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THE END OF EUROPE:  
DICTATORS, DEMAGOGUES, AND THE COMING DARK AGE

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

MR. WRIGHT: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Wright; I'm a fellow at the Center for the United States and Europe here at Brookings and director of the Project in International Order and Strategy. I'm delighted to welcome everyone here today for a really terrific event with Jamie Kirchick, for this book, "The End of Europe: Dictators, Demagogues, and the Coming Dark Age." It's a really terrific read. I read it a couple of weeks ago and it really captures I think the sense of multiple crises in Europe, simultaneous crises that have really all occurred within the last seven or eight years. Jamie is a great writer and he goes through several of those cases, from country to country, having spent quite a bit of time in Europe over the last few years.

So Jamie is going to speak for about 15 minutes or so to outline some of the major arguments of the book, because I think everyone knows Jamie is a fellow with the Foreign Policy Initiative. He has written very widely for a large number of publications, including The New Republic, The Daily Beast, New York Daily News, and the New York Sun.

So after Jamie finishes his presentation we'll have a panel to discuss the book; my colleagues, Bob Kagan, senior fellow with the Project on International Order and Strategy, Leon Wieseltier, a senior fellow at Brookings, and Constanze Stelzenmüller, also a senior fellow at Brookings with the Center for the U.S. and Europe. And so I know there's a lot to discuss, not just Jamie's book, but also the events of the day. Even tomorrow, we have Chancellor Merkel, visiting here in Washington, weather permitting. Today we have the second Scottish independence referendum announced. So after a period where it seemed like history had ended in Europe it's well and truly back and we couldn't be joined by better people to discuss that.

So, without further ado, Jamie, please come to the stage. Thank you.

MR. KIRCHICK: Thank you, Tom, and thank you to the entire team here at Brookings, in particular, Will Moreland who set this up, and Bruce Jones.

A specter is haunting Europe, the specter of populous nationalism, ideologically indeterminate it manifests across the continent in the form of France's right wing national front, the post-communist German left party, and the Italian five star movement, which defies any customary political label. While these parties and the intellectual currents to which they give voice may not align on

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everything they are invariably anti establishment, opposed to the European Union, and hostile to America. They are also all supported either materially or through less tangible instruments by Russia. This is not incidental. As Europe's political stability, social cohesion, economic prosperity, and security are more threatened today than at any point since the Cold War, Russia is destabilizing the continent on every front. Indigenous factors, whether long existence, nationalism, design flaws in the Eurozone, the lack of a common foreign policy, or the inability to assimilate immigrants, certainly lay at the root of these crises. But all are exploited by Moscow and exacerbated by its maligned influence. Fomenting European disintegration from within, Russia also presents a threat from without in the form of its massive military buildup, frequent intimidation of NATO members, and efforts to overturn the continent's security architecture by weakening the trans-Atlantic alliance. Yet just in the moment, when the west requires unity, it is disintegrating. Brexit foretells the potential demise of the European Union, a democratic bulwark to Russia's predatory strategy of divide and conquer.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic the American people have chosen a president who abjures his country's traditional role as the lynchpin of the liberal world order and who wishes to ally with the very power threatening to dismantle it. Unlike any American president of the post war age, Donald Trump's 19th century worldview seems to accord with the Russian sphere of influence in Europe. For the next four years, at least, it is an open question as to whether there will be any American leadership to corral Europeans against Russian aggressive and subversion. On the contrary, President Trump wants to gain Moscow's partnership in pivoting back to the Middle East, a strategic realignment that may sacrifice European security as the cost of Russian collaboration.

The title of my book references not the dissolution of the European Union or something so catastrophic as a war, although these are real if remote possibilities, but, rather, something more ethereal and imaginable: the slow gradual reversion to the European state of nature prior to the post war integration project and the rise of amoral, prostrate, nationalist governments that no longer project the liberal values upon which the Euro-Atlantic community is grounded, and that are willing to engage in a purely transactional relationship with the Russians.

Should the end of Europe I presage come to pass, it will be the fault of apathetic Europeans, absent Americans, and aggressive Russians. Now, unlike the Cold War, Russia today seeks

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not the military and political domination of Europe through the advance of the Red Army or the spread of communist ideology, but, rather, a resetting of the continent's security order. The Kremlin tries to achieve this through meddling in European and America politics so as to install governments acquiescent to its primary objective, supplanting the values driven, rules based system with what Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov recently called a "post western world order," where in might makes right. Moscow seeks nothing less than a reversal of the momentous historical processes began in 1989 when Central and Eastern Europeans peacefully reclaimed their freedom after decades of Russian imposed tyranny. Because the European Union and NATO are obstacles in the reassertion of this hegemony Moscow's long-term strategy is to undermine and ultimately break these institutions from within, thereby neutralizing the concert of nations that has traditionally been necessary to restrain Russian expansion on the continent. The Kremlin's ideal outcome is the Finlandization of the entire western world, whereby Europe and America abandon their principles, sacrifice their allies, and accommodate Kremlin prerogatives without Russia having to dispatch a single soldier abroad.

In Western Europe today Russia hopes to achieve, by nonviolent means, what the Soviet Union once did in Eastern Europe through force of arms, overthrow democratic governments. For a West that is divided, inert, and unsure of its own basic values, is not one that will resist Russia's revisionist agenda. If a peaceful and prosperous Europe is a core national security interest of the United States, and has been for the past 80 years, the Russian regime is one to be resisted and contained. The road to a Europe whole, free, and at peace, in other words, goes through Moscow.

Across the West Russia is pushing on open doors, exploiting fears over Islam, economic inertia, and anxieties wrought by globalization to nudge Western publics in a more Russia-sympathetic direction. Finely attuned to the particular grievances of a diverse array of constituencies in the West, Russia narratives find fertile ground in Europe, where the resentment over the Iraq War, fallout from the financial crisis, fears over the challenges brought by Muslim immigration, and revelations of national security agency surveillance continue to breed discontent with the political establishment.

Beginning with President Trump, many Western leaders have difficulty accepting the strategic necessity of treating Russia like the pariah it is. They labor under the illusion that it's our own hubris, our arrogance, post-Cold War imposition of security and political arrangements on an

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emasculated post-Soviet Russia that is primarily standing in the way of good relations and not Russian behavior. This credulity extends, I might add, to the previous administration, many of whose members have suddenly awoken to the paramount threat that Russia poses to our security and values, and to our engaging in a bout of selective amnesia regarding their own solicitousness to Moscow while condemning the current president for his promises to "get along with Russia."

