutely vicious circle, and I think it's an obligation on those of us who want to make immigration smarter, want to make globalization smarter and fairer, and more sustainable in all sorts of ways, we've got to take on that argument.

If we only fight at the micro level, and don't fight at the macro level, we're reducing the debate to tactics. It's not about tactics. This is a strategic debate about whether or not the West is going to be part structure in the modern world, or separate from it, or withdraw from it.

And I think it's a really, it's a big debate. It's an economic debate, it's a political debate, but it's also a social debate, and we've got to make the case that engaging with the world is the way to manager it, and withdrawing from the world is to put yourself at its mercy.

MR. IGNATIUS: So I want to turn to Leon Wieseltier. Senator McCain described you as a poet, and fair enough. But I want you tonight to be a political analyst. And I want you to think with us about what a successful politics dealing with this issue, which is just, you know, ripping apart our country, countries in Europe. It's just terrible to watch the war in Syria. It's terrible to watch this issue is doing to the body politic in the West.

So you've been thinking and writing about these issues as well as anybody for years. Help us think about that.

MR. WIESELTIER: I think we need politicians who have the courage to speak the truth about these historical facts and the moral principles involved in this.

I'll give you two concrete examples, and then I'll back up for some larger, general considerations. So take the first example. The Obama administration has announced that it would



accept 10,000 Syrian refugees. Now this number is an insult to the Syrian refugee community. It is an insult. I mean, it is a number, it is such a piddling, what's that old word you're not allowed to use, niggardly number, parsimonious number, that it represents almost an admission of the unwillingness to deal with the problem.

But so far, we've had 2,805 refugees, and now the media, the papers are full of excited, hepped-up reports about the great suspense story of whether the administration will make its 10,000 quote. The president has said, who as always said to be anguished about Syria.

I mean, two weeks ago the president said that he looks at pictures of Syrian, of dead Syrian children, and he weeps because it reminds him of his own children. I must say by my lights, he forfeited the right to that kind of language a long time ago.

But he looks at, you know, he's always anguished about it, and because he's anguished about it, we hear that we're going to do everything we possibly can to admit 10,000 people.

Ten thousand people will affect this problem not at all, and 10,000 people does not acquit us of our moral responsibilities of this any way whatsoever. It is an American disgrace that we are now at the edge of our seats wondering whether we will admit 10,000 or not. And somebody has to come forward and say that the United States of American has to admit 100,000 or 200,000.

Now, you would say that this would be an unpopular position, and it would be an unpop -- but wait. But wait. But wait. One of the roles of politics as Senator McCain has demonstrated throughout his career is to lead, meaning, you know, the polls before Obama rolled up his sleeves and fought for Obamacare, the polls about Obamacare were terrible. And no one in the White House suggested that the American people be inhospitable to Obamacare. Should not be troubled about this.

Instead, the president did, given that he wanted this program, did exactly what he should have done, which is done everything he possibly could to change public opinion.

So, for example, no democratic politician that I know of, I mean, Mrs. Clinton is perfectly right to respond after the attack in Orlando about American pluralism, and tolerance, and so

on, but we need a democrat or a Republican, but certainly a Democrat, and a president, frankly, who will actually get up and explain to the country why the security dimension of refugee settlement in America should not be the dispositive consideration.

For example, some of you have heard me say this before. Between 1880 and 1924, four million Italian immigrants were accepted into the United States. Four million. And we got Frank Sinatra and Joe DiMaggio, and Enrico Fermi, and Antonin Scalia, and Al Capone. Right? We got Al Capone.

MR. IGNATIUS: And we got nothing with the Irish.

(Laughter).

MR. WIESELTIER: Well, you know, there was something Trumpish about that. I don't like it.

(Laughter).

MR. WIESELTIER: And you know, and we got, the Mafia came -- does anyone in their right mind suggests that we should not have admitted those four million Italian immigrants?

So there all kinds of concrete subjects in which the debate is kind of rigged because our leaders are not prepared to say things clearly.

Now, the larger historical truth is that the Syrian catastrophe, whose consequences we're all dealing with now, it would be imprecise to say that the Syrian catastrophe would the result of Assad savagery against his people. The precise formulation would be that the Syrian catastrophe is the result of Assad's savagery against his people, and the refusal of the West to do anything about it. That is why the Syrian --

(Laughter)

MR. WIESELTIER: When people like myself, and John, and others when we, you know, us warmongers, when we tried to get, when we advocated for some forceful solution, we were always told that we cannot say with certainty what the outcome of American intervention of any kind would be, of any kind, which may be true, but I have to say we could say with certainty, and we did say

with certainty what the outcome of no American intervention would be.

