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HOW THE NEXT PRESIDENT CAN IMPACT THE FUTURE OF U.S. ALLIANCES AND THE INTERNATIONAL LIBERAL ORDER

THIRD IN A SERIES OF LIVE PODCAST TAPINGS SHOWCASING BROOKINGS EXPERTS' BEST IDEAS FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. LAKSHMANAN: All right. Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Brookings for what I am sure is going to be a lively and provocative discussion. I'm Indira Lakshmanan, Washington columnist for the Boston Globe. And today's event is the third in a series of live tapings for the Brookings Podcast Network that feature big ideas from Brookings' scholars on how the next President should tackle the world's toughest problems.

This morning we're going to focus on America in the world, specifically its relationship with European allies, NATO, and Russia. Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have articulated world views during this campaign that are virtually polar opposites, I think it's safe to say. Clinton has argued for an internationalist approach that builds on the foreign policy of President Obama and her own foreign policy as Secretary of State, while Trump is pushing for an America that might turn its focus inward by questioning longstanding alliances, international agreements, and foreign trade, while at the same time reimagining a more positive relationship with Russia.

I'm delighted to have today for our conversation Brookings experts Fiona Hill and Thomas Wright, who will help us navigate the ways in which the next President could or should treat traditional U.S. alliances and engage with Russia, and how all of this will affect the international order over the next four to eight years.

We're going to start with Fiona, who is an expert in the U.S.-Russia relationship. And I'd like you to please lay out for us your policy recommendations for the next President. How should the next President approach Russia and what would you say success looks like over the next four years?

MS. HILL: Well, I'll start with the question about what will success look

like. I think actually there's a rather minimal bar that perhaps we should be setting for ourselves right now. We're in one of the most contentious relationships with Russia that we've been in in a long while. Most Russia experts are arguing is it worse than the 1940s, you know, the beginning of the Cold War immediately after World War II? Is it worse than the 1980s, when we had a major war scare? Which I think gives you, you know, kind of a bit of a flavor of the kinds of discussions that we're having about the state of that relationship.

So basically, getting us off a path of confrontation and heightened rhetoric of accusing each other of being involved in our political systems and elections, as is happening currently, would already be a step forward. So I think we can very easily set a minimal bar here. We're not going to be returning to the idea of resetting relations, grand bargains, strategic partnerships with Russia. So that's the first point to basically getting ourselves off a confrontational path, taking down the rhetoric, and finding a way of having a more normalized discourse with Russia and figuring out how we can move that relationship forward would already be a sign of success.

The second point is that we have to stop thinking about Russia in a very narrow context. One of the points that's been made about Russia during the Obama administration is that Russia a regional power, meaning that Russia is a regional power within a European context. I think we've seen, certainly since Russia's intervention in Syria in 2015, that Russia's idea of a European region is much more extensive than just what we would think of as the normal European theater defined by NATO and the European Union.

Russia also has very important sets of relationships with China and interactions in the Asia Pacific because Russia is a very large country, and that's kind of

the most obvious thing to say. And when Russians think about their foreign policy and their position in the world, they do think in a multi-regional context. For Russia, for them it's not just Europe and then the Middle and Near East, extending from the Black Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean. It's also Central and South Asia, the borderlands with India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. It's also then the Asia Pacific, their relationship with China, North Korea, and Japan; and also then, frankly, with Canada and the United States across the Pacific. I mean, they're actually one of our interlocutors in the Asia Pacific region, as well. And then Russia is, of course, the big Arctic power and a major player on the Arctic Council and lots of separate interactions with Canada and other Arctic nations.

So we need to have a holistic view of Russia and we need to figure out how Russia fits into all these other relationships and not just try to put Russia into a box. And that's one of the ways that we will be able to tackle this. So one of my first recommendations would be not to just slice up the relationship with Russia into little segments because that's one of the ways that we're getting ourselves into trouble.

And then we have to focus, and I think this is where we should bring Tom in on this, on really building up our alliance structure. All of our allies are in trouble, perhaps with the exception of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand among sort of our, you know, key partners. In terms of our alliance structure in Europe, Europe's being battered by the eurozone crisis, then by Brexit, obviously by the migration and refugee crisis. We've had then in the Middle East our traditional allies there battered by all of the events since the Arab Spring in 2011, the complete breakdown of the Middle East order. And then in the Asia Pacific we clearly have all of our alliances under considerable question, partly as a result of this presidential campaign, frankly, but also because of big questions about the future of China.

So we're going to have to take, I think, a very serious approach at looking at all of our regional alliances and figuring out how we work with our allies to tackle critical issues, and Russia will be one of those topics. But the first step is trying to figure out how to take down the confrontation and we can talk a little bit more about that.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: So whether it's Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump, neither of them should pull out that reset button that Hillary brought with her to Russia on I think her first trip as Secretary of State, the one with the misspelled "reset."

MS. HILL: Yes.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: No one should try to do that then.

MS. HILL: And the irony of that was that the mistranslation was "overload." Instead of "reset" the button had "overload." And I think --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: That's pretty true.

MS. HILL: And that's what's happened. I mean, it was actually very prophetic. We've got an overloaded relationship and we have to figure out how to reduce some of that load. I think Donald Trump is making a gambit for he knows how to do this, but as I said, we'll have to see.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, you know, you mentioned Donald Trump and so I want to ask you, he has said so many differing things about Russia. On the one hand he has said that, you know, in the past he said Vladimir Putin might be his best friend. Now he says I don't really know Vladimir Putin. He's talked about how the U.S. shouldn't get involved in the world. At the same time, he said we could have such a better relationship with the whole world if we were just friends with Russia, and I can do that. He's also said that we should accept that Crimea is part of Russia and that our allies should pay their weight and pull their own freight and not expect us to do it for

them.

So where is Donald Trump on Russia?

MS. HILL: Well, that's a very good question. Tom has written a lot about Donald Trump's foreign policy, so I'll leave some of the finer points to Tom, but I won't punt on this question.

