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THE UNITED STATES, EUROPE, AND THE ZOMBIE WESTERN LIBERAL ORDER

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. I'd like to welcome everyone here today. My name is Tom Wright. I'm a fellow and director of the Project on International Order and Strategy, and director of the Center for the U.S. and Europe, here at Brookings.

And it's a pleasure to welcome everyone here today to talk about: the future of the liberal order, in fact: the zombie Western liberal order as we call it. That's now its formal term in the White House, I understand.

I'm delighted to be joined by three terrific panelists. We have Ralf Fücks, who is a very old friend of Brookings, and the president of the Heinrich Böll Foundation. My colleague Constanze Stelzenmüller, who is senior fellow for Center for the U.S. and Europe; and my colleague Bob Kagan, who is a senior fellow at the Project on International Order and Strategy.

On behalf of the Center for the U.S. and Europe, I would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation, particularly for Ralf Fücks, who has transitioned out of the presidency for the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Brookings has been delighted to have a long-standing partnership and collaboration with the foundation, and this successful collaboration is due, in very large part, to Ralf's leadership, and his hard work to grow the Foundation from a handful of people to a forum for policy debate and discussion, and an influential voice for advancing democracy, human rights and green values around the world. So thank you very much for this great pleasure to speak with you today.

MR. FÜCKS: Thank you. Very gracious, thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: I would like to note, just before we begin discussion, to reiterate Brookings' commitment to independence, and to underscore that all the views expressed today, are those solely of the speakers. Unfortunately, I wish they could represent a much larger movement, but they are actually just their own views.

I wasn't in it, but I understand that we actually had Ralf to speak a couple of weeks after the election on the future of the liberal order back in November, and it just struck me as I was preparing for this panel, if four years ago one was to say that Donald Trump would be president of the United

States, that Vladimir Putin would have invaded and annexed part of Ukraine, that Britain would have left the European Union, that Marine Le Pen will be in the runoff for the French election. And then they said, what do you think that would be like? I think people would have said, well, that could be the end of the Liberal Order.

And certainly I think on the event that you had just a couple of weeks after the election, and there was a feeling that it was existentially threatened. Since then there's been various sort antibodies have emerged, the main streamers within the Cabinet in the Trump administration posturing for alliances, and for some preservation of America's traditional foreign policy; the emergence of Macron in France, who may very well win the presidential election.

And the question I'd like to start off with is, you know, where do we sort of stand on this thing that we call the Liberal Order? Are we looking at its end? And if it doesn't end under these circumstances is it basically indestructible? Is it basically like a zombie that you can hit it as many times as you want, but it will reemerge continuously because it's actually much more strongly and deeply rooted than we anticipated? Or, in four years when we look back and say that the Trump administration was actually the end of this post-Cold War, or even postwar moments.

So, Ralf, if I could start with you maybe, and how does it look from where you sit?

MR. FÜCKS: Thanks a lot. And again, thank you for the kind introduction. I hope it will not be my last time at Brookings but -- Actually it's last time in my function as the president of the Böll Foundation.

Yes. May be you are right, and we already have seen a kind of turn-around moment regarding the rise of populist politics, and populist leaders, and that the series of events, of the British Referendum on the Brexit, and the election of Donald Trump, and the Netherlands ran elections, and the threat of Marine Le Pen becoming president of France, had been working as a kind of wake-up call. A wake-up call to civil societies and to the democratic political spectrum in the West; but I would say it's far too early and premature to lean back and to think it's over.

So, we will not return just to normality if we take the last 20 years or 25 years after the fall of the Wall, as the new normal. The election of Donald Trump as U.S. president will remain a disruptive moment for the future of the international law and order, or the global balance of powers, and especially

for European security and trans-Atlantic relations.

And we are confronted with a situation that the very country that acted as main guarantor of the Liberal Order since '45 is now challenging this order. If we define the global liberal order as a kind of global governance system based on liberal norms, and growing international trades, and on supranational corporation based on supranational institutions.

So, a kind of multilateral and global order, and I think we can see the fractions within this -- and the global governance system, not only because now the U.S. administration is challenging it, but because internationally we already have seen a kind of tight change from the democratic wave after '89 and '90 when Francis Fukuyama published his famous thesis of “The End of History.”

And “The End of History” of course didn’t mean it will stay as it is, there will be no change, no development? No. The meaning of this, that there is no systemic competition anymore. The liberal democratic order or the combination of that capitalism and global democracy, this is now the global model. This is the paradigm the whole world is following. And that’s over, definitely.