And the outcome is exactly what we're seeing right now. As a consequence of our offering no resistance to what Assad was doing, we have seen a secular tyranny, a religious tyranny, genocide, chemical warfare, the murder of children, 11 million displaced people, 4.8 something million people, refugees, the potential destabilization of Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon, the emergence of Russia as a regional and maybe a global power and the possible resurgence of Fascism in Europe.

Now, does anybody want to tell me that all of that was worth not, was not worth 10,000 or 15,000 American troops in Syria? Does anyone want to tell me that because of whatever the spook, the hobgoblin of Iraq was, that arming a Syrian rebel force was not work it in the light of everything that's happened since? So we have to understand that when the United States does nothing, it's doing something, and that's what happened.

So similarly at the moral level, we have got to get back to a debate about the first principles of American foreign policy, because under the Obama administration and with the collaboration of Democratic isolationists and Republican isolationists, and Democratic withdrawalists, and Republican withdrawalists, and Democratic multilateralists who really don't want to do anything, and Republican multilateralists who really don't want to do anything, the objectives of protection, assistance, and rescue have disappeared from our foreign policy. The objectives of democratization have disappeared from the top of the list of our foreign policy. And if you'd pardon the George Bush like expression, the objective of spreading freedom around the world has disappeared from our foreign policy, and Obama is going to leave our foreign policy confused about its principles, and liberal internationalism as we know it is breaking down as a consequence.

MR. IGNATIUS: So, again, I want to push you on how that's rebuilt.

MR. WIESELTIER: Thank you for stopping me because, clearly, I could go on.

(Laughter)

MR. IGNATIUS: Well, no, the, I just, I don't want this conversation to be entire or principally backward looking about, you know, mistakes that were made, and, you know, we said this

and, I do want it to look forward.

And this is a moment when the American people are frightened. And so I want to ask you again, how do you make the case for this liberal internationalism, engagement, but in particular on the refugee question.

MR. WIESELTIER: We --

MR. IGNATIUS: Accepting war. Accepting -- Obama is getting hammered for allowing in one-third of 10,000, and I agree you that the number should be vastly larger, but how do you make that case in a way, I said it before, that isn't political suicide.

MR. WIESELTIER: I don't believe in the first place that the American people are indecent people. I have to say that every time there were beheadings, and every time there were atrocities if you looked at the polls in the immediate aftermath, and I'm not an addictive reader of data, but if you looked at the polls, it was quite clear that if the American had decided to do something forceful about this, it would have at least plausible political support. Maybe not overwhelming political support.

On the other hand, the Constitution gives us one president at a time, and he gets dealt one historical hand, et cetera, et cetera.

I don't believe, and I know this is heretical, I don't believe that the American population is war weary. I really don't. I think that, you know, we lost soldiers in Afghanistan, we lost soldiers in Iraq. There I think two thousand some wounded in Afghanistan, and, I mean dead, and four thousand some in Iraq, and there were the wounded.

We have a volunteer Army. The idea that the pain of these wars was even dispersed across the American population. It's silly. I think the American people need to be told that we are a good people, and a powerful people, and whereas we do not intend as John Quincy said to go searching after monsters to destroy, sometimes the monsters present themselves, and that we are, you know, we are the ones who should go destroy them.

I think this is, it would take some political courage. It would have to be repeated ad

nauseam. But then again, there are many things that political people repeat ad nauseam, if it's something --

MR. IGNATIUS: So true.

MR. WIESELTIER: Right. So, but so what, so I think, in fact there is a lot of political work that needs to be done. Moreover, it is not too late to create a safe haven for refugees in Syria. It is not too late, I mean, you know, to think about forming some sort of Syrian force if only so that when the day comes that Assad falls, and a new government is formed in Damascus, that there be some element of that government that owes the United States a damn thing. That owes us anything.

So, you know, the idea that, you know, that, so you're right to say that it shouldn't be backward looking, but, again, in Washington, everyone has this idea that maybe two, three, four years ago we could have when, of course, as you recall, two, three, four years ago they were saying exactly the same thing.

It's not too late. I mean, don't get me wrong. I don't think anything will happen as long as this president is --

MR. McCAIN: Can I --

MR. IGNATIUS: Yes, please, sir.

MR. McCAIN: -- add a little bit onto that. That American, I'm sorry to tell you this. American is the indispensable nation. The reason why the 20th century was called the American Century was because of what America did. And we didn't always do it right. We did a lot of things wrong. And there's ways of looking history. And we should have done this, we should have done that, but if we had completely withdrawn from Korea after the Armistice in Korea, I don't know what Korea would look like today. I know what it looked like then. It was a terrible landscape dominated by a total dictator named Syngman Rhee.

What would have happened if we had abandoned Japan and Germany to their own devices after World War II? And what is brought up by Mr. Trump and others is Libya. Oh, we never should have gone to Libya.

MR. MILIBAND: We didn't.