I think if we're looking at the approach and, you know, giving Donald Trump the benefit of the doubt here, I think he's clearly approaching engaging with Russia through the eyes of a deal. You know, this is the man who wrote the book about the art of the deal. And actually, there's something to be said for looking at the relationship with Russia in that context because that's how many in the Russian political class view relations, very transactional.

They also want to make deals, but they want to know who can deliver. So irrespective of whether Donald Trump is laying out the contours of potentially being able to make a deal on certain issues as he's, you know, throwing out there, as he said he doesn't know Vladimir Putin yet, but he's trying to kind of throw out there the contours of I'm ready to sit down at the table, I could make a deal on some of these issues.

The Russian government wants to see that whoever sits down at the table with them can deliver on things that they undertake. So the big challenge for any president, irrespective of whether it's Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton, is they'll have to show that if they're sitting at a table with the Russians, that they know what they want, first of all; and that if they're making any undertakings, that there's going to be something delivered and that the expectations are the same. Because the problem with our reset policy, how it got overloaded, was it was meant to change the tone of the relationship to be able to move forward with Russia on issues like the Iran nuclear program, on dealing

with Afghanistan. It wasn't really about resetting the U.S.-Russia relationship, per se, and putting that into a different front.

Moscow then expected an awful lot from the United States. It actually thought that the U.S. was going to change its policy on a whole host of things from democracy promotion to the expansion of NATO, perhaps to, you know, support for other EU enlargement or other issues in Russia's neighborhood, and that wasn't what that was about.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, because, in fact, the U.S. in that case was the one being transactional, saying we need your help, Russia, with the northern distribution network to get supplies into Afghanistan. We need your help, Russia, sitting down with the P5+1 to make an Iran nuclear deal. This was, of course, before we needed their help with Syria, but the U.S. had its little checklist and, as you say, did not intend to --

MS. HILL: That's right.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: -- readjust other things; wanted to transitionally do what was good for us.

MS. HILL: That's exactly right. So that's the framework that we have to operate in. We have to understand if we're going to make it that transactional, then we have to be very clear so that the expectations are exactly the same. So irrespective of who the President is, they're going to have to figure that out.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, I suppose in foreign policy, as in life, when somebody wants to get something transactionally, the other party often wants other things attached.

MS. HILL: That's right, other things on top, yeah.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: It doesn't always work that way.

MS. HILL: And Russia's got a long list.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Yes, it certainly does.

Okay, for those of you in this room or watching our live stream who might be Tweeting this event, please tag @BrookingsInst or @BrookingsFP, and you can use the hashtag #Elections2016.

All right, Tom, you have written extensively not only about Donald Trump and his foreign policy, but also about the U.S.-Europe relationship, particularly with respect to Brexit and the European posture in general of both candidates. So I want to hear what you think the next President should do to improve or change the world order or should it stay exactly as it is? And what does he or she need to achieve within the first 100 days, to use that hackneyed old construction, to get us there?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, thank you and it's a great pleasure to be here this morning. You know, I think it's difficult to answer that question about both candidates because they're so fundamentally different. I don't think you can really give advice to both of them together because Trump, I think, if he was elected, it would immediately lead to sort of a crisis in Washington in terms of what his foreign policy would look like. And would he adhere to the sort of core visceral beliefs that he's had over several, you know, decades or would he gravitate more toward the center and bring in mainstream Republicans?

My view is that he is a more ideological candidate than we often appreciate. And while there's a lot of bluster and a lot of ignorance on a wide variety of issues, there are certain things that he has been pretty consistent on. He's been consistently -- I think he's opposed to U.S. alliances, it's not just burden-sharing. I think

he's opposed to them and I think he would try to withdraw the U.S. from security commitments around the world.

He's opposed to free trade and would like to sort of go more toward a mercantilist system. And I think he is pro-Russian. He is pro authoritarian. He has a foreign policy that's very consistent with Russia's national interests. And I think he will have a complicated relationship with Putin for many reasons, but I think that the upshot of it all is that he will be fairly compliant in terms of what Putin wants.

And I think he will cut a deal that's pretty transactional. I think the deal will be Russian help to fight ISIS and he'll ally with Assad and Putin in Syria in exchange for neglect of NATO and Europe and allowing NATO to atrophy. And, you know, I don't think Russia will make a major move because why would you make a major move when the President of the United States is essentially acting, you know, in a matter consistent with your interests? But that will be essentially the environment we will be in and that would generate all sorts of pushback and opposition within Washington, within the U.S. foreign policy world. And I think we have no idea where that would end up and the repercussions of it.

So I think if Trump wins, there really will -- I think first it will be a tremendous shock to everyone. No one's really expecting it and it will be one of the greatest sort of shocks in foreign policy and international order in decades.

I think the easier part of -- it's not an easier part of the question, but on Hillary Clinton, I think that's a more traditional one in terms of what should she do, what the first 100 days is, how it would differ. And I'll just make a couple of brief points here.

You know, it will be a third Democratic term and, obviously, she was President Obama's Secretary of State, and so there's a lot of discussion on whether or

not she is going to be different or the same. Every President is unique on foreign policy. Every President has their own perspective and view, whether it's a doctrine or a philosophy or an approach, including presidents from the same party. President George H.W. Bush was different than President Reagan. President Truman was different than President Roosevelt in very significant ways. And so Hillary Clinton will be no exception. She, too, will be different than President Obama. There will be -- and that's a natural, normal thing that foreign policy would evolve. President Obama will be different in his third term, if he could run and win one, than he was in his second or in his first. So there's a natural evolution that occurs because events move on and then there's also the personal sort of approach.

So I think the question is how will she be different? And there I think it's hard to say for sure because she has a political incentive at the moment to minimize the difference with President Obama. And so we could go about it and look at every detail of every statement she says and says how is that different from what President Obama said and really parse every word. But that runs the risk of overestimating or overemphasizing minor differences that she didn't really intend.