Like the titular leader of the free world, a fair number of political elites stuck in a mindset that still considers Russia a potential partner, bend over backwards to explain Russian conduct as the predictable and not entirely unjustified reaction of an encircled power whose interests need to be respected. They counsel that we bend the rules of the international liberal order to the claims of a revisionist power that wants to overturn it completely.

Shorn of Marxism-Leninism, the Kremlin today is driven by an ideologically versatile illiberalism willing to work with any political faction amenable to its aims. Whereas once Moscow allied with communists and their fellow travelers, now it can also count upon a growing number of sympathizers on the right. Russia has reverted to its place as -- in the words of Paul Berman -- "the historical center of world reaction." The avatar of this Kremlin friendly conservative is Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who over the last quarter century has undergone one of the most remarkable transformations in European politics, from that of a liberal anti-communist firebrand to Vladimir Putin's closest ally in the EU. Despite being the leader of a country that was once brutally invaded and occupied by the Soviet Union, Orbán is the most vocal internal opponent of EU sanctions placed on Russia. And he also aligns with the Kremlin on a more profound level, championing what he calls a liberal democracy, and just two weeks ago, ethnic homogeneity, as well as echoing Russian promulgated narratives on Western decline and the threat to Europe posed by an undifferentiated Islamic peril.

The embrace of Putin by Western leaders like Trump, Orbán, and Marine Le Pen, represents the culmination of an insidious years-long cultivation of the global right. One of the most potent narratives Russia has weaponized in this regard is that of a Judeo-Christian civilization in Europe under siege from a rising Islamic threat. As spheres of demographic and societal change have taken hold in parts of Europe, traditionally most resistant to Russian meddling, like Central and Eastern Europe, Russia has suddenly insinuated itself into Western politics to an extent unprecedented since the collapse

of the Soviet Union, finding allies in the unlikeliest of places.

That the issue of Islam in Europe has been exploited by Russia, however, shouldn't prevent us from having an honest conversation about its challenges. A recent poll commissioned by Chatham House found that over half of respondents in eight out of ten European countries favor an outright ban on Muslim immigration entirely, the same exact position that was proposed by Donald Trump during the campaign. This shocking figure demonstrates a massive gap between the lofty language of European elites and average citizens. To ensure that this gap does not grow, and that the populous espousing such extreme positions, like Geert Wilders, do not come to power. The Western political mainstream needs to create the space for an inclusive liberal nationalism in their countries that is capable of addressing questions about the place of Islam in European societies so that the cause of national identity is not hijacked by unscrupulous demagogues, tackling the problem of parallel societies, banning the face veil, or even lowering immigration from some Muslim majority countries. If mere discussion of these issues is treated as a concession to fascism, I believe it is the fascists who will reap the benefits.

In response to Brexit, the American election, and the rise of populists across the continent, many in the West are beginning to question the assumptions upon which the post war liberal order stands. While introspection is necessary, we do not need to rethink first principles. Protectionism remains wrong, both morally and economically. NATO remains the bedrock of our security, no matter how many times certain individuals call it obsolete. The post war international system has benefitted America enormously; it is not a rip-off. Minister Lavrov's call for a post Western world order is not new. Russian leaders have frequently floated proposals aimed at deluding the Western led system by incorporating a nondemocratic Russia into its structures. Increasingly, these calls for reassessing the liberal world order are finding an audience on this side of the ocean, where voices posit that it has outlived its usefulness. In a combination of astonishing historical illiteracy and sinister prophecy, the president's senior counselor says that he wants to make the world "as exciting as the 1930s" and that "strong nationalist movements in countries make strong neighbors." Meanwhile, a leading figure in what passes for the pro-Trump intellectual movement, who now serves as a high-ranking national security official, asks of NATO, what is the alliance for once its original purpose has evaporated. The original purpose of NATO was, as we all know, to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans

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down. With the exception of that last part about Germany, whose neighbors want it to play a more assertive role in the defense of the continent and the alliance, the founding rationale for the Atlantic alliance endures. The fundamentals remain. The arrangements we have are working. They need strengthening, not redesign.

To avert catastrophe it is imperative that the United States pivot back to Europe. For all the hype about a rising Asia, Europe is America's most important ally with whom we share values and interests. Abandoning Europe at this time would create a political and security vacuum on the continent. While Russia today may not be nearly as strong a power as it was during the Cold War, the threat it poses is more diffused. In a globalized world, where the cancerous influence of Russian money and disinformation can more easily corrupt us than when an Iron Curtain divided the continent, and where the ideological terrain is more confusing than the Cold War's bipolar rigidity, containing Russia presents different challenges than it did a generation ago, not the least of which is maintaining Western unity against a more ambiguous adversary skilled at fighting asymmetrically. Never during the Cold War, for instance, was there such a dramatic break within the Western political alliance as Britain's departure from the EU, nor for that matter did an overtly pro-Russian candidate ever capture the presidency of the United States.

A genuinely democratic Russia would feel no threat from Europe and thus lack the impulse to debase and disrupt it. To be sure, the illiberal movements currently roiling the EU would exist regardless of Russia, as anyone remotely familiar with European history can attest. But only absent the revisionist regime in Moscow is a Europe whole, free, and at peace possible.

Thank you. (Applause)

MR. KAGAN: Welcome all to this panel discussion following Jamie's terrific opening presentation. As someone who has already read the book I can tell you it's a terrific read, it's an easy read, but it's also highly informative. And although it has a kind of dark title, I think there is a call for some effort and hope on our part.

We've already introduced our astonishingly wonderful panel. Let me begin by asking Jamie, I think someone might say -- I mean you sort of allude to it, but you put so much emphasis on the Russian threat but obviously a lot of these problems in Europe preexist Russian meddling. They provide

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an opportunity for Russia, but the problems are real. The refugee crisis obviously is a big part of this. Russia is partly responsible for it, but obviously not solely responsible for it. Brexit certainly was not something that the Russians did. Loss of faith in EU institutions, the charge that they are not democratic enough, et cetera. I could go on. There's plenty of difficulty in Europe irrespective of Russia.

Now one of your suggestions is the United States needs to get more involved, pivot back to Europe. Setting aside for a second what that would mean vis-a-vis Russia, what would it mean vis-a-vis Europe? I mean what is it that you think the United States can and should be doing in Europe to address some of these problems?