SENATOR McCAIN: Well, we killed Kaddafi, who was on the gates of Benghazi with artillery and tanks, and was about to slaughter a few thousand people. The same reason, frankly, why we went to Bosnia. Why President Clinton had the courage to, over far right, the Republican objections, to go to Bosnia, and how Bosnia stumbles along, but it's a hell of a lot better off than it was at the time.

And Libya, we killed Kaddafi, and we walked away. We walked away from Libya. And I could tell you the times I called people in the administration, including my friend, John Kerry, I said get over there. We got to secure the weapons caches; we've got to help them with their border. We gotta treat their wounded.

They had something like 20,000 wounded with no way of taking care of them, and we could have sent a hospital ship over there, and it would have been the great signal of American commitment. We didn't help them with anything. We walked away, and guess what? The situation deteriorated.

My point is that no we can't fight every fight. We can't put out every fire. We have to make decision as the come along.

But the fundamental principal of American leadership is that without it, then a lot of bad things happen. And, yes, they don't spend enough money on defense, and yes, they are leeching off of us, and, yes, there's a nuclear umbrella. All of those things are true.

But there was a peaceful world for 70 years primarily because of American leadership, and I'm sorry to say, it required American sacrifice.

I'm proud of America. I'm proud of what we've done. I'm proud of the people, young men and women that are serving in the military. By the way, we just lifted all restrictions on a combat role for women in any of that. I'm sure that women will applaud that.

(Appaluse)

SENATOR McCAIN: And we're going to register them for selective service. Oh, no.

Anyway, I just to conclude with this statement. When America leads, it's at great sacrifice, but the rewards for American over time are incalculable.

MR. IGNATIUS: So I hear in that as clearly as it can be articulated, the argument against an approach that says America first, and subordinates our international role, and so I think that's --

SENATOR McCAIN: Well, you and I are old enough to remember either history, the period following World War I, the America Firsters. That's what interesting when we say America First. Those of us who know history know what that meant that meant in the 1930s. And we know that there was following World War II there was a Taft Wing and the Eisenhower Wing in the Republican party.

We started, we remember, there's always been this tension within the parties and within the nation. Withdraw from the world. And when we've done that, again, the lessons of history we've had to repeat time after time when that aspect of American isolationism prevails.

MR. IGNATIUS: Can I just --

MR. MILIBAND: Let me make one public service announcement which is that it's harder to get to the U.S. as a refugee than under any other route. Let's not forget that.

MR. WIESELTIER: Which is why if you --

MR. MILIBAND: It's harder to get a refugee visa I think to get a visa as a student, or a tourist or anything else.

MR. WIESELTIER: Which is why, by the way, if you were ISIS, getting a terrorist over as a refugee is the dumbest way you could --

MR. MILIBAND: It's really important to have that in mind. Eighteen to 24 months, 12 to 15 different agencies, biometric tests, and the burden of proof is on the refugee to prove that they're going to be a safe, and productive, and patriotic citizen. So let's all remember that.

Let me just -- I just want to flag, the politics of the fight against jihadism is not that just our politics. There's politics that's going on in the Middle East and elsewhere. And there are three

dimensions I think are just worth flagging because they're important to the overall mix of this, I always say that refugee resettlement in the U.S. is the right thing to do. It's a practical thing to do because of the security point and other things I've just made, but it's also smart because the last thing that ISIS wants is for this country to be a genuine beacon of what it means to be a multifaith, multicultural, et cetera, society.

But the politics it seems to me within Sunni communities across significant parts of the Arab world have three aspects that should concern us, engage our minds.

One is, obviously, the sectarian issue. It hasn't been discussed yet, and which has been growing in significance, I don't want to be alarmist about it, certainly a country like Pakistan if I think about that, 20 years ago, 25 years ago, people wouldn't have been asking in Pakistan are you a Sunni, are you a Shia. It was a much potent.

There's a sectarian element to the politics in significant parts of the Muslim world.

Secondly, there is an issue of the relationship of citizens to their own governments. There's a political reform question. And remember in Syria in 2011 in Daraa it was the demand for accountable government that started this off.

But the third aspect to the politics that's used by the jihadists is about how we conduct ourselves, and that engages the west. And as we discuss the politics of this I think it's important to remember that we're in a politics that is genuinely global, and there's no such thing as local politics.

MR. IGNATIUS: So I, because we promised Senator McCain that he could leave at quarter of --

SENATOR McCAIN: That's all right. Go ahead.

MR. IGNATIUS: Are we all right?

SENATOR McCAIN: Yes, sir.

MR. IGNATIUS: So let me turn back to Senator McCain for just a follow-up to something that Leon mentioned. We have talked about the fact that we could be creating safe zones for refugees in Syria today. You have been arguing for this policy consistently now, for five years



basically.

SENATOR McCAIN: At great success.

(Laughter).