So how I would go about it is to say what is the critique from sort of Democratic-leaning foreign policy observers and experts and policymakers about the Obama administration, like is there an alternative view out there from the Obama administration? And maybe if that's consistent with what Hillary Clinton has stood for in the past, maybe that's where they will go.

And I think there is one and I think it basically is viewing international politics more through a geopolitical lens and more through a regional lens, and seeing what's happening, particularly in those three key strategic theaters in the Middle East, in

East Asia, and in Europe, as very important and the deterioration there damaging to the international order and to U.S. interests, and seeing the U.S. role in trying to stabilize and shore up those regional orders.

If you look at the Obama administration, the President's view, I think, is that particularly in the Middle East, the greatest risk is getting drawn further in and that the U.S. has no inherent interest in imposing or really sponsoring an equilibrium in the region and that this needs to be done by the powers themselves. The U.S. has some narrow interests, but he sees it as his role to really limit America's exposure to the Middle East.

I think President Clinton would be more likely to see a key U.S. role in trying to stabilize the region. So the question is how would that come about? It probably would be by reengaging with America's allies in the region, particularly some of the Sunni and Arab states.

Similarly, in Europe, as Fiona was mentioning, in terms of with Russia, I think they will see a very key sort of U.S. role in trying to shore up the European Union and NATO and then also balancing Russia.

I think the problems that she will face is that Russia's going to be, I think, a real difficulty. I can see how she gets to a relatively constructive relationship with Russia at some point, but I don't see how she gets there without a very difficult first year. Because there's all of these crises and problems, including the fact that Russia's just interfered in the U.S. election, which I think will be a substantial issue after the campaign and that there will be a U.S. response to that and it will be significant.

And then there's the Syria part, where there's, you know, an obvious clash over the No Fly Zone and there are other things, too. So I think it will be she will

have no honeymoon. It will be a very tough sort of foreign policy environment for her, a very difficult six months. But I think that the message that they need to send is to really, you know, show what their policy is at this -- you know, they may want to show this is a tougher sort of team in town and trying to sort of lay out key sort of U.S. interests in these different regions, and then acting to bolster them.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, you mentioned the tougher team in town. Of course, the key here and the difference between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton is that both Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov, his foreign minister, know Hillary Clinton very well. They've met her on many occasions when she's been to Russia or she's been at international meetings. And Sergey Lavrov has met her all over the world whereas they don't really know who they're dealing with in Donald Trump other than his public rhetoric.

And, you know, even though certainly Clinton is leading in the polls and it looks like she will probably win, nothing is over until it's over. So I want to ask you to describe for us a little bit, since you've looked at it quite closely, Trump's rhetoric towards Russia. I'm sort of trying to think through the lens of someone who studied China because, of course, American foreign policy experts over the last decade have talked about a supposed G-2 with China; this idea, you know, we're the two great powers. We don't have to be oppositional superpowers. It doesn't have to be a Cold War of any sort, but we can sort of lead the world together through this constructive cooperative G-2.

Is what Trump is suggesting between the U.S. and Russia similar to this G-2 idea?

MR. WRIGHT: Well, maybe to -- yeah, I think it is to some degree. It's an interesting way of -- I hadn't thought about it in the G-2 way. Just in terms of his rhetoric on Russia, I think he's been pretty consistent. I mean, he's always had a fond

spot for Russia. He went to Russia in 1990. He came back, he was really disillusioned by Gorbachev. He thought Gorbachev was a disaster. He said that he thought that Gorbachev should have behaved more like the Chinese in Tiananmen Square, and that that would have been a much stronger approach and would have shown there was the rule of law and order.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: So Trump's nothing if not consistent actually over the decades.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, and so ever, you know, he has had various interests in Russia. It's really been remarkable during the campaign. The easiest thing for him to say in the world would have been I have concerns about Vladimir Putin, of course. Of course I'm worried about what he's doing in Eastern Europe, but I think we have common interests. He has been unable to even say that. Right. He has consistently brought up Russia in a positive way, Putin in a positive way, including in the last debate, but he didn't have to. There was nothing that said he had to do that. And his rebuttal to the accusation that he is pro Russia is I don't know Putin, I don't really have anything to do with Russia. It's not I have concerns about Putin or there are real reasons for worry or we have alliance commitments that are important.

The only leader, the leader who sought a meeting with him at U.N. General Assembly that he refused to meet was the Ukrainian leader. I mean, they intervened in the Republican National Committee platform to change the language on Ukraine.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: You're talking about Russia through Paul Manafort, Trump's then campaign chairman, and other influences around him who have close ties to Russia.

MR. WRIGHT: Right, but even after Manafort left there was, I think, the UNGA thing, the U.N. thing with after Manafort left.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: But the platform was under --

MR. WRIGHT: And the platform was Manafort.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: -- Manafort.

MR. WRIGHT: But so I think he has, for whatever reason, he has sort of a view that Russia is a partner that he does not want to offend or say anything critical of. There was quite an interesting article in POLITICO with the biographers of Trump, asking what he was up to. These are the six people who've written biographies. And one of them said, you know, maybe this is because he wants Putin's help because Putin, you know, is his only shot at winning the elections. So that's one sort of theory.

The other theory is that, you know, he genuinely sort of believes this. So I think that's his track record. I mean, I don't think anyone can find anything where he says something contrary to that, where he lays out all these concerns about Russia or he talks about the importance of NATO's core mission.

So I think that is significant because he would save himself a lot of grief if he just said two sentences on concern, and despite much prompting he hasn't done so. So that leads me to think that he does want a partnership, that he does see it as very transactional, that he really doesn't care about Eastern Europe or NATO. The one thing he seems to care about is ISIS and Syria, and he thinks Putin will help solve his problem there.

But the other thing I would just say in closing is that the leaks and all of this interference and that we've seen, I mean, people haven't really asked in terms of what that means if Trump was elected. Right? Because why do we assume that these

hackers, whoever they were, didn't also hack the RNC? Didn't also hack Trump? I mean, maybe they're just releasing what they have on the Democratic side. And so there is a question about -- you know, there's a whole question there in terms of what could come out afterwards and Putin's role in all of this and how that might affect a Trump administration.