We have seen the rise of more and more self-assertive authentication regimes, China, Russia, Iran, now there's Turkey and others, who see themselves as an alternative to the Liberal Order, to democratic universalism. But the dramatic point we have reached now is we see that challenge from within. It's not only the U.S., it's also Europe they’ve already been talking about Brexit.

And also when Marine Le Pen, which I still am quite optimistic will not become the French President; you have all over the place in Europe, this kind nationalistic, xenophobic, authoritarian movements and parties with 20 to 30 percent of the public vote, 20 to 30 percent of the public vote; also in relatively prosperous and stable countries, like in Scandinavia, or in the Netherlands.

So, I will say there is something fundamentally changing, also within our societies, and if we are talking about the future of the liberal order, it's not only a foreign policy issue. It's also an issue of our domestic politics. And we have to hope there will be an opportunity to go a little bit deeper into that in the following hour, we have to think about what went wrong. What went wrong with globalization? What went wrong with the financial crisis? What went wrong with growing inequality and social polarization in our societies?

And also with the cultural revolutions, the cultural transformation which obviously is seen

by parts of our population as a threat. And how can we find different answers to these challenges? We affirm in the promise of equal opportunities, of social belonging, of social coherence in our societies, and linking that with a new effort to build democratic alliances internationally.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Thank you, Ralf. Bob, if I could turn to you next. I mean, do you see this, and we've spoken about this before. I mean, do you think this sort of has long-standing roots in American foreign policy after the Cold War? Is it sort of mainly a function of Trump? And are we sort of really looking at the end here? Or will, in four years we bounce back, and there will be some internationalist Republican or Democratic president. And then also, they repair part of the damage that has been done, and sort of the cycle will continue?

MR. KAGAN: Well, it's a good question of course, it's an unanswerable question, you know, predicting even four months ahead is dangerous, and four years is even more so. But the reason I feel like you can answer it is that Trump didn't come -- I mean what Trump represents as an American foreign policy viewpoint didn't come out of nowhere.

I think, in fact, not only does he speak for a very large number of Americans today on the foreign policy issue, but this has been a growing trend, really, since the end of the Cold War. And I think it's worth recalling that even in American foreign policy the role that Americans sort of accepted after World War II, was highly unusual. It was highly unusual for any country. In fact there's almost no -- I can't even think of another country in the history of the world that played the role that the United States was willing to play after World War II, which is essentially to take responsibility for an order.

It didn't mean it wasn't based on selfishness to some extent, but it really was rather extraordinary. It's not what nations do normally; they look after their own interests, sort of narrowly conceived. That was not something they had done before, it was something, in fact, they had actively rejected after World War I, and it seems to me that it was inevitable, especially after the disappearance of the Soviet Union and international communism, which I think kept that sentiment and that approach alive longer than it might otherwise have been.

That after the fall of the Soviet Union, that Americans would begin to question what the point of it all was, especially as generations pass, and people who remembered World War II, or even the Cold War passed, and now you have many -- several generations that don't really remember any of that.

And want to know why it is exactly that the United States provides protection for rich countries that are thousands of miles away. It needs to be explained all over again, but it's not an easy explanation to make.

So, Trump was not the only candidate in this last election who spoke for this point of view. Bernie Sanders did also from a slightly different direction, but ultimately not that different. And even President Obama, after 2008, felt that the American people wanted to be less deeply engaged in the world, and was leading the country, to some extent, in that direction. Not as dramatically, but definitely in that direction.

So, therefore we are dealing with a larger issue which is American's willingness to take on global responsibility. And I think at the moment that's very much in doubt. Now, it's not as if we haven't seen that before, we did see it obviously in the '20s and '30s, and what got Americans out of that mode, was the worst catastrophe possible in international relations.

So, part of me feels like it could come back if there's a crisis that Americans feel warrants their involvement, so I think that is a possibility. But part of me also thinks the fall of France didn't do that, really, until Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. So, I don't know what would require it this time.

And then just, in general, I totally agree that -- our tendency to feel like we are out of the woods just because Macron got point-what percentage higher than Le Pen did in the last election, I think is a mistake. I think we are very much in this in a fundamental way, not just in terms of the American role, which I think is in doubt, but also in terms of the crisis within the liberal order itself, which we have also seen before.