MR. KIRCHICK: I think supporting more political cohesion so that Europe can act as a geostrategic power is what's most important. I mean it's not for Americans to decide the degree to which there's Eurozone integration or, you know, all of the matters that they deal with in the European Parliament. But I think we need a departure from the rhetoric that's come from this current White House that a united Europe -- it's politically united, it's not a competitor or an adversary of the United States, which I think a lot of us in this town suspected around the time of the Iraq war when there was obviously a lot of disagreement between what Donald Rumsfeld referred to as old Europe and the United States. And that Europe as a political actor is an ally of the United States. It's a force multiplier. Nothing that the United States has ever done in history that's been successful has been done without Europe. And so I think that's the message that needs to come out of America now. It appears that it's the complete opposite that we're hearing.

MR. KAGAN: Well, just to follow up, I mean obviously the problems that have arisen in Europe pre-date Trump substantially. And, in fact, arguably grew severe years before, but certainly before Trump even was a nominee. So, you know, what was it that the United States should have been doing, according to you, that it wasn't doing at a time when you didn't have a president who was sort of even -- or who had advisors who seem to be overtly hostile to the European project? You had someone who was presumably sympathetic to European project. So what went wrong?

MR. KIRCHICK: I think you can be sympathetic to the European project but not exert leadership. And I think that's what we saw during the Obama years. If you look at the Ukraine crisis, we sort of delegated that to Germany and France to deal with. There really wasn't much --



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MR. KAGAN: And they just messed it up.

MR. KIRCHICK: I'm not saying they messed it up, but I think --

MR. KAGAN: I'm just setting up Constanze here. (Laughter)

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Really? And so gracefully and unnoticeably.

MR. KAGAN: I'm always graceful.

MR. KIRCHICK: I think it's very difficult to have European politician cohesion on these fundamental questions without the U.S. playing a leadership role because fundamentally the differences in national interests are going to emerge between Germany and France and Poland and whatnot. Those differences will metastasize, I think, in the absence of U.S. leadership. And I think that that's what we saw over a lot of the Obama years.

MR. KAGAN: Okay, great. All right. So, Constanze --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yes, dear?

MR. KAGAN: -- First of all, before you leap into that particular issue, I think we'd all love to get a German perspective on this whole landscape that Jamie has described. You know, does it look different? Are attitudes towards Russia -- and obviously you have to speak for a broad spectrum of opinion in Germany, but if you had to -- sort of -- find the sort of essence -- are attitudes toward Russia different than that? Are attitudes towards what's happening in the rest of Europe different than how Jamie describes it, and are attitudes toward the U.S.'s role, as Jamie describes, are those different in Germany?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: That could be a separate event. But I also want to agree with you that this is a fabulous panel. It's kind of the thesis defense from hell panel (laughter) for Jamie here. And let's make sure it is that.

So Germany. You know, I obviously read that chapter with particular interest and I think my take on it is that -- and, by the way, it's exceptionally well written -- I recognize a lot of it but I don't recognize all of it. And I think it's sort of -- the main issue I would take with your argument is that you think -- I think you leave things out that are perhaps slightly more sunny and thereby detract from the bleakness of your argument.

MR. KIRCHICK: The good thing about being a pessimist is that occasionally I can be happy, and it's a surprise. (Laughter)

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Exactly. So let me try and make that case, although I know it's hard in this town because these narratives are really, really sticky. I think to take issue first with what Bob was saying -- or actually you were saying -- on Barack Obama delegating to Europe. You know, my impression really was that the White House saw this as a case of finally taking off the training wheels and saying, people, you have to be able to do this on your own -- go. And I think that that was gratefully received, particularly in Berlin. There had been a sense for quite a while that this trans-Atlantic relationship was in a state of unhealthy codependency and that this needed to end because we needed to have adult conversations about these issues. So I don't share your take on the White House's relationship with Europe. From what I saw living in Berlin until 2014, for 10 years, was that the relationship was, while often at odds over issues, was exceptionally close and cooperative in style. And actually Merkel and Obama, who had started off sort of warily circling each other, I think by the end had developed a really close and personal friendship, cordially. Again, the Germans have been -- you can fault them on many things, the German government at any rate. You can fault them on style, you can fault them on substance, you can fault them on never thinking quite far ahead enough or planning far ahead enough. And I could go into great detail here on the refugee crisis, on the Greek bailout, on the handling of the Minsk agreement, and so on. But the fact remains that we are backstopping much of the Eurozone crisis with real financial contributions, we are holding together the Russia sanctions and that at real cost to German business. And, you know, while our decision to open Germany's borders to refugees created a sort of giant sucking sound that led to follow on knock on effects for German and European politics and indeed the politics of the trans-Atlantic countries, at the same time if we hadn't done that we would also have created a disaster. So sometimes it's damned if you do and damned if you don't.

As to German attitudes, I think I see something that you sort of don't mention in your chapter, which is a genuine attempt by German policy makers to say to the German public and to German citizens; this is really the time when we have to pick up the ball here. You've seen a German defense review, a German foreign policy review that tries to be much more imaginative and forward leaning. You've seen an eight percent increase in German defense budgets without people rioting in the streets, something that would have been unimaginable only a short time ago. And people really are very angry at Russian meddling because of Crimea, because of Ukraine, because of meddling in Eastern

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European member states of NATO and the EU, but also meddling in the German political space and the meddling with the European political project.

And, finally, one thing I do want to say, you're right to say the Russians don't create vulnerabilities, we created those vulnerabilities. We let them happen. There is a little bit of an American role in that too, but I think sort of most enlightened citizens that I know of Germany and Europe would say yeah, we need to address those vulnerabilities and then the Russians will have less purchase. Very simple.

MR. KAGAN: Leon, you're kind of a critic of Donald Trump. (Laughter) But I have heard an argument that despite a lot of rhetoric and interesting interviews that certain individuals may have had in the Vatican at one time, if you look at what the Trump administration has actually done, they haven't done anything to undermine Europe. They haven't pulled out of NATO, they have in fact expressed their endorsement and support of NATO, they even choked out an endorsement of the EU ultimately when asked to do so by Merkel I think. So what's the problem?

MR. WIESELTIER: Well, let me begin by saying that in my view Donald Trump is shy, enigmatic and cruelly misunderstood. (Laughter) Look, I think that if we want to talk about Trump for a minute and not Europe, but --

MR. KAGAN: Well, it's Trump and Europe.