MR. IGNATIUS: You have not had much success. The only person at the top of American politics you've convinced about it I think is Secretary Clinton.

But I do want to ask, if Donald Trump should be elected and as our next president he's going to turn to you for advice, and I just want to get a preview of what you would say to him a person who is running, really, deeper American involvement in a lot of these things, what you say to him about why we should create that safe zone. Why we should put American soldiers at risk, and how you'd make that case to him?"

SENATOR McCAIN: Thank you, David. I do not know Mr. Trump. I think I've encountered him a couple of times, but I don't know him. So I can't relate first hand.

What I know so far, he does not seem to be listening to my wing of the party, or my wing of America because there are Democrats that feel exactly as I do.

So I obviously would advise him on the no-fly zone some relief for the refugees, but probably a very importance place where we could really arm, train and equip forces which would then, hopefully succeed.

So all I know, frankly, what's reported in the Washington Post, and that is that Mr. Trump is not—that people keep saying he's going to listen to, fill in the blank, but then he comes out and gives a speech where, obviously, that's not the case.

MR. IGNATIUS: You'd also have to show him where Syria is.

SENATOR McCAIN: But what I would recommend to him though, very quickly, call the people who succeeded, call the smart people. Call the ones that are most respected. I'm talking about people you and I respect. Ryan Crocker, David Petraeus --

MR. IGNATIUS: Robert Ford.

SENATOR McCAIN: -- Bob Kagan.

MR. IGNATIUS: John McCain.

MR. McCAIN: Maybe so, but, you know, those, you know that thing about people that get captured, but anyway --

MR. WIESELTIER: Ohhh.

(Laughter)

SENATOR McCAIN: Anyway, I would say call and be smart people that would, we are blessed with a generation of military leadership that is, I think is as good or better than any we've ever had in this country, and diplomats along the lines of Ryan Crocker, and so many of these others that we've encountered along the lines.

They're the best I've ever known, and I'm proud of their predecessors, but these are the people that've been leavened by 15 years of conflict. I would say call these people and listen to them, and listen to their advice just the way that in 2006 when things were going to hell in a handbasket, George W. Bush finally fired Donald Rumsfeld and called in these people and orchestrate the surge, et cetera.

It's time to call in wise people. And I'd include Kissinger in that group, and they're there. That's what I would do.

MR. IGNATIUS: Let me ask Leon a question because he and I talked about this briefly before we came out here. You've just celebrated a month ago the 110th anniversary of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. And we see among many other horrible realities of this conflict is the reality that the Sykes-Picot world is stressed and may never return.

And I want to ask Leon whether in your mind it's time just to let go of those borders, those ideas of countries, whether U.S. strategy should explicitly embrace the idea of something different, or whether we should leave it to the people of the region. Don't try to impose a solution now just as people shouldn't have tried to impose one in 1960?

MR. WIESELTIER: Look, I think the first thing we have to do is keep our heads. I think that the region is obviously undergoing turmoil that has to do with the fundamental nature of the

political order there.

The really important, you know, we thought for years that the great event of our time in the region would be, was the Arab Spring. In fact, the most significant event of our time in the region was the failure of the Arab Spring, which is a truly heartbreaking event.

But if what's happening in the region is turmoil that may eventually lead, and I'll get to this in a moment, to political reform to the slow emergence of some sort of democratic order, we have to remember that democratization is not an event. It's a whole era. It takes a very long time. And there will be actors in that process who will need our help, and who will deserve our help.

There are dissidents, and democratizers, and good people in all the Arab and all the Muslim countries some of whom are struggling at great personal risk to try to reform their societies.

For me, the great, you know, my first big tipoff about what was coming with Obama was his response to June, 2009 in Iran when there was a democratic rebellion and we behaved more or less indifferently towards it.

I think that we are not here to draw any maps or any lines. I think that it's not yet clear to me, certainly not yet clear to me that the states system in the Middle East is over. I think that if the borders were all to dissolve, terrible atrocities would cross all those former borders. The idea that that would be some improvement seems the opposite of the case to me.

I think that there will be humanitarian emergencies that will require immediate action on the part of the West, and the thing about humanitarian emergencies is that unlike crises, if you don't go in strong in the beginning, you've misunderstood the problem. You failed.

You do not escalate in your response to a humanitarian emergency. You do whatever it is that is necessary at the moment of pain. I think, as I say, there will be actors that we should support and really not only with hard power, soft power, smart power, sometimes dumb power, which is another word for boots on the ground, I guess.

But I think that we have to keep our head --

MR. IGNATIUS: Just power I think is the word.

MR. WIESELTIER: Well, power is fine, but we're so interested now in defining power in every way but military power. So we've got to use soft power, or smart power, or exquisite power, or incredibly refined power, or power, cultural power, anything but force when, in fact, sometime force, and by the way not a lot of force may be necessary.