I mean, you know, in the '20 and '30s, and even before the depression set in, we the rise of fascism in Italy and elsewhere, and real doubts about democracy, real doubts about the value of democracy, doubts about the value of the capitalist system. We shouldn't assume that this fundamental belief that we think so many people have shared, is eternal. We know for a fact that it's not eternal, and so I think the bigger error we would make, would be in assuming that things just gets back to normal.

What we think of as normal is not normal. What we think of as normal is in fact a historical aberration, and it will require enormous effort on our part, I think, to keep alive what has been growing since 1945.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Constanze, how do you look at it, particularly from a European perspective, but also more generally?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Right. Well, unfortunately after this point everybody, agreeing with both Ralf Fücks and Bob Kagan on the fundamental --

MR. WRIGHT: A first time for everything.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: I know. I know. Well, I'll try set myself off in other ways, for the course of the discussion. But on the fundamental issue of normal being over, I completely agree. I think that we have had a couple of tight escapes, and the first round of the French election certainly has started more than that. And I think we would be false to think that Marine could win the second round. I don't think she will, and one of the reasons is that the French polls, unlike other polls, have so far, seem to be accurate, far more accurate than others.

But it's still going to be very tight this week. And I think the fundamentals of this, if you look at what happened in France. The two mainstay parties of the French Fifth Republic, have been ignominiously routed and replaced by -- essentially by two parties that are anti-democratic, the FN and Mélenchon's troop; and Macron's Party, which is not anti-democratic, is barely a year old, is tiny and will force the President, if Macron is elected, to find a completely new coalition, after the parliament elections at the beginning of June.

I think you can still see the enormous disaffection, disconnection between the French elites and voters that's expressed in anger everywhere, there's a tremendous metropolitan, urban and rural/industrial provincial divide. And all that, is something that Macron will have to find a way of bridging.

And then we are not yet talking about economic reforms, and the European reforms, that he wants to engage with and where he actually also is challenging Germany already and saying, you know, we want things that you are on the other side of.

I actually tend to think I agree with him but, you know, he's got his hands full. And I'm using the French example, not to bash the French, not that I didn't think one shouldn't do that, but I'm perfectly happy to find a similar phenomena in my own country, Germany, or elsewhere in Europe.

So, my bottom line is, if we don't look very carefully at the fundamental sort of tectonic shift pathologies of democracies, both Europe and in American, then we would be making a huge

mistake.

That said, that is incredibly difficult to do in political climates that appear to be obsessively focused on crisis management, and on brokering very short-term agreements between very increasingly polarized political camps. So, that kind of adjustment is incredibly difficult to do short of an all-out political crisis. I'll stop there.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Let me drill a little bit deeper on this, you know, you all mentioned I think that the system is sort of weaker than it was, that people are less satisfied with the status quo, that they are sort of rebelling against in some way. That people not, like, support their governments coming up to the -- you know, stepping up to deal with the sort of problems as they exist, and alliances are fraying.

But, you know, since the topic is sort of the Zombie Liberal Order, I do come back to the question of, how does it actually end? Like, how would we know what part are most afraid of in terms of strategic vulnerability? Like, we look at this administration, right, it's actually given some reassurance to NATO, has given some reassurance to Japan, some reassurance to South Korea.

It's pulled back, to some extent, from trade war with China that was on the agenda in the first few weeks of the administration. And so, you know, are we going to end up in 3-1/2 years, that's presumed it's one term, do we where the U.S. is less popular around the world, there's reputational damage? There's a sort of stagnation on the trade front and economic front, there's lots of unilateralism and pull back from the U.N. and other institutions, but actually not much has happened, right? Not much else really bad that's happened.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: That's your optimistic scenario?

MR. WRIGHT: That's sort of the -- Yeah, that's optimistic scenario, but you know --

MR. KAGAN: (Crosstalk) is control, right?

MR. WRIGHT: -- there's a genuine optimistic scenario, that's economic growth, but let's set that aside and just assume. You know, is that what we are looking at? Or, you know, what could actually happen that would damage it? I mean, one thing I've worried about is an actual test of Article V, you know, that would really push Trump on that. There's a North Korea contingency that could really destabilize the situation, Northeast Asia.