And so I think it's a very sort of worrisome picture and they have a lot of questions to answer. I mean, this is an unprecedented situation. No one has ever run for President proposing sort of a partnership with an authoritarian regime and a major power before. That's never happened.

MS. HILL: Well, maybe not in the U.S., but it's certainly happened in other places.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah.

MS. HILL: I mean, sitting listening to this, you know, for many people in the audience probably it isn't actually really all that shocking. And I guess it's just shocking in the context of this particular presidential campaign when people have been expressing so many concerns, especially about the hacking and the implications of all of this and the confrontation with Russia overall.

But if you travel outside of the Beltway in Washington in the Northeast Corridor and get across America, and I've been doing a lot of that as many of my other colleagues have to, you know, various talks and meetings, there's a very strong sense of, yeah, Putin's the man. You know, kind of this is a strong leader and there's quite a bit of admiration. I have literally been in, you know, very different settings than this where people have come up to me and said, well, he's the guy, you know. I mean, we should have leaders like this, who push our interests, basically to the detriment of others and,

you know, basically are pushing these very strongly.

And when you get around Europe and outside of Europe, in the Middle East, you know, lots of travels, I was just in Turkey a week ago and in the Caucasus some time ago, where there's some trepidation about Putin and Russia. There's also kind of a feeling that there needs to be a strong hand. And even in places where there's quite a bit of concern about Russia and Russia's intention towards their own country, there's also a deep but grudging admiration about the way that Putin has been able to push, with a weak hand, Russia's interests very strongly.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, the way you're describing --

MS. HILL: So the idea is that Trump from the outside is trying to do the same thing, although people, I have to say, are very concerned about the idea of a Trump presidency nonetheless here in the U.S.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Oh, so you mean even in the same places around America where you're hearing Americans express grudging admiration or open admiration for Putin as a strong, authoritarian leader, those are not the same people who are themselves supporting Trump for President?

MS. HILL: No, outside of the U.S., it's a bit more complex.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Yeah.

MS. HILL: But inside the U.S., I've often found that there's an overlap.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: There's a (inaudible).

MS. HILL: But not always an overlap.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Interestingly, and this is getting a little off our topic, but I have seen that the one, I think it was a Pew study, that showed that the thing that is most important to you that's going to determine whether you like Trump or not is whether

you like authoritarian leaders. If you like authoritarian leaders, then you like Trump. They looked at a number of characteristics, but that was interesting.

All right. Well, let me ask you, though, Fiona, even if Trump loses the election, do you feel that his rhetoric on Russia is going to have a lasting overhang beyond this election or is it going to be overshadowed by other sort of more concrete issues, like the hacking of the emails and any potential election tampering, which U.S. intelligence agencies have warned about?

MS. HILL: Well, I think those two things have actually gone together because, as we may recall, part of that rhetoric has also included egging on --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Yeah, saying please.

MS. HILL: -- please, you know, (inaudible) --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Please, if you have the 30,000 emails, please release them.

MS. HILL: -- can you send them our way? And part of this is, you know, frankly, the way that we approach many of these issues in our own discourse about politics. Vladimir Putin rather pointedly said in an interview where he was asked about the hacking essentially, well, of course, we had nothing to do with it. But really, does it matter, you know, that this information was hacked? Doesn't it matter more about the content? I mean, that's kind of a paraphrase.

But this is the same line that Trump has taken. Who cares how we got all of this information? What really matters is the information.

So, look, I think this is part of our domestic debate about transparency here. You know, is this all in the public good for us to be having this debate if it can be also then manipulated by people from the outside? So I think this whole issue is going to

be with us for some time. It's not just going to be in the context of Russia. It's going to be in the context then of the way we ourselves discuss issues and deal with information.

And so I think we've got ourselves into quite a mess as a result of this election, and Russia is part of it. But it's not the only source, is it, of hacking? I mean, we're not really clear, let's be totally frank about it, as to who exactly has done the hacking.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Although something like 17 U.S. national security intelligence agencies have said, and actually not just with a high degree of --

MS. HILL: Exactly, but they can't say for sure, knowing something about this, who exactly ordered this. What we can be sure is if they were Russian hackers, they were not being reined in by the Kremlin. There was not any restraint here, so there's clearly an intent to let this play out for as long as it's got legs.

And then there's an awful lot of people who are, you know, jumping onto the bandwagon of this, as well, and just doing this themselves. I mean, there's a recent hack of a Russian official on some of their attitudes towards Ukraine that appears to have been done by sort of a self-appointed Internet vigilante. You know, we're getting an awful lot of that happening now, as well.

So that's what I say about we really kind of pushed this to a fairly large --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And the genie's out of the bottle.

MS. HILL: Yeah, the genie's completely out of the bottle. I mean, I would just recommend to everybody never send an email again. (Laughter)

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Yes.

MS. HILL: I mean, there was a recent column about emojis. I mean, I think that's what my emails are going to look like. You know, good luck on interpreting

them in the future. (Laughter) But I think we're really in this kind of space now where everything is fair game. And that's where we really have had a huge jump in this presidential election cycle.

During the Cold War there was a lot of this spy vs. spy. There was a good piece in Reuters recently about pointing out that the Soviet Union really tried to influence the election of Ronald Reagan by putting out information. We've got lots of evidence through the whole Soviet period, books have been written about this, about the ways that we've all tried to interfere in each other's politics. But social media and the Internet and the ubiquity of emails and cell phones sitting right next to yours here, you know, really just put the opportunities for mischief in a completely different space than they've ever been before, and everybody is basically involved in this.

So this genie is very much out of the bottle and this is not going to go away.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Agreed. All right. Well, let's set aside the hacking issue and the tampering issue for a moment, and let's drill down a bit on alliances.