MR. WIESELTIER: Yeah, yeah, but look, right now we have the spectacle which we may have to endure for four years of an administration that is more or less incoherent in foreign policy and whose actions in foreign policy -- when they do the right things I always think we caught a lucky break. In other words, you know, you take the example of the phone call with Taiwan. I mean I'm a Taiwan nut and I was very happy about that call until I realized it must have been a butt call and then it turned (laughter) out that it wasn't a butt call because Bob Dole had been lobbying for the call. And then so it looked like terrific, and then all of China went crazy and then within 20 minutes Trump says well, okay, if we do fair trade negotiations then we can talk about Taiwan. So he went from positing a really dramatic and -- in my view, and I know it's heretical and I'm in the minority here -- a morally justified revision to our China policy to treating the object of that revision as a bargaining chip. I mean so I am at a loss to say what the Trump administration believes when it does anything, when it does anything. I think it is incoherent, ignorant,

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incompetent, and right now is, you know – he is busy reassuring allies the way businessmen reassure markets. You know, they just want people to calm down. I have no idea what to make of the policy.

I do think that Jamie is right and I think -- here I would disagree a little bit with you, Constanze, in the sense that I think that Obama really did represent the post-European moment in the following sense. I first noticed it in 2009 on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, when every Western country sent its head of state and rightly Obama did not go. And Obama had a thing about, you know, one of the greatest curse words in the Obama White House was to call something 20th century. The 20th century was over. The Cold War was over. Whatever is happening with Russia we can't get into a new Cold War with Russia, even though we may have already been in one, because we don't get to choose. The other party has a veto over this. You know, the new foreign policy problems will be Ebola and climate change, as he put it. And then lo and behold, the 20th century was not over. The centrality of Europe is now obvious, has been made obvious by the prospect of its disintegration. And all this really elegant futuristic ambassador from the future kind of things turns out to have been, to my mind, actually damaging, actually damaging. And I think in other ways too in foreign policy we will find historians will note some very embarrassing continuities between the Obama foreign policy and what may be -- who the hell knows -- the Trump foreign policy.

I mean the one thing I wanted to add to what was said here is on the question that you asked Jamie. I think it is important to put aside the Russian question for analytical -- the question of Russian influence on Europe for analytical purposes because for me the truly frightening thing about what's happening in Europe right now is that this is consistent with a long indigenous European tradition of darkness. In other words, the question that we ask in the United States is to what extent is Trump an American phenomenon, are there precedents, what Andrew Jackson the precedent as the man on horseback, do we have to include Huey Long in the list. But the fact is there is some profound unfamiliarity with populist authoritarianism at the highest level in the United States. And we have to worry about its genealogy and its providence, whereas in Europe, Europe is now grappling with a contemporary resurrection of some of its oldest demons, of some of its oldest demons. There are traditions in Europe, which Viktor Orbán can say he is honoring. And the same with other ultra-nationalists, ethnic nationalists, neo fascists, populist authoritarians, call the mix whatever you want. It is no surprise that what has put

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the question in Europe is the immigration to European countries of very different populations. That this is not a surprise.

If you look -- and I'll just say one more thing and then I'll stop -- if you look, for example, at European nationalism as it is classically conceived, according to the tradition of European nationalism of the late 18th-early 19th century, the idea was that every nation would have a state, that every state would incarnate a nation. And so the idea was that in some way the political boundaries and the cultural boundaries would coincide. But, of course, they never do. And so in Europe you develop this thing known as the problem of minorities, which got more and more dangerous as the size of the minorities got larger and larger. What European nationalism lacked entirely was any natural sense of multi-ethnicity, of multi-ethnicity as legitimate demographic constitution for European polity. And what's happening now are these new -- the refugees but also the immigrant populations, the Muslim populations, they have now reached a size that is actually beginning to put the old question again to Europe. I mean really the old question of sameness and difference. Of sameness and difference. Which is why I think there are only two possible solutions for the European dilemma right now as regards these populations. The first one is that Europe finally, finally breaks through to some genuine sense of the legitimacy and the irreversibility of multi-ethnicity as the social composition of a democratic state.

And the other possible outcome of this is the resurgence of fascism. If it's not going to be multi-ethnicity it's going to be fascism. And before that there will be stumbling along and muddling through and so on. But as I say, before you even get to the Russian piece, which is outrageous. I mean I happen to agree with everything that comrade Kirchick (laughter) said about the new Soviet moves in Europe. Just kidding -- half-kidding. But I do think we have to recognize the intrinsically European nature of this crisis.

MR. KAGAN: Constanze, you did not have to put your finger up. I was going to come to you for your view on -- but really, again, sort of expanding on what I was asking before, what is the German view of what's happening in Europe right now? I mean, I also want to know what your view is, but maybe also more broadly.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yeah, sure. Two things. On what Leon has just said, I would beg to differ on two points. One, don't forget the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Empire, both of

whom were by measure multi-ethnic.

MR. WIESELTIER: I brood about them every day. (Laughter)

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: I'm glad to hear that. That's a relief to hear. But, you know, it's not as though multi-ethnicity -- and in fact tolerance of religion had not been a factor in Europe, it has in European history. And we had this very unfortunate phase in the 19th century and the early 20th century when we had a disastrous re-division and of course upheld most horrifically by the Nazis.

MR. WIESELTIER: Let me just say -- since we're friends let me just say that there has certainly been tolerance and certainly since the 18th century --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: And the (inaudible).

MR. WIESELTIER: Tolerance for me is part of the rhetoric of condescension. In other words, what many groups discovered in Europe is that patents of tolerance were extended --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Right.

MR. WIESELTIER: -- and patents of tolerance were revoked.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Tolerance is, of course, an 18th century term, or earlier, and I can't change the history for you. But what I will say is though that all European countries now have constitutions where tolerance is no longer the principle, it's equality of rights --

MR. WIESELTIER: Yes, yes.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: -- and in fact protection of minorities and political pluralism. And I think some of us will very genuinely go on the barricades before we let that be touched by the populous.

MR. WIESELTIER: Yes, yes.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: And that is certainly true of my country.

MR. WIESELTIER: There is a fight. Yes, yes.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yes. There is a fight to be had.