The other thing that's happened is that the White House now defines the alternative, the alternative are leaving things approximately as they are, or, of course, providing inconsequential help like 50 special operators, or meals ready to eat for Ukrainian soldiers, or things like that. Leaving things approximately as they are, or repeating the war in Iraq.

I don't know a single person, do you, who wants to repeat the war in Iraq, who wants to put that many boots on the, nothing. It's a total boogeyman. But sometimes there will be problems in this region over time that will require the use of western force on behalf of certain elements that are deserving of our support.

So as I say this is going to be a very long and nerve-racking period in which (a) we have to keep our heads and not think that if the problem isn't fixed immediately then we have to get out because it's just a, it's hopeless.

You know, in the West, it took, what, 250, 300 years for democratization to take place? We were talking about this the other day, and I said that, you know, John Stuart Mill was not born the morning after Thomas Aquinas died. That's not how it happened in the West.

People were burned, and books were burned, and it was an, and as a consequence of liberalism, we had both fascism and communism which together accounted for the deaths of more innocent people than any other phenomenon in human history.

So we have to recognize that we're in for a long struggle, and that we should support people who are on the right side of that struggle. It's a historical vision that we need not just crisis management.

MR. IGNATIUS: Senator McCain, one thing I've seen in 35 years of visiting the Middle East is when you talk about the right side, it goes village by village sometimes. And in

particular right know, Kurdish people think that the right side is a country called Kurdistan whether they're in Iraq or in Syria, and a big question that I would put to you as a person who has been thinking about this deeply for so many years, should we tell Kurdish friends, the toughest fighters that we've had in this fight, brother and sisters we're sorry, but this is not the time for you to assert your nation or should we say as the Barzanis have been saying privately, this is it. This is our moment. We want our country. How should we think about that?

SENATOR McCAIN: I think it's one of the toughest questions that we face, David, and I'm glad you raised it because on the one hand, we know that they're really the only effective fighters, as you know.

Perhaps there's some of the Shiite militia in Syria, or the Iranian Revolutionary Guard are somewhat effective, but I think we know that the Shia militia compared to the peshmerga pale in significance, which is why the peshmerga are the one that have achieved most of the military achievement, and also presents us with a dilemma militias take over largely Sunni populated areas, and as you know, sometimes that ends in very a tough humanitarian situation.

And as we know, there's different gradients of the Kurds. The PKK, which is clearly a far more terrorist-inclined organization, and then there is the other one. And there is the ambition of the Kurds for their own homeland. They're the largest ethnic group in the Middle East that does not have their own country.

I think that some of this is going to be dictated by facts on the ground. If the Kurds continue to fight well, and continue to establish spheres of influence, they're going to have de facto homeland, and how the other countries in the region, particularly the Turks react to that, I'm not exactly sure.

As you know, Erdogan views this Kurdish movement with as much seriousness as he does Bashar Assad, and so, and ISIS. I think this is one of the complexities that's bred by all these years of conflict and back and forth, and shifting alliances, and what's Al-Nusra doing, and what is their relationship with the Kurds.

If I had to guess, if I had a crystal ball, I would say at some point there is very likely going to be some kind of Kurdish establishment. I don't know if it's an autonomous region, or outright independence, I'm not sure. But one thing the Kurds have proven is that they have the most effective fighting force in the region, and they're going to therefore demand recognition for that.

And as you also know, for the size of their population, they've suffered a pretty high rate of casualties, but to sum it all up, because of the shifting situation in that area, I'm not sure exactly what the outcome is going to be because if you'd asked me a year ago if the Russian would have the dominant position that they have today, I probably wouldn't have predicted that they would.

So it's a little tough. That's a very tough question, and I don't know if David or Leon has an opinion, but I don't have a good answer.

MR. IGNATIUS: I just three weeks ago was in northeastern Syria, and we had not announced it. We, I'm not sure fully recognized it, but we are running a version of Operation Provide Comfort in the Kurdish areas of Syria, and as happened in Iraq, once people have had a taste of that, they are not gonna give it up. And so we're just going to have to deal with the, it was a necessary alliance, but it has consequences.

I promised that we would go to this amazing audience for questions. There's so many people here who are deeply knowledgeable about these issues, so with the permission of my panelists, I want to turn to you and ask you for your questions. We do have another 15, 20 minutes before the end.

I know Senator McCain --

SENATOR McCAIN: No, I'm fine.

MR. IGNATIUS: Okay. So let me ask that -- yes, Shibley.

MR. TELHAMI: Hi. I'm Shibley Telhami from Brookings and the University of Maryland. I just want to make a comment related to something Leon said about the president being a little more aggressive in his refugee policy and stating something like 100,000 instead of 10,000.

And I want to say something in support of it. I just released a poll yesterday at

Bookings on American public attitudes towards refugees broadly from the Middle East, but also from Syria particularly.