But if I could just ask to, maybe, to say, you know, like best and worst case scenario about the next four years. Not just the Trump administration, but also looking, whether it's Brexit, or France, or even the Middle East. What's the range of outcomes that we should be considering from where we sit today, given the constraints that currently exist? So, if any one wants to jump in first, or I'll just --

MR. FÜCKS: Okay. Maybe you're right, but the problem starts with this kind of unpredictability. When the central pillar, still as the guarantor of last resort for the International Order, the United States is becoming unpredictable. We are already in a mess, and I would not dare to decide which factions or which occurrence within the administration and the Trump camp finally will -- or that get the upper hand.

I'm still extremely alarmed about the signals around the slogan, America First, and I guess everybody in the room knows the political history and the message that is linked with this role: America First.

So, will America go back to, say, a very rude kind of nationalist, economic and political nationalism? And this will be really, not only corrosive, it will be a disruptive factor for the multilateral order. Even more, in the global situation where there is no vacuum in global politics, when the United States is stepping back from its international engagement; others will step in. China will in, Russia will step in, and other regional forces.

They will step in, and the whole balance of power will shift. And in terms of the multilateral order, I hope very much to call another topic which may be not in the center of your foreign policy agenda, but Europeans think it's extremely important, if the United States will step back from the Paris, the Climate Agreement, this will be not only damaging to the international reputation of the U.S., but this will be a very hard blow to the multilateral global governance system.

Also in terms of a more traditional security policy, of course, I can understand what Bob Kagan was arguing, that we could not expect that this kind of imbalance in security responsibilities, and security spending, and military capacities between the U.S. and Europe, could go on, and go on forever, I agree with that.

And of course for the Europeans, this is a kind of wake-up call to become more grown up,

and to take more responsibility for Europe's security. But first, I think even if the Europeans will step up, which not necessarily means, more spending, but better sharing and pooling of military capacities, and more military integration between European armies.

We will need the U.S. as a kind of -- not only the nucleus shield of the U.S., but will need the U.S. as military ally given the potential threats and crisis Europe is confronted in its East and in its South. And will the U.S. be willing to step up to these Trans-Atlantic commitments? I don't know. If not, it will become very critical.

MR. WRIGHT: Bob or Constanze, whoever wants to --

MR. KAGAN: Let me just make a couple of observations, one is a sort of historical one, which is that it isn't so much what crisis emerges in the next four years, although there certainly could be major crises which you can't foresee. It's what the groundwork laid in the next four years, leads to, or the next five years or six years, whatever it is, leads to somewhere down the road.

So, you know, if you think about the 1930s, the 1930s, didn't emerge from nothing. Decisions made in the early 1920s, which seemed relatively minor at the time, ultimately proved critical, in particular America's withdrawal from any responsibility for Europe turned out to create an imbalance, turned out to create French insecurity which led to the Invasion of the Ruhr, which radicalized Germany more than in other ways -- et cetera, et cetera.

It didn't seem like a big deal -- Well, it seemed like a big deal to the French and the Germans, but Americans could look at it, and think, you know, so what. Similarly policies that the United States undertook in Asia vis-à-vis Japan, The Washington Naval Agreement, had effects that didn't manifest themselves in both parts of the world, until the 1930s.

So, what I fear more than the immediate crisis is the longer-term crisis that would come from decisions that are taken or not taken now, and I want to agree that the role of the U.S. is critical. We take so for granted, the degree to which the existence of an incredibly powerful country that is also sort of uniquely situated geographically has kept a lid on so many -- we know all the bad things that have happened, you can't even imagine the worst things that could happen if the United States wasn't playing the role that it's been playing.

And so if you -- and it isn't enough for the United States to sort of be there and not do

anything, because in order to sustain a Liberal Order, it's not just a matter of staying in place, you are actually constantly active. And it's a little like if you cut out a clearing in a jungle, and plant a garden, you don't plant the garden and then say, great, the garden is planted, that's it, the jungle grows back, it keeps coming.

And so, if you plant the garden you know you have to constantly weed it, you have to constantly push the jungle back, and if you just stood still, that would be the end of the garden. I really feel like that is the danger now, and that brings me -- and I'll just end on this -- that the forces -- I think that the best you could hope for in the current administration is that you get neutral out of the United States.

So, the forces that you talk about, Tom, keep Trump from doing terrible things. But it's not enough not to do terrible things. You actually have to be doing positive things. We are going to have, if we are not already in the middle of a crisis in the Balkans.

I'm sorry. I would love to believe the Europeans could handle the crisis in the Balkans themselves. I'm quite confident that's not the case at the moment, and it would require the United States' involvement as it has in the past, not dramatically, but to some extent. If that involvement is lacking, you are going to see things happen in the Balkans which, you know, have a dramatic effect on the rest of Europe in my view.