MR. WIESELTIER: There is a fight.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: And there will be a fight if necessary. But the other thing I need to say is, look, the thing to not forget here is that there are a variety of historical causes for migration to Europe. One, of course, is World War II and its aftermath. Then it's decolonization, and then it's wars

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around the world, and of course labor migration. Labor migrants and refugees from war and destruction tend to be quite happy to arrive in Europe and then try to integrate. That said, we haven't been particularly good at doing that. It's only really post 9/11 that it has been understood, including in my country, that we need to do much more to effectuate that.

The large minorities that came to say Belgium, France, and Great Britain, in particular, as a result of decolonization wars, are another matter because they ironically got full citizenship but no practical offers of integration whatsoever and almost no acknowledgement of the historical trauma that they have brought with them. The single exception in recent weeks was Macron, who said that the Algerian war had been a crime against humanity and was hammered so much in the internal French debate that he had to withdraw this statement, which I think is absolutely correct.

Now, lest you think that I'm being complacent here or smug, you know, we luckily -- we Germans lost our colonies in 1919 as a consequence of having lost World War I and the Versailles Treaty. So we really weren't in a position to make those particular mistakes. But that is an issue that I think we're only very slowly remedying.

The German take on what's going on in Europe is very simply this, is that we -- and this is not just the German government, but I think a sort of general German take, except for the extreme left and the extreme right, which is that our position in the center of Europe as, you know, currently de facto had thrust upon us the leadership of Europe, our position could not be more different from the take of the current White House, which is that all that we are, all the prosperity, the stability, and the democracy and the constitutional order that we have, depends upon our openness within Europe and to the rest of the world on international free trade and the guarantee of a liberal free international order and the protection of the global commons. And so the realization in Berlin is now holy cow, if the Americans are going to wander off on this particular one, we and the Europeans are going to be left holding this particular baby. That is the massive push, you know, that's impelling Germans to reconsider the strategy, but there is also a profound awareness that this is simply too much for one nation in Europe to carry and that if we don't manage to find a European consensus and European solidarity on this we're well and truly screwed. And I for one can certainly recite an entire litany of points where I think the Germany government, Germany in general, could do more to achieve that consensus and that solidarity, but it would also, I beg to argue

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here, it would be slightly unfair to say that we're not doing anything. We're actually doing a fair amount.

MR. KAGAN: But in addition to -- I don't think anybody is putting Germany on the spot here, but what I'm trying to understand is -- nobody in the United States should be, you know, feeling superior to the brilliant -- because of our brilliant foreign policy over the decades, but I'm actually -- when Germany looks out at Europe, and we've heard Leon's analysis, we've heard Jamie's analysis, so setting aside what Germany should be doing, what is the analysis? Is the analysis that -- and let me ask also a follow on to that, which is and what is the meaning of a Le Pen victory then? So first, what's the analysis and then what would be the meaning of that?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: So the analysis is that, you know, one of the profound ironies of the current situation is that we were sort of quite happy with the sort of American notion of the end of history and the victory of liberalism worldwide and the rise of a global middle class, and we would all like each other and no longer wage war. That was the ideal German take on things. We were very happy to go with that. And suddenly it appears, you know what, we underestimated the dark side of globalization. We underestimated historical resentments and, in fact, historic differences and geographic differences of threat and risk perceptions within Europe and beyond it. Because we, you know, god forbid that I should say that Germans are occasionally a little bit complacent, but yes, you know, we were suddenly surrounded by friends after 1989 and we just completely ignored the fact that we'd pushed out our security problems to the periphery through the enlargement of NATO and the EU, you know. And for two decades we managed to resist that insight and right now it's come and sneaked up on us and hit us over the head and it's impossible to ignore.

So there is a sense that --

MR. KAGAN: So do you not see friends?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Well, I mean, the Russians certainly arguably at this point -- and I would -- let me phrase this slightly less dramatically. This particular Russian government and the elites that underpin it are certainly not our friends. But at the same time, I think if you're -- unlike the Americans we don't in Europe have the luxury of selective engagement with people who share a continent with us. So for us the security problem of Russia is there regardless. And the problem is I think less one of an aggressive revisionist power that's about to attack us, although I have every sympathy in



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the world with Baltic and Polish fears about this. I think the larger and more systemic and long-term risk is one of the disintegration of the Russian power system and the consequences that that would have for the economy and migration flows in Europe. That's a really dramatic issue. Similar things apply to the Middle East or Northern Africa.

And again, just look at the landscape of Europe, the continent is physically indefensible. The only way to defend it is having an enlightened foreign and security policy that exports stability. And in my view, and this is where you and I probably agree a lot, Jamie, that also exports democratic transformation because that is what makes for stability and prosperity.

So, bizarrely, the Germans have I think fully come around to the sort of Clintonian/Bush/Obamian -- that's something that they already have in common -- vision that there needs to be not just a Europe whole and free, but a periphery that is stabilized. And if the Americans don't think that's currently in their interests, well, we're going to have to damn well do it alone because otherwise this comes back and destroys the European project.

MR. KAGAN: I will turn to Leon in a second, but what about the consequence of a Le Pen victory.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Disaster. Seriously. I mean, you know, Europe hasn't been run by a Berlin-Paris axis for a while. That's just not how it works. There was a while when Stockholm and Warsaw played a very significant role in European policy, particularly in designing Eastern policy and policy towards Russia. That currently is a little wobbly for a variety of reasons. London had a huge influence. But, yes, Paris is, as it were, and the state of affairs and the politics of France is the tipping point for Europe. Nothing else is. In the same way as Ukraine is the tipping point for Russia's sphere of influence in its West, the state of affairs in France is the tipping point for the European project. There is no two ways about that.

And so I'm just at a loss to imagine scenarios for the EU and for Germany if in the case of a Le Pen victory, although I do think that that might lead to a sort of resurgence of Europeanism in some countries that wish to maintain the European project. And this is not just what is sometimes unfairly called greater Germania, you know, sort of Germany, the Dutch, the Nordics, the Balts, but I think this is very true for Portugal and Spain and Italy as well.

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MR. KAGAN: Leon, you wanted to jump in?

MR. WIESELTIER: I just wanted to say that since we're having this conversation here in this city, and even though we have -- what's there left to go, 3 years and 39 weeks? Is that what there is? (Laughter) But even though we're just at the beginning --

MR. KAGAN: Who's counting, right?