And what's interesting is that if you look at, when you ask people how many refugees should we have, you know, in just an open question. They could write anything they want. This is a national survey of Americans.

And they write a number, but the number is interesting because first we give them information about what the president has said. So we say our current policy is that the president wants to accept 10,000 this year. How many do you think it should be next year?

So what you find is that the numbers they give, they write, the median is about 10,000 to 15,000. So that's, you know, they're getting their cue from the president.

When you ask them about the actual number, the average, the mean, is much higher. Is over 50,000 actually. And that even for Republicans it's over 30,000.

So obviously what the president does does set a certain expectation, you know, from the public. And the public isn't obviously preoccupied with numbers. It's really an issue. And so, for example, over 50 percent of the American public say they feel a moral obligation to help Syrian refugees.

And when you, you know, probe a little bit further in terms of what they, what their idea of number is, you ask them a question about how many, you know, for those who oppose refugees, what are you most concerned about, half of them are concerned about terrorism, of course, those who oppose it. Half of them are concerned about the economic burden.

When you ask them about the security issue, how many of you think have been, of the refugees accepted since 9/11 have been involved or arrested for terrorist, we know the number is roughly three, and no more than that. Only 14 percent get that. Only 14 percent say less than five, and most of them have an exaggerated idea. About more than a quarter of them think it's over 100.

So obviously these numbers aren't, look at the numbers have been talked about by one of the presidential candidates saying we're accepting hundreds of thousands of them. And it's not

even being fact checked by the audience.

So I think the issue is one of principle to put it on the table and make the moral argument. And I think the numbers, I think the public will swallow the number if you put 100,000, and that'll become the new benchmark.

Some people will fight it. Some people will be higher. But it'll become the new benchmark in my opinion.

MR. IGNATIUS: Senator McCain, is that just to enunciate a number and then assume that the public will just accept it because the president said that's the number?

SENATOR McCAIN: I think there's another aspect to this and that there's a great fear out there that in the refugee flow will be a terrorist who commit acts of terror in the United States. I don't know what percentage of Americans know that this person who perpetrated this horrible, horrific crime in Orlando was not a refugee. They see his name and they think, ah.

And so I think they have to be, as you say, they relate to 9/11 so there has to be a certain amount of confidence. If I were sitting in the president's office - something I think about occasionally --

(Laughter)

-- I would say my first mission if I wanted an increase in refugees just say my fellow Americans, here's what they have to go through before then can get into this country so that Americans would have the confidence that there is no possibility that someone would come from the Middle East, and then sneak into the United States, get on this contact Baghdadi and commit an act of terror. I think that's the, when my conversations with my constituents in Arizona, that's their big concern. They're bighearted, but they don't want to be part to something that would lead to another act of terror.

MR. IGNATIUS: Yes, please.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is (indiscernible 18:34:14) refugee agency, UNHCR. The challenge of it taking so long of 12 to 18 months, if not longer through of all of the



security checks is that it's no longer act of rescue.

As the child of a Holocaust survivor to wait that long to come to the United States changes the nature of the purpose of resettlement.

So the question I'd like to ask of Mr. Miliband is from your experience working with communities as IRC does, what would be, as you said, all politics is local, what should be the message from the bottom up? We've been talking a lot about what the president should say, or what the president should do, but what are the people, what are the mayors saying from your experience?

MR. MILIBAND: It's really nice to be able to answer that question because amidst all of the political polarization as we resettle Syrians and others around the country, what you find American's doing their new neighbors is saying where are you from? How can I help? Where's your kid going to school? And the truth is that that American story of bringing people into their community is one which is going on every day. And we know from our experience that if you get the kids an education, teach the parents English, get someone in the household a job and just in parenthesis, 81 percent of Syrian households that we resettled in 2015 had someone in work within six months.

And fourthly, get them on the path to citizenship. After a year they get checked. After five years, they can become citizens. You've got the roots of creating productive citizens and big contributors to local communities.

The great advantage that you have in this country when it comes to Syrians, frankly, the great advantages that you have in this country when it comes to people from all over the world is there are Syrian American communities around the U.S. ready to welcome people in.

There are people from every country in the world in this country ready to welcome people from that country. So the local message, and it's interesting, 38 state governors have said they've got concerns about people coming from the Middle East, the mayors of the big cities are actually standing up and saying we want to be part of the movement. And so that's very, very important.

I think that we work with people of all parties and none right across the country. And I

think refugee reception is essentially the say, frankly, one of the things we're going to be doing in Europe over the next year or two is taking the lessons of the American story and help the Germans, and Greeks, and the Serbians outside the European Union, other European countries who want to know how can they replicate some of the success that you have had from the very simple foundations.