And, Tom, I want to ask you because, you know, on the one hand, we certainly have some oppositional interests to Russia's. At the same time, they're not just out there to hack the U.S. election and hack Democratic email. They're also a regional actor with their own national interests in certain parts of the world, in Europe, in Asia, in the Middle East. So I wonder, in your view, is it possible that Russia will continue to challenge U.S. leadership in certain regions, like Europe and the Middle East, where it sees itself as having core national interests while perhaps engaging with the U.S. in a more cooperative way to counterbalance what both the U.S. and Russia see as a rising China?

MR. WRIGHT: That's a great question. I think Russia will continue to cooperate with the U.S. where its interests suggest it should and so the Iran nuclear deal was a good example. There were other issues, counterterrorism, maybe other issues, as well, where that cooperation will continue. And I think one of the important things is not to allow the tensions over Eastern Europe and Ukraine or in the Middle East to spill over onto all of these global issues.

That also works both ways, though. I think it's important that we don't let the need for cooperation on global issues crowd out the importance of pushing back regionally where there is disagreement.

China is an interesting case. I don't see really the U.S. and Russia cooperating on China. I mean, Russia has, I think, long-term concerns about the rise of China, but it views that as secondary to its confrontation with the West at the moment and has sort of, I think, had a dialogue with itself about relegating that to sort of second priority status for the time being. Although there are people in Russia who've written to the contrary and said that China is more of a problem. But I don't think that's where Putin is headed.

It's interesting how Putin is acting in Asia because, of course, he's trying to get closer to China. But he's not just trying to get closer to China, he's also trying to build a regional role for Russia and is working more closely with Japan, as well, in terms of the dialogue. And the Russian-Japanese dialogue, particularly over some of the outstanding issues from the Second World War, I think is one where the U.S. has been engaged, too, as sort of a cautious actor, sort of saying just be careful about going too far here. And so that sort of trilateral diplomacy I think will be interesting to watch because obviously Japan is a very important sort of key ally of the United States. And we're not

sort of talking about it this morning, but there are many issues in Asia where Japan will be crucial to rebuild -- well, not rebuilding, but deepening the alliances applies to all three regions, not just to Europe and to the Middle East.

So I think there will be a variety of issues. There will be some scope for cooperation, but there are these really large issues where there are divergence of interests. And that's sort of what worries me is in that first year on Ukraine, on Syria, on the cyber front, is there way to -- and also getting over the fact that Putin and Clinton don't like each other at all, you know --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Right.

MR. WRIGHT: -- which I think is a non-trivial dimension to this. How do we sort of establish a clear position to push back where it's necessary, but then get to some sort of stable equilibrium where there's predictability and stability?

MS. LAKSHMANAN: All right. Well, you know, you've talked about their very oppositional interests in Ukraine and in Syria and some other places. So let's sort of broaden the lens on this and let me just ask you more generally is Russia an existential threat to U.S., EU, and NATO interests? And are we entering a new Cold War?

MR. WRIGHT: I don't know if I'd go so far as to say existential threat, but I think there is a core problem there, which is in Europe, Russia sees the EU as a threat to its regime's interests. It sees the expansion of the EU and the color revolutions that it sees as sponsored by the U.S. and Europe as a real danger. And it's obviously pretty active within the European Union in trying to promote discord in some of these populous, more nationalist movements. And a strong European Union is a core U.S. interest and has been since the beginning of the EU. So that's, I think, one area where it's quite sort of complex, but you could say that there is a Russia dimension to the

problem that the EU has.

And then there's also the nuclear side, which is coming back as an issue that probably is more existential on both sides. So I don't think we're going back to a Cold War at all and I think it's really important not to sort of allow that frame to come back in because it's much more complex and multidimensional and there are areas for cooperation and even some interdependence with Russia, as well. But there is, I think, a competition and it's important to sort of manage that in a responsible way.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, competition is a positive frame for it. Cold War is the negative frame that we often hear.

Fiona, where do you come down on this? And then I want to ask you, you know, the major tool that the U.S. and the EU have used against Russia in the last several years, particularly over Ukraine, has been sanctions. You know, maybe they've been effective in tightening -- you know, putting pressure on Russia's economy. They have not been effective in terms of getting Russia to actually change its behavior. So if those crumble, either because there's a split between the U.S. and the EU or within the EU, what alternatives do we have? So first the Cold War question.

MS. HILL: Yeah, well, that's where I'd like to start, actually, because I think what Tom has presented is spot-on as an analysis from our perspective. If you flip it and look at the Russian perspective, they actually do believe that we are an existential threat to them and that this is something that has built up over a period of time.

And you just have to take a close look at Russia's military strategy, which has been evolving over the last decade. And you can see a strategy that's built on actually a strategic perspective on preemption. Russia sees a threat from the United States and from NATO on the conventional side and, of course, there is still the nuclear

dimension here. And the Russians love to remind everybody that they are still the one country that could basically destroy the United States in a nuclear war, but they're equally as mindful of the fact that --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: They could be destroyed.

MS. HILL: -- we could do the same. Russia has also put out a strategic perspective that in the future it wants to make sure that no more wars are fought on Russian territory. Now, you can actually -- so that's a fairly straightforward and completely understandable goal. Russia, unlike the United States, has had two major world wars fought on its territory to devastating effect, one bringing down the Russian empire and the second basically devastating the country in World War II with the big figure of 20 million people killed in the course of this war and, again, huge losses as well as eventually some gains of territory.

So the whole of the Russian military establishment is very much geared to figuring out how a local war could turn into a much larger conflict and then preemptively moving in. And you can see that in Ukraine and in Syria. And Russia is fighting two wars now with the West in it's view: with the United States directly in Ukraine and Syria. We just don't interpret it that way.

And it's the Russians who have been pushing out the frame of this idea of a Cold War 2.0. Because it's back to the idea of two superpowers, this is a G-2 idea, but in a military context, of the United States and Russia facing each other off certainly in this broader European theater, extending from Europe to the Middle East.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: But then, of course, it's not a G-2, it's a proxy war.

MS. HILL: Exactly.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: It's not cooperative in that.