And you could take that situation and multiply it times 30 around the world. So, mere inaction, that doesn't have to be hostility to the Liberal World Order, mere inaction by the United States will undermine the order gradually, if not suddenly.

MR. WRIGHT: And just before bringing in Constanze, a quick follow up. If it gets worse, will that entice the U.S. back in, or will that sort of reinforce the trend?

MR. KAGAN: You know, there are two historical models of the United States to look at, one is the Cold War model, where, what you just described is what happened. The United States would pull back for whatever reason, things would happen, and the United States would get back engaged again. I mean, American foreign policy is a sign wave between periods of high intervention and then periods of retrenchment.

During the Cold War the sign wave was such that the valley -- the troughs were shallow

and short, and that's how Americans reacted, when they saw a crisis they came back to life sort of. Americans responded quite the opposite way in the '20s and '30s. They, as they looked out at the world, the worst the world got, the more they felt they should stay away from it, because of course, the worse things get, the higher the price required to fix it.

So, as the 1930s unfolded, and you have one crisis after another, the American response to that was: keep us out of it. Not, we had better get in. So the question you have to ask yourselves, as Americans, is knowing your fellow Americans, which is the more likely response today, if the world, increasingly, gets out of hand? And I don't know the answer to that. It could be that it's the Cold War model, or it could be that it's the 1930s model.

MR. FÜCKS: But didn't that kind of free-thinking already started with Obama? You know, reflecting the disaster of Iraq. I think it was Iraq -- similar to the financial crisis in 2007/2008, it was a kind of turning point. It was really catalytic element, and it changed the whole thinking about democratic interventionism.

MR. KAGAN: I mean, again, it's a question of which phase we are in, because you could have said the same thing about Vietnam. Vietnam was a much worse catastrophe, actually than Iraq was. It was -- the loss of American lives was 10 or 15 times greater, the divisiveness in the country was actually greater than Iraq. And yet, you know, five years later, they elected Ronald Reagan, and we were -- you know, it Morning in America, and we were going to be a powerful country, and running the world again.

And I think that was, again, due to the existence of communism. What happened? The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. My, God! The whole country said, oh, my, god, we have to -- I mean, who cares if the Soviet invaded Afghanistan. Today, would anybody care if Russia invaded Afghanistan, or the equivalent? So, that's that the question, you know, what mood are we in at this moment.

MR. WRIGHT: Constanze, best, worst-case scenarios?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Yes. Let me give this a shot. I think the problem with crises is that their net impact is so ambiguous. On the one hand you could argue that crises have always had a galvanizing effect both on the Trans-Atlantic relationship, and on Europeans. This is true of the Balkans crisis, this is certainly true of the Russians invasion of Crimea, and its continued meddling in Ukraine.

On the other hand, you could argue that that same effect is negative, in that it prevents us from noticing and doing something about the long-term tectonic shifts that I've been talking about; and that, or both about our relationship with each other, and about the stability, the functionality, the legitimacy of our domestic democratic arrangements.

And I think that, so crises aren't necessarily, I think, in themselves a guarantee for us being able to get out of this in any positive way. I mean, arguably you could also say that the financial crisis made us look into the abyss together, made us realize just how profoundly we are integrated economically with each other and that therefore, economic contagion has political consequences, not just for the relationship with European countries among each other, but also between Europe and America. I think that's the first time we understood that to that degree.

What have we done about it? Precious little. I mean we clawed ourselves back from the brink, but basically while conducting an extremely acrimonious disagreement about the appropriate economic policy, and the question of appropriate political reactions I think has been left unanswered.

So, I think my best case scenario really is, yeah, I supposed a sort of normalization, and hoping America doesn't do a lot of harm, or at least under this administration. But then, I think I would agree with both Bob and Ralf that that does enormous damage to the legitimacy, both of the West and of the American guarantor role. So, we are in trouble in my most optimistic scenario.

And my worst-case scenario, God, I can think of so many we could spend the entire evening here. So, I'm going to spare you that, but I think your imaginations can fill it in. I do think that it's worth saying one thing though. The reason why I'm so worried about these domestic things, is that I think we -- I mean we foreign and security policy wonks, have begun to understand that our domestic arrangements are really important for the bandwidth that we have, and for the resources and assets that are in play, or can be brought to play in security policy.