And just while I've got the floor, we can't let this session end without mentioning the words Jordan and Lebanon. Those two words have not been mentioned --

MR. IGNATIUS: I mentioned, but never mind.

(Laughter)

MR. MILIBAND: Okay. I was listening so carefully --

MR. IGNATIUS: David, would you care to elaborate --

MR. MILIBAND: We can't allow the words Lebanon and Jordan, you think that the vast number of the world's refugees are ending up in rich countries. They're not. 86 percent of the world's refugees are ending up in poor or lower middle income countries.

And when you tell people Lebanon is a country of 4.5 million people. It's taken 1.2 million refugees. Jordan, the second closest ally of the United States in the Middle East, if we didn't do anything in the next few years to promote stability, Jordan, 6.5 million people, 750,000 registered refugees in that country, the government says there another 600,000 unregistered.

There are some real basic points about making sure that kids get an education. 200,000 Syrian kids no education five years into the war.

These are not difficult public policy questions. They have basic public policy questions that require fundamental change in the humanitarian system because it was built as a system 50 years ago to help people survive for a few months before they went home. Now, we've got to help those kind of countries help people thrive, and that is core to the confidence and the effectiveness of the humanitarian system going forward, and it speaks directly to this point because we're talking about long-term displacement not short-term therapy.

MR. McCAIN: Could I just mention one additional point? Refugee camps are

breeding grounds for extremism, and we have to make people understand that. When they have no hope, no job, no future, that's the most fertile ground. It breeds the kind of problem that's going to be with for a long, long time. The longer some you man or young woman, but particularly young men stays in a refugee camp without any hope or any future, the more conducive it is for that person to embrace this radical unacceptable form of Muslim faith.

MR. IGNATIUS: Yes, please.

SPEAKER: 90 percent of Syrian refugees are not in camps just to (indiscernible) on that.

MR. IGNATIUS: Yes, ma'am.

MR. WIESELTIER: I've been to camps with 20,000, 30,000 in in them.

SPEAKER: So following up on that --

MR. IGNATIUS: All right. Use a microphone.

MS. FERNANDEZ: I'm Emily Arnold Fernandez. I'm the director of Asylum Access, and we are a refugee human rights organization. And we are talking a lot about resettlement here as one of the ways that we can share the burden, but we're not talking about money flows, and we're not talking about the fact that European and U.S., North American governments are providing billions of dollars toward refugee response, and that almost none of that money is flowing to local advocacy organizations.

Who's going to change the law that says all refugees in X, Y, Z country need to live in camps? No refugees can work? The people who are going to change those laws are not the current actors in the humanitarian aid system. They are locals, right? A foreigner like me isn't gonna come in and tell the Jordanian government what to do and have any hope of being listened to.

And so how can we start to direct some of those funds, and this is my question particularly for you, David, and, John, you also may have some ideas about this. How can we start to direct those funds to local organizations that have the capacity to do the hard legislative advocacy work that needs to done to create a framework where we can have local integration and long-term

solutions?

MR. MILIBAND: Very directly, the biggest and most positive thing that's happening in the humanitarian sector at the moment, is the newfound interest of the World Bank in being major supporter of fragile states with a very simple deal. We, the World Bank, will extend long-term financing to middle income countries which they're currently banned from doing. I mean, the World Bank is currently banned from working in Jordan and Lebanon, but by October, it will change it.

We will give you long-term economic support for the renewal of your economy if you're willing to give work permits to refugees, and out of the London Summit in February this year, there was an agreement that Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey a million permits would be issued to Syrians in return for which the World Bank was promising \$40 billion worth of 15-year financing for economic infrastructural renewal.

That's the kind of a deal that will offer hope to people in the region both host communities and refugees. And by the way, that's the kind of deal that in the end will be needed to close the refugee camps in Kenya and elsewhere, because this is a global issue not just a Middle East and Europe issue.

MR. IGNATIUS: That's a wonderful takeaway to create incentives for people to bear the burden and do the right thing.

Yes, sir. Hold on a second. A microphone is coming.

SPEAKER: Microphone, okay. Thanks. My name is (indiscernible). I'm the director of the Middle East and North Africa and I have responsibility toward the Syrian refugees and (indiscernible 18:41:15) in the surrounding countries.

You know it's true. I agree with my colleague here. We're talking about a certain number, a fraction, and it adds up to only being a symbolic gesture to receive people not as a total solution.

The most important thing is we have 4.8 million refugees as Senator McCain said. More are not registered with UNHCR, so they have about 5 to 6 million. We are aware of this fact, and

we want and we want refugees to be close to their countries because there will not be a Syria if all of them disappear.

What I call the great march toward Europe actually was a benefit for Europe and a minus to Syria. In a diner with the minister of migration not long ago in Geneva of Sweden immigration who said they 80 to 100,000 refugees that ended up in our country when we did a survey of our needs, only in the medical sector, in the health service because most of technical people, and still people went to Norway for a higher pay. We're able to bring the Syrian refugees, doctors, nurses, technicians to fill the fill the gap in all provinces of Sweden.