MR. WIESELTIER: Right. I think it's very important that when Constanze asks the question, what is necessary to defend Europe, right near the top, or maybe at the top, the answer has to be American power. And I think that it's too easy to hide behind Trump on this question because neither democrats nor republicans in this city have any longer any enthusiastic consensus about the historical importance of American power, about the historical importance of American military power. I think that each of the parties, and the wings and the subcultures, have for their own reasons de-legitimated this over the last 20 years. And I think that Europe will not regain, putting aside the ominous developments that will happen there, Europe will not fully regain its security and the underpinning of the values until Americans have a debate and finally come to their senses that without American power it will be (inaudible). And never mind that this will have terrible repercussions for us in terms of security, I'm speaking here more about history and politics and values. And this is a debate that, if we care about Europe, we have to debate American power. It's not another subject, it's actually the same subject.

MR. KAGAN: We'll now turn to the audience for some questions but, Jamie, do you want to get anything in at this point?

Okay, great. By all means, we have a lot of smart people in the audience, we'd love to hear from you. If you could just state your name and try to ask an actual question, that would be terrific.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. I'm Ryan Richardson. I'm an alumnus of the Foreign Policy Initiative, a former coworker. My question is we've heard a lot about the populist movements in France and Italy and Hungary and we can sort of see the natural opposition of them within their own countries. But who are the at risk internationalists? So who are those people who are going to experience the same thing that you described? And Hungary, given additional Russian influence and maybe slipping from a liberal internationalist point of view towards a more populist nationalist point of view.

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MR. KIRCHICK: Countries you're saying?

MR. RICHARDSON: Countries or parties or leaders or anyone. So we in the West can look to them and say these are the people who we identify as moving towards a place which is dangerous for Europe.

MR. KIRCHICK: One country to watch has been the Czech Republic, which has a president who has openly called for a referendum on the EU, whose population seems to be moving in more of that direction. Russia has very aggressively -- you know, there's a huge amount of conspiracy fake news websites operating in that country.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: And money.

MR. KIRCHICK: And money. And the Russian embassy there has far more "diplomats" than it should be accredited. (Laughter) And this is, again, it's this strange -- you know, this is a country that was brutally invaded and occupied by the Soviet Union, what is going on? And I think to some degree it has been the Russians sort of cynical weaponization of the migrant crisis, where there is a lot of hostility to Islam and migrants in this country, in the Czech Republic. And a lot of people there might not even be knowing that they are sort of buying into these narratives that are being put out by the Kremlin. But it is clearly have its effect. Slovakia also to a similar extent. And even, I would say, Poland, which is a country that, you know, there's a broad political consensus that's anti-Russian. But I would argue that the government that's now in Poland, which is probably even more virulently anti-Russian than the previous one, it works to Russia's advantage to have them there because the relationship with Germany has deteriorated dramatically over the past -- since law and justice came to power. There is hostility towards the EU. I mean Poland was the only country to oppose its own countrymen. Mr. Tusk having been re-elected as the head of the EU Council. It shows chaos and it shows confusion within Europe to have this nationalist party in power. So it's the Visegrád four countries that are worrisome I would say in this sense.

MR. KAGAN: Yes, sir, over there on the -- if you can get over there.

MR. CHECCO: Thank you. Larry Checco. It seems to me like Mr. Trump unleashed this populist movement overseas. If it goes beyond Le Pen, and Mr. Wilders in Holland, and the five star movement in Italy, and goes on and on, what's the future of Europe if this movement really takes hold and

effect?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Very simply, I have to disagree with you that Mr. Trump unleashed the movement. We're perfectly capable of creating our own populist movements, thank you very much. (Laughter) I want to insist on the originality of our own movement. That said, what should really concern us is the degree to which American actors have been encouraging, aiding, abetting, supporting, European actors. That includes certain members of Congress who get themselves photographed with leaders of the European right and praise them for representing a commitment to values and liberties, which I have to say I find completely astonishing. There are hither to on – I think not yet executed – plans from Breitbart to operate in France and Germany. So far that seems to have not materialized because it appears to be difficult to get an office organized that actually publishes in the local language. That hasn't stopped Breitbart London from making a little foray into the German public space at the beginning of January, where they planted a completely fabricated story -- or a story fabricated on the basis of something that actually happened about thousands of migrants trying to pillage Germany's oldest church. That's a little -- you know, that's certainly not helpful. So that's something that's being watched very carefully. And of course it would be quite nice if you had a White House that actively disassociated itself from such efforts.

MR. KIRCHICK: I would say in Germany too, in particular, it's very worrisome. I think Steve Bannon has a particular animus towards Angela Merkel, and I think that there is --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Among others, yes.

MR. KIRCHICK: And she represents sort of everything that he despises in terms of views towards Islam, migrants in particular. Just read the Breitbart headlines about Merkel for the past year or so. And we're not in this unprecedented situation where we're going to have a German Chancellor, who is, by the way, the most pro-American German Chancellor you could imagine at this point in time, who's now running for reelection. And not only does she have a Russian disinformation campaign that's been going on for years, in my opinion, since the Snowden scandal by the way, she now has to deal with her American friends and a White House that may seek to undermine her. And I find that crazy, frankly.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: That said, can I just break a sort of -- not break news, but to

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say something in favor of the much maligned Sigmar Gabriel, who's a social democrat and who has just become foreign minister, and to the astonishment of most Germans went to Moscow last week and told Lavrov, his Russian -- I was tempted to say Soviet -- counterpart that his narrative that he tried out in Munich at the Munich Security Conference of a post West world was simply not true and that in fact the West is not a matter of geography but of values. I've just been trying to find an English source for a footnote for that and found it wasn't reported in the English language press apparently. It was reported in the German language press and that is actually a very significant and important thing to tell the Russians and to say in general.

MR. KIRCHICK: Particularly from --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: From Sigmar Gabriel.

MR. KIRCHICK: -- from Gabriel.

MR. WIESELTIER: Maybe I could add to that because -- I'm sorry, but could I just say one thing?

MR. KAGAN: Yeah, go ahead.

MR. WIESELTIER: The whole phenomenon of Breitbart and fake news and all this, we've seen this before, it's not new. We know about propaganda, we know about disinformation. We know what kind of governments run it. And we know that once this happens what you find yourself engaged in -- and I don't mean to be sentimental and naive here -- but one of the things we're fighting here is a war of ideas and nothing less. So that when Gabriel goes and says that to Lavrov, or when McCain gets up and makes that speech in Munich in which he doesn't just talk about defense and security questions, but about the moral fabric of nationalism. I mean, we're going to have more and more interventions of that kind because Putin of all people -- like if anyone had ever thought that Putin would ever be fighting a war of ideas as opposed to a war of poison umbrellas (laughter), right, but he is, but he is. And one of the things we're seeing is a rattling of the belief in Western democratic ideas on the part of Western populations. You know, in the old days we had a CIA that very wisely would create all kinds of magazines to help this. We can't do this anymore. However, it's really important that we understand that there are cultural and intellectual dimensions to the outcome of this struggle because this is what we saw the last time we had a struggle of this kind.