MS. HILL: Exactly right. And then, you know, they've also pulled out the idea that Syria is like the Korean War in the 1950s. That's not how we've been describing it. So we have to understand how the other side is presenting things and we also have to see their own threat perceptions. So although we don't see it in this way, they certainly are seeing an existential threat from the United States that they're preemptively moving against, which is getting us constantly reacting to it.

So that then brings us to this question of Ukraine, Crimea, and all of the sanctions. I basically think that we have to put this again in a bigger context of what Russia is looking at.

I want to have a little bit of a nuance on what Tom said about China. China is a very important relationship for Russia vis-à-vis the way that they think they can react to the United States. They do worry about China over the longer term, but they also want to kind of create as much of a strategic partnership with China as possible.

Where they're the weakest is in the Asia Pacific and in the Arctic, as well as in their soft underbelly, which is Central Asia, and China is now in all of those places. Asia Pacific, China's the dominant power. The G-2 there is with the United States. In the Arctic, China is already making forays there. A lot of the Russian military buildup is against the idea that other like China may start to make claims on international waters and positions in the Arctic. And similarly, in Central Asia, China's the other dominant power in that region, no longer Russia.

So on the issue of Ukraine and Crimea, as Tom said, Russia has no desire actually to change -- and you've suggested this as well -- change its position. It does want to get rid of the sanctions. And what Russia is trying to do right now is weaken the sanctions regime not just in Europe, but also, the sanctions are G-7

sanctions, not just Europe and the United States, and the other player in the G-7 is Japan.

Japan has a serious concern about its relationship with China. Japanese leaders will describe China now as the most serious existential threat to them since 1945. The Russians are very well aware of this feeling of vulnerability and they're playing upon that. Everything that we see now in this back-and-forth between Japan and Russia on their baggage left over from World War II and their territorial dispute and the lack of a peace treaty is being driven by the hope that Japan can be --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Peeled off.

MS. HILL: -- peeled off and its anxiety about will the United States still be there as its guarantor of the alliance in the Asia Pacific, you know, whether they can exploit that, too, to basically play on Japan's anxiety to peel it away somewhat from the alliance structure. And also, more importantly, in the meantime, peel it away from sanctions.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, in the same way that Tom said that one of the first orders of business if Hillary Clinton is elected is going to be going around reassuring traditional U.S. allies, such as Gulf States, you know, Saudi Arabia, Israel. I am sure that one of the first things she will do is be reassuring Japan.

MS. HILL: I agree, yeah.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And on her first trip as Secretary of State, which I went on with her as a reporter, you know, Tokyo was her literally first stop as Secretary of State, you know, emphasizing the importance of that treaty alliance and its centrality to U.S. foreign policy.

Okay, I want to be able to get to some of the questions that we got in

advance from the audience.

MS. HILL: Right.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: But before we do that, Tom, I want to just switch gears to Brexit, since you've worked on this topic a lot, and say, all right, so if Hillary Clinton wins the election or, for that matter, Donald Trump, what have they each said about working with Britain after Brexit? And how could either one of them as President help shape the future of U.S. with Europe given the Brexit situation that nobody knows exactly how it's going to unfold?

MR. WRIGHT: Right. I don't think Donald Trump knows much about Brexit except that it was a surprise result, so he loves it because of that. (Laughter) So he keeps call us up, Mr. Brexit, but it's not because of anything to do with the substance. It's just because he --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And because Nigel Farage is his new best friend.

MR. WRIGHT: And Nigel Farage is his new best friend. Although when Farage went to the RNC, he said, well, I feel sort of left wing here. This is a surprising environment.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Although Nigel Farage at the second debate said that Donald Trump dominated Hillary like a silverback gorilla, so.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, yeah. So a match made in heaven, those two.

I think a Clinton administration will want to be helpful to both Britain and to the European Union. And their position probably will be, since traditional U.S. foreign policy has always had a strong Europe as a core sort of interest and goal, I'm sure that they will say, look, we can be helpful in this and we want to see a Brexit that succeeds for Britain and Britain come out of this independent and strong, but also that the EU comes

out of it strong, as well. And so you have this win-win situation for both.

The tricky part is what does that mean in practice? And what I think has been sort of interesting in terms of the UK position is that they don't have anything really that they want from the U.S., right, that there's no ask out there in terms of a role that the U.S. can play.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: From the Brexit-ers.

MR. WRIGHT: From the Brexit-ers. I'll get onto trade in one second, but just as a general sort of diplomatic thing it's not sort of obvious what the United States can do and Britain certainly doesn't seem to have a clear sort of notion of what a U.S. role would be. Now, there is a quiet diplomacy, I think, that could be helpful and sort of appealing to both the EU and the UK to have the better angels of their nature prevail in terms of dealing with each other and to avoid maybe some very hardline and counterproductive positions. But beyond that it's sort of still murky in terms of what it'll be.

In terms of trade, there is this FTA idea in terms of the UK and the U.S., but it is -- and I think that will be very appealing. It's already appealing on the Hill and there's a major move amongst Republicans to endorse it. But very little is known about it beyond the top line sort of name of a free trade agreement because there's already a lot of trade between the United States and the UK. So one question is what would it be about and would it really have sort of bang of the buck in being a benefit to Britain or is it purely symbolic? And then trade is very difficult to get through anyway at the moment and there's the whole issue of TTIP and the UK's relationship in that and whether TTIP is reworked or abandoned or revived.

So I think it's very sort of unclear, but there is -- I'm pretty sure there will

be good will there from a Democratic administration. You know, I mean, Trump is an unknown. I think Republicans on the Hill are also have a lot of good will, as well, to try to make this work if possible.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: All right. I'm going to ask for short answers for the new several questions so that we can get through some of the ones that audience members were good enough to submit in advance.

So Amelia San Miguel asks aside from taking the Donald Trump route and threatening that we will abandon our allies, what tools do U.S. leaders have to incentivize our allies to actually pay more for their security, especially in NATO?