So there is an added value there and I'm happy about it, but I'm not happy about the fact that Syria will be dried up of their people and they cannot build the Syria again.

This is the real issues that we have to deal with.

Thank you.

MR. IGNATIUS: That's a powerful point, and it is stripping the human capital from these countries.

We've come to the hour at which our session is going to end. I'm reassured that you're going to be able to spend the next day talking about these issues.

I'm going to ask our panelists to make a brief concluding comments before we leave, starting with Leon.

MR. WIESELTIER: I guess what I would, I want to conclude, I know this is backward looking, but I recently had occasion to do some historical research or reading, and what I want to report is that when I went back and looked at the debate about the docking of the St. Louis in the United States, or, rather, the refusal to let it dock here.

Then when I went back and read the protocol for the Evian Conference, what I discovered was that every single argument that we hear now against Syrian refugees, every single one, was used in those pseudo-debates. That these people are foreigners. That we don't know them. That there's just been a depression and they're going to take our jobs.

I mean, there is a sense in which the decision of the United States to accept or not to accept refugees is really the decision of the United States whether or not to be the United State. There is some sense in which our self-definition, our identity as a society is at stake in this policy. It's not at stake in every policy that every government has, but there are certain policies that really do broach the question of who we are, and what are our values, and what do we want to teach our children that we are, quite frankly.

And I think that it's safe to say that we are at such a moment now which is why there is so much ugliness in our politics because those moments always bring out not just our better angels, but our worse demons.

And I think that the struggle that we're facing over this question is it's a fundamental struggle over who we are and nothing less.

MR. IGNATIUS: Senator.

SENATOR McCAIN: I agree with the final words that Leon just uttered. There's the bad angels of our nature, the demons, and there's the good angels of our nature. And what we need is leaders who will appeal to the good angels of our nature.

We are a nation of immigrants. People who came here voluntarily, unless they're African-American. And the greatness of this nation is that there's been an infusion of fresh blood and vitality into our country for generation, after generation, after generation.

I'm proud of American. When they talk about make American great again, I still believe that America is the greatest nation on earth. How many of us remember the days when we had to wait in gas lines for hours because OPEC had their hand on the spigot?

Now, we're energy independent. Would you like to be China? Anybody ever been to Beijing on a day when you can't see a block? Would you like to have the problem that they now have been with this one child policy for all of these generations?

Or would you rather be the Europeans where we are now seeing strings that have been articulated already in our conversation.

So I believe in America. I believe the fundamentals. I believe in the strength of America. But I also think that from time to time American is in a period of crisis, but leaders have emerged who have appealed to the better angels of our nature.

And sometimes that means some sacrifice. Sometimes it means maybe changing your mind. But if we emphasize the initial goodness of the American people who time after time in crisis have risen to the challenge, then I'm confident about America. And I think that this may be one of the most seminal elections in, certainly, in modern times.

MR. IGNATIUS: David.

MR. MILIBAND: Let me pick up on both those two comments. The good news is America is the indispensable nation. The bad news is America is the indispensable nation.

(Laughter).

MS. MILIBAND: And I think it really is important to recognize that when it comes to being an agenda setter, America has the potential to be an agenda setter. When America decides not to set an agenda, the others can. And that role imposes enormous burdens and responsibility on this country, but it also gives you a unique opportunity.

And one thing I would say is that there remains a huge constituency in Europe to partner with America (indiscernible). I don't want to add to your burdens, but I think that the decisions you take in the next five to ten years and whether or not Europeans follow them will have massive implications for the future of the European Union.

That's true in the Middle East. Frankly, it's true in your pivot to Asia, as well, because an America which pivots to Asia with Europe is going to be a much more effective engagement, engager of rising Asian nations.

And I think that that speaks to the kind of fundamental discussion and debate that my co-panelists here have spoken to because it's true that the balance of power in the world is different today than it was 30 years ago, but it's not true that America has lost and absolutely critical pivotal role in defining the global order, and I think that we're at a stage when the need for a rules-based order has

never been more obvious. And this is a country that's got an absolutely critical role in helping to define progress towards that rules-based order.

And the two most interesting questions in global politics over the next decade, it seems to me, are first does America decide to commit itself to helping to shape a rules-based global order.

And secondly, if it does so, how does China respond. Does it want to opt into a rules based global order or not? My bet, actually, is that the Chinese would opt into a rules- based global order. I think it would be in their interest to so.

But I think those two questions will have to be answered in that order. The question will come to you before it comes to the Chinese.

MR. IGNATIUS: So as said at the outset, these are three people who have kept faith with the moral dimension of this issue, and please join me thanking them.

(Applause)

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