MR. KAGAN: Yes, there, in the back.

QUESTIONER: Hello, I'm Voice of America, Georgian service, from one of those outlets that you just mentioned. That aside, you've talked about Stockholm, Warsaw, Eastern Partnership Project, however, you have not talked much about, you know, new Eastern Europe. So to say what's going to happen if we are seeing the European disintegration in the processes you described? If you could comment what's going to happen to us, to the new Eastern Europe in a way and whether I should move my family out of there maybe.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Happy to answer that. You know, I've been -- here's the Berlin take, and it happens to be mine as well, is that if you take 1989 seriously where a self-determined nation was suddenly -- the right to self-determination was given back to the Germans after we thought that that was going to be part of the price that we paid for Holocaust and World War II -- if you take that seriously it is I think impossible for a German of my generation not to stand up for the right to self-determination of peoples, for the inviolability of borders, and for the right of peoples and nations to choose their alliances (inaudible). That said, I thought that the NATO membership process for Georgia and Ukraine, as advocated by America, was problematic because as a framework it was not sufficiently encouraging of democratic and economic transformation and was too much focused on military contributions by, among others, Georgia to say, the Iraq War, and thereby skewed the transformation of Georgia and Ukraine in ways that were disadvantageous ultimately.

And similarly by the way, I would say very similar things about the EU membership process. You can see in parts of Eastern Europe that this works for countries that have well established national state structures. It is much more onerous and possibly undermining for countries that have no viable and vital state structures. I'm thinking of Bulgaria and Romania, who really struggled to adopt all the rules that the EU imposed on them. So I think my position on this would be, you know, protect the right to choose, support democratic and economic transformation, and never ever as a government ever exclude officially the possibility of NATO and EU membership. Never ever let that be put on the table to anybody, certainly not by the Russians. And hopefully then you would work together in such a way as to, you know, together reach a point where the question of membership suddenly becomes completely unproblematic. I think that we failed to do that with -- and the price was paid by the Georgians and the

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Ukrainians. I think we're currently working very hard with at least the Ukrainians to remedy those mistakes. The Georgians I'm less sure, but then of course the Georgians themselves I think are less sure. With the Ukrainians it's kind of hard to overlook the fact that they at this point really have decided that they are a country of their own and want to be part of the European sphere rather than of Russia. But there we are.

MR. KAGAN: Well, we only have a couple --

MR. WIESELTIER: Whether or not you move your family out, you should have valid passports is what I'm going to say.

MR. KAGAN: We are running out of time. Let me take a couple, if there are a couple, or three, and then we can move on from there. Yes, the gentleman right there with his two fingers up. Yes. I'll take two more after you. Go ahead.

QUESTIONER: Paul Cart, University of Maryland. Supposing that the Russians were to decide they wanted a land bridge to the Ukraine. I think this is less likely now than it was a few years ago, but it still might happen. If they were to proceed in this direction the question I think would arise in the West as to whether we should provide the Ukrainians with lethal military equipment, such as anti-tank weapons. And in addressing the question, it seems to be one of the major issues is what does it do to the probability of the Soviets intervening in the Baltic states.

MR. WIESELTIER: You mean the Russians.

QUESTIONER: I'm sorry.

MR. WIESELTIER: It's easy to get confused. You mean the Russians. (Laughter)

QUESTIONER: I've got too much snow on the top.

MR. WIESELTIER: Let's just say the Slavs. (Laughter)

QUESTIONER: What does it do to the chances that the Russians will intervene in the Baltic states? Does it make it more likely or less likely?

MR. KAGAN: Okay, great. Let's take a couple more and then we can do that. So there's that question. Yes, sir, and then you in the back. Yes.

MR. BRASWELL: Hello. My name is Matthew Braswell. My question is, so it's clear that Putin is a pernicious individual, but if he were to have a stroke and die tomorrow it seems that there could

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still be a lot of obstacles in the face of a more cooperative relationship between the U.S. and Russia, whether it's limited democratic tradition, state entanglement with the economy and the media. So if you're thinking long-term about Russia over the next 30-40 years, especially after Putin eventually passes from the scene one way or another, do you think there's a likelihood that developments in Russia if things break a way couple of ways could be very positive and lead to a more productive and morally justifiably friendly relationship between Russia and the U.S., or do you see that as unlikely? What's the lay of the land there?

MR. KAGAN: Okay, good. And then way in the back. Yes.

QUESTIONER: Yes. So it seems like the fact that only four of our NATO allies in Europe spend two percent of their GDP on defense, it's a fact that the Trump administration uses to kind of smash Europe with a lot of the time, is there a different measurement we should start to be looking at besides the two percent GDP that would better reflect Europe's contributions to their own security?

MR. KAGAN: That's definitely a question for Constanze because the Germans have to start grappling with the bookkeeping necessary to get up to two percent.

MR. KIRCHICK: I think we obsess over this two percent number a lot. I mean, for instance, look at Greece. Greece is one of those countries that spends two percent. You know why? Because so much of their military spending goes into defending against Turkey, a fellow member of NATO. So a lot of their military spending is not, you know, relevant to the question of are they contributing to the alliance.

Similarly, a country like Denmark I think only spends maybe 1.5 percent on defense, yet they have sacrificed more soldiers in Afghanistan per capita than any other. I think that should count for something, shouldn't it? So I think this --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Not as an official NATO goal. (Laughter)

MR. KIRCHICK: No, it's not. No, but that is a demonstration of their sacrifice and their contribution to the alliance, that's not just sort of this crass monetary figure that our president seems so obsessed with.

MR. KAGAN: Not to mention that even if countries were able to get up to two percent in most cases it would make very little fundamental difference in terms of the European contribution to any



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major conflict, which would still be 95 percent American. So it's a very artificial number ultimately.

MR. WIESELTIER: Well, and not to mention the fact that the legitimacy of the alliance is in no way affected by the question of who's spending how much.