MS. HILL: Well, I think that the debate that we've been having during the presidential election and also comments from President Obama, many people here will recall his extensive interview with Jeffrey Goldberg in *The Atlantic*, for example, but other comments that he's made about his frustration often with allies I think has already sent a pretty clear signal. Certainly, in meetings that I've been at in Europe --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: "Free riders" was the term he used.

MS. HILL: -- that message has really got across. I think a lot of it gets back to some of the travails that Tom has been flagging in the European Union now with Brexit as to, you know, whether the big hits to European economies are really going to be affecting their defense budgets, particularly in the case of Brexit. I mean, the UK had made a commitment to 2 percent of GDP being spent on defense, but this could be 2 percent of a much lower GDP as a result of the economic hits that have already been experienced in the last several months, but that certainly could be prolonged over a period of time.

We also have a head of us in 2017 four big elections in Europe, two

bigger than the others: in Germany and France than the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. And all of these issues about defense and security will be on those election rosters. So it's going to be pretty hard for the United States to really get its allies to focus on building at least defense, even though I think that there is really a realization now, within NATO for sure, of the allies that they have to step up.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Okay. I like this question from audience member Bokten Balie, who says how does the United States balance support for domestic reform in other countries where the U.S. doesn't have the leverage to deter or challenge other local powers militarily? Thoughts?

MR. WRIGHT: Could you read it again? Sorry.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Yeah, I think the question is really saying, so the United States wants to help reform in other countries, you know, countries that may be undergoing democratic reform, but we don't have the leverage. I think this person may be thinking about Ukraine or Eastern Europe, that, you know, you want to support democratic movements, but then you can't actually deter Russia, for example, from going in and stopping a color revolution, for example.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. I mean, it's a big dilemma and I think it is a problem. The issue, though, would be that if you say there's nothing that can be done, then it will probably make it much worse. And so I think in somewhere like Ukraine it's important to engage as much as possible for reform even if there are these external constraints because of external intervention. But it's true that as long as there is an external threat to a country like Ukraine, domestic or foreign, would be very difficult because a country like Russia has too many levers that it can pull.

I do think it's a general rule promoting reform works best when the local

actors want it and, you know, that's not the case everywhere. It is the case in a couple of places. And so finding that moment of rightness, like where is -- you know, rather than treating this as a general policy rule that has to be applied everywhere, how do we take moments of opportunity where there is an opening for reform? To back it and to take advantage of that moment I think is sort of one of the key things that the next administration should look for.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Okay. Vijendra Kumar wants to know which countries would it be important for the U.S. to cooperate with in maintaining an international liberal order given that the U.S. still supports so many authoritarian regimes?

MS. HILL: Well, that's, of course, the big question in our foreign policy and, you know, I think she gets into the response to the last question, as well. You know, one of the reasons that sometimes we're just not very effective about supporting reforms in other countries is precisely because we often then support authoritarian regimes based on interpretations of our national interest. I mean, it's certainly the case of before the Arab Spring and before the domestic upheavals there that we were, you know, perfectly satisfied with dealing with many of the leaders at the top of those countries until the political crisis emerged.

I think this is going to have to be another part of our ongoing foreign policy debates here as to how we handle this and then how we actually show that we do stand by our values and principles on reform and on good governance. It's the perpetual challenge of American foreign policy and it's always the one that actually, in many respects, undercuts some of our own positions and efforts to promote better governance around the world.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: In both Democratic and Republican administrations.

MS. HILL: It's an equal problem. This is kind of an overall problem, frankly, actually, of anybody's foreign policy. I think if we could look at most --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: In any country.

MS. HILL: Most countries they have that same dilemma. It's the perpetual kind of response of, oh, this son of a bitch, you know, kind of any idea.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Yes.

MS. HILL: I can't remember who first called him that, but it was something like that.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Was it Henry Kissinger?

MS. HILL: Yes, exactly.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And maybe someone can remind us who he was talking about. Oh, I know, he was talking about the Pakistani leader at the time, Zia-ul-Haq, and he said he's a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch. That's apparently what he said. Okay. Someone can Google and check if I'm right, but I think that's right.

MS. HILL: Yeah, we'll probably get a quick feedback you're not quite right (inaudible). Yeah, exactly.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: But I think that's right if my memory serves.

All right. Well, I have a question of my own that brings back the sort of domestic politics and its intersection with foreign policy, and that is we've got this growing populist, nationalist sentiment in the U.S. Even if Donald Trump doesn't win, the polls are showing about 40 percent support for him and for those ideas. Will that trend and theme in American domestic politics, you know, will that fight against efforts to maintain or build

up our traditional alliances or is that going to fade away? Is that domestic nationalism really more about trade and immigration and less about our conduct of foreign policy?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I think it's always been there. What's interesting about this campaign is that -- and maybe it's stronger this cycle than before, but what's really notable is that Trump has chosen to tap into it. Most nominees do not choose to tap into it to this extent. You know, they have a sense of limits or they have a sense of what the appropriate policy is and so they walk up to the line, but they don't really go across it. You know, Ted Cruz is the first candidate to describe his foreign policies, America First. He said it first in a debate last fall.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, it actually is a term that dates back to Nazi appeasers.

MR. WRIGHT: No, I know that, but, I mean, he's the first one in this cycle --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: In this cycle who used that term.

MR. WRIGHT: -- to say that. I mean, yeah.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Before Donald Trump did.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, of course, but he's the first one to say that in terms of tapping into that old tradition. But even he did not then go and say that he is opposed to NATO or that he wanted to pull out of alliances. And so what I'm trying to say is that in general political leaders are cognizant of those limits and Trump has not been and he has really tried to ramp this up. And I think we've seen, you know, the reaction.

The question is whether or not future Republicans that are trying to -- or maybe even Democrats who are trying to tap into that populist wave, do they have the same sense of no limits, that they will just try to drive a truck through all of this, or do they

try to tap into it, but they still want to be in NATO, they still want to be in the alliances, they still want an internationalist position? And I have no idea. You know, I could see a plausible story for either outcome, but I don't know what they will do.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Right.