MR. KAGAN: The only thing to be said is that I think every administration since at least Eisenhower has been complaining about European under spending.

MR. KIRCHICK: But never have they made Article V conditioned on --

MR. KAGAN: Well, it hasn't been that much of a quid pro quo.

MR. KIRCHICK: Because there's an ulterior motive here.

MR. KAGAN: Although Robert Gates gave them a very, very stern warning the last time. What about the other two questions? What about Ukraine? Do you want to --

MR. KIRCHICK: I think weapons to Ukraine should be independent of whatever the Russians do and land bridge in Crimea. I mean I've been supporting weapons -- most of the Congress was supporting weapons to Ukraine long before. So I don't think it should be hinged upon a particular Russian provocation or whatnot.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Let me add to that. I'm sort of completely conflicted about this particular question, but that's because on the one hand I think it's indefensible to not give lethal weapons to Ukraine when its armed forces are to the point of being basically wiped out by Russian supported forces. But on the other hand, it's possible to know too much about the state of Ukrainian military leadership and political control over the military and think that, you know -- in other words, that's in my view are where the real problems lie. There is also a problem with the privatization of violence, so called private armies. Even if you don't buy the Russian propaganda about the Azov Battalion and all that stuff, I think that the first order of the day is to make sure that Ukraine has actually a professional army that is under political control.

MR. KIRCHICK: A lot has changed in the last three years.

MR. KAGAN: Let me just focus on the question because I think it's the one that you can't skirt, which is -- and this was the main reason I think that President Obama opposed it, which was if the Russian then respond --

MR. WIESELTIER: It would escalate.

MR. KIRCHICK: Right.

MR. KAGAN: -- by launching an attack and you say the Baltics, but it could be in Ukraine, where they up the ante and then it's our move. I mean how far -- what is your answer to that scenario?

MR. KIRCHICK: I think the Russians will do what they want to do regardless of how we act. I don't think they're going to say oh, you gave weapons to the Ukrainians, now we're going to go for Narva. I don't think that's how they --

MR. WIESELTIER: But first of all there's that. Secondly, Putin's adventures in Ukraine have been relatively cost free.

MR. KIRCHICK: Yeah.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

MR. WIESELTIER: Yes, yes, yes.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: No, no, no, no. Nope. (Laughter) You go first, then I'll go.

MR. WIESELTIER: No, you go first. (Laughter)

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: That's so transparent. Look, I think it's very simple.

MR. WIESELTIER: No, no, it's chivalry. I think they've been anything but cost free. I think the sanctions have been very unpleasant for Russia and it means something that actually there hasn't been attack on the Baltics or an attempt to cut off more of Ukraine. In fact, and I'm not saying that because of the direct economic impact of the sanctions on the persons who are being sanctioned, but because of two reasons. One, it's been a very strong political signal to the markets and Russian banks and companies have had enormous in refinancing themselves. Very, very unpleasant for Russia. And, even more importantly, it's been a signal of European unity. And the sanctions are, if you will, an imperfect but effective vehicle for transporting a European political position, much like what they --

MR. WIESELTIER: But the unpleasantness of the sanctions has not yet led to any significant revision of the Russian policy in Ukraine. In other words, my view is that Putin is not proceeding further in Ukraine because he has already accomplished his objective. He has scared Ukraine to death, he has semi Finlandized it. You know, the reason that those of us who argued for lethal weapons to the Ukrainians argued for it was actually not because we thought that the Ukrainian army

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would one day march victorious into Moscow. What we were arguing was for two things. One, that there will be no political settlement unless there is a change on the battlefield and that Putin has absolutely no incentive to come to the table and pursue the Minsk thing or anything in a genuine way unless he's suffering at home because of casualties and the like. And -- yes?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: But, Leon, Minsk is an imperfect arrangement. I'm the first to recognize that. But Putin's actions have also galvanized Europeans into resistance, have galvanized Europeans into supporting political stability --

MR. WIESELTIER: I have to tell you, galvanized -- I mean I see resistance. Galvanized strikes me as a little bit too strong.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: There is a great deal happening in Berlin on helping Ukrainian transformation.

MR. WIESELTIER: I have not seen demonstrations in the streets of Europe on behalf of Kiev.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: No. But you have an entire department of the German Foreign Ministry working on transformational projects in Ukraine --

MR. WIESELTIER: Yes, I'm all for that.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: -- together with other European foreign ministries.

MR. WIESELTIER: Yes, yes, I'm all for that. All I'm saying is that Putin has so far called the shots significantly on Ukraine. He has.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yeah, but not as far as he wanted.

MR. WIESELTIER: Huh?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: But not as far as he would have liked.

MR. WIESELTIER: Oh, you see, I -- anyway, Bob, what said, we have time to --

MR. KAGAN: Let's try to address the last question, which was basically I think -- to boil down your question -- I think it was irrespective of Russian rulers do we have a problem with Russia or does Russia have a problem with us. That is, sort of insoluble by sort of an effort to sort of reach out and get cooperation.

MR. KIRCHICK: I'm not an expert on Russian domestic politics, but it's my

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understanding that, you know, were Putin to go this is a problem we're going to be dealing with. That the world view that is being expressed and the policies that have been undertaken of the past 10 years are pretty widely supported and that there is a bureaucratic, you know, establishment behind this. And I think that means we need to have strategic patience on our side. You know, people forget the Welles Declaration, okay, about the Baltic states. There's a policy of non-recognition of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states for 45 years. And it may be 45 years before Crimea goes back to Ukraine, but I mean already we're seeing there's, you know, people talking about well, we're just going to have to give this up, the sanctions are too painful for us and what not. I mean I think we have to steel ourselves for a potentially very long, you know, period of time where we're going to be dealing with this sort of regime in Moscow.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Can I --

MR. KAGAN: I think that's a good note to end on, unless you have an even better note to end on. The pressure is on.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yes, all right. There has been traditionally a take among American and European realists that democracy is not for Russia because Russia is somehow really part of Asia rather than Europe. I think that's a completely unacceptable position to take. And I think that we have to depart from an assumption that Europe and Russia belong to one strategic space and that Russians too wish to live in a decent society. And I think that Europeans and the European project will only be safe if that is accomplished. And we should do everything that we can to make that happen.

SPEAKER: Absolutely.

MR. KAGAN: That is a better note to end on. (Laughter) Thank you. Well, please join me in thanking Jamie and our excellent panel. (Applause)

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