MR. WRIGHT: In terms of Clinton administration, I think it will be a constraint. It's always a constraint on the economic front and trade. But at the risk of, you know, having this sound like a cliché, I mean, it depends whether or not their policy is successful. If they get success, then I think a lot of people will be less motivated by the populism. But if they fail in key spots, then it will probably exacerbate it and, you know, we will see this return of this sort of isolationism.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Well, hasn't some of that populism, though, been based on this sense that others need to pull their weight? You mentioned the Jeffrey Goldberg article and where President Obama himself talked about free riders. Just very quickly, do you think that Donald Trump has hit onto something? Do our allies need to contribute more money to their defense either through the U.S. security umbrellas that we give to Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, or the NATO umbrella? Do others need to contribute more?

MS. HILL: Well, I think actually they do. And we need to actually have a serious dialogue with our allies about this. And, you know, you mentioned the Philippines, I mean, here's the perfect example of where we could very easily be getting taken advantage of because we have a new leader in the Philippines who feels that he can basically go out and insult the United States and gauge as he sees fit, but still then be able to kind of walk things back and keep the alliance structure as it is. And, you know, frankly, we've been experiencing that in many other settings. The point of this,

also, is that populism is alive and kicking in so many other settings that, you know, really we're part of a very similar wave of everyone trying to focus in on their own national narrow interests, and the leader of the Philippines is doing exactly that.

Brexit is a very similar issue. And I think, you know, that could be a very cautionary tale for the United States. This was driven not by just a fringe of UKIP, but by a very strong streak within the Conservative Party and also the grassroots of Labor have a feeling of Britain First. You know, they're talking about a global Britain, Britain going back to kind of stringent of some mercantile routes, but also of a fortress Britain cutting itself off from Europe and the waves of migrants and refugees coming in.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And not wanting to pay the bill --

MS. HILL: And not wanting --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: -- for people who come in.

MS. HILL: Correct, correct.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: But then that brings me back to the other question, which is if we say that allies should be carrying more of their own weight, paying more of their own freight, then why shouldn't Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia develop their own nuclear deterrents? Why shouldn't they have their own nuclear weapons to defend themselves?

MS. HILL: Well, and that's actually the space that we're in now. I mean, there are discussions in other countries now about precisely that issue. So, I mean, we're really going to have a very crowded agenda for a new President to deal with about alliances. We're going to be unpacking, I think -- and we have a colleague here at Brookings, Steve Pifer, who has just written a new report on the other powers, the third powers, nuclear powers, and their stances -- these kind of questions about whether other

countries will also seek a nuclear weapon. That's been a debate in the Middle East, obviously, as the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has picked up. It's one of the reasons, of course, why the Obama administration wanted to move ahead very quickly on curbing and constraining Iran's nuclear program, so there wasn't then further proliferation of nuclear weapons programs around the region. They wanted to try to keep the genie in the bottle while we're so focused on what's happening in North Korea.

We've basically got a whole situation here where an awful lot of our allies and traditional partners are hedging, looking to put their own issues first and trying to think about how they can basically promote positions because of uncertainty about where their relationship with the United States lies or, in some cases, because they see that perhaps their interests lie in a different direction. So I think we're at that big inflection point now where we're going to have to address a lot of our alliances and a lot of our relationships.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And nice plug for your colleague Steve Pifer, who is a nuclear expert and former U.S. nuclear official, for his paper, which you can find on the Brookings website and I also Tweeted a link to it.

MS. HILL: Oh, good, thank you.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: -- @DRL, so you can find it there, too.

So, all right, quick lightning round as we wrap up. And I'm going to ambush you with this question, which is rank the three most important alliances to the United States that the next President has to be either mending or dealing with. Go. Whoever wants to go first.

MR. WRIGHT: Fiona.

MS. HILL: I say Europe first because it's our longest traditional standing

alliance.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And by Europe you mean EU or do you mean NATO?

MS. HILL: Well, what I mean there is actually a set of mutually reinforcing alliances. It can't just be NATO because so many countries have fallen out of NATO and are not likely to be in NATO either in the European context. The European Union is in trouble, but we also then have within that the OSC and other institutions, so it's looking at Europe and our --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Writ large.

MS. HILL: -- transatlantic partnership writ large and figuring out how we can reinforce that relationship with the institutional arrangements we have.

Then the G-7 I think is -- it hasn't really --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Not the G-8? (Laughter)

MS. HILL: Well, let's just say the G-7 for now, you know, because these things can be flexible and I hope will evolve in time. That also gives us a link over through Japan to the Asia Pacific, and I think that that has to be a good second. And I think if we can get those two sets of alliances' pillars set up, then we can move on more broadly.

Obviously our own hemisphere with Canada and Mexico --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: So that's Europe, that's G-7 --

MS. HILL: -- is also pretty important.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: It's Europe, G-7, and who are you putting in third place?

MS. HILL: I'm putting the alliance in the Asia Pacific --

MS. LAKSHMANAN: And the Asia Pacific in certain places.

MS. HILL: -- as a link through the G-7.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Okay. Tom?

MR. WRIGHT: So very briefly, I think the three major alliances that there's some prospect for deepening and in one case repairing are Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Japan. And the three ones that I think will have a crisis or break and be very problematic are Turkey, the Philippines, and Egypt.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Wow. Wow.

MS. HILL: Yeah, well, I agree with those on the individual level.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: I wish we had another hour to talk about those, the three that are at crisis point.

All right. Well, I want to thank everyone for coming out early this morning or tuning into the live stream early this morning, and hearing from Fiona and Tom about their recommendations. You can read more on the Brookings website from their papers. And also, for our podcast audience, the tape of this is going to be available through the Brookings Intersections or Brookings Cafeteria podcast, and you just have to look for Brookings in your podcast app.

And please come back and join us next week for breakfast again on Tuesday morning, when we're going to be doing the fourth in our Election 2016 series, Big Problems, Big Questions: An Agenda for the Next President. We'll be talking with Darrell West and Robert McKenzie about violent extremism in America and abroad.

Thanks and have a great day. (Applause)

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