Now, there is a very direct connection between your domestic growth, say, and your security budget. But the reality is that it's much more difficult these days, because of the polarization and the heating up, the anger and resentment, and cruelty in political debates these days, to establish the kind of bipartisan consensus that you would need to change things like say, gerrymandering in America, which cements this, political polarization.

Or, say, money is speech citizens, the famous Citizens United case, or in the case of Germany, I would say our biggest problem, I think, is identity politics, and the existence, as we are slowly realizing, of an entire section of the German population, some of it in East German, but not all of it. That thinks of the Berlin Government as a somehow illegitimate regime, and they refer to it as the B-R-D Regime.

And I think that ought to give us pause for thought. That means that there are people in a very wealthy, growing democracy, supposedly the dominant one in Europe, that think their entire country is based on an illegitimate premise. Now, again, they are not a majority, but that's a festering sore, and it's something that we have to address.

That's just by way of example, a final one would be for me, centralization in the U.K. and France, and enormous divide between London and Paris on the one hand, and the periphery on the other, which has led to feelings of disenfranchisement and alienation politically, that I think also are not being addressed.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. That brings us on -- I think we should spend few minutes on sort of the root causes of this. You know, when Frank Fukuyama wrote his book, "The End of History," he had a final chapter that went often unnoticed that basically said. "At some point this will end because people grow bored. And they essentially, or inherently --"

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: I am not having a bored (crosstalk). I just want to say that.

MR. WRIGHT: "-- they inherently want to be -- they want to be engaged in the struggle, and if they can't struggle on behalf of a just cause," he wrote, "They'll struggle against the just cause, those struggles against democracy, and against peace." And so you'll see this identity and other issues emerge because, you know, inherent to humanity is essentially a struggle, and that he thought even without these broader ideological competitions you would essentially, you know, end up sort of where we are. And ironically he actually mentioned Donald Trump in that Chapter, as an example of somebody who was that way inclined, he didn't predict he would win the presidency, but he was one of the people he mentioned.

You know, but that I think is a minority view. Most people believe that, and I think even he sort of changed his mind, and sort of can't believe that it's more to do with dysfunction of democratic

societies. That there's -- real political flaws in the systems that we have, that millions and tens of millions of people are left behind, economically, and so my question is, you know, is this movement, or is this populist or nationalist moment a reflection of a deep failure within democratic societies that it's a 21st Century crisis of democracy.

Or is it a function of, you know, some sort of demagogues who sort of got lucky, and various identify issues, and the overhanging of financial quietus was actually handled pretty well from a historical point of view, but people are still a bit cheesed off because the recovery is not quick enough? I mean basically, how serious is the democratic crisis, or is it something else? Ralf, do you want to --

MR. FÜCKS: Maybe I would like to come back to Bob's comparison to the '20s and '30s, and I'm also sometimes thinking about this kind of parallel. And I think the positive thing we can say is that today democratic institutions are much stronger, and that the roots of liberal democracy, especially in the European societies, in the Continental European societies, are significantly deeper than it was in the '20s and '30s when large parts of the elites had been anti-liberal and anti-democratic.

And as an old leftist from -- leftist, one of the significant differences is that today the bourgeoisie is more cosmopolitan and internationalist, and in the '20s and '30s it was extremely nationalist. So, these maybe are the good news, but of course I think there are similarities, and if I got Kagan right, I have a similar notion of a crisis of modernity.

If you look back to history there is almost a kind of an historical -- that law that ever -- when we have a kind of acceleration of modernity, you have these kinds of counter-movements, of anti-modern, and anti-liberal (inaudible) revolts, and what we have seen over the last 20 years, was an enormous acceleration of fundamental changes in terms of economic globalization, which of course is ambiguous or ambivalent for the old industrial societies.

We have been losing our monopole on high-qualified work, shops and products. We are in a real global competition not only -- and high-tech, and high-end product, and this is exercising an enormous social pressure on especially the traditional working class in our societies.

We are confronted with an acceleration of global migration which, again, I would say for the liberal elites it's a positive thing, but for parts of our society they perceive it as a threat. We have experienced a dramatic cultural revolution in gender relations and the family model. The decline of the

patriarchal family model, which for parts, again, especially White male, is a crisis of male identity, and we are in the beginning of a digital revolution which will change, fundamentally, not only our economies but our -- than daily life.

And it creates, again, a kind of similar polarization between winners and losers. And this is one of the core problems of our society, that we have been too long, I would say, ignorant towards this growing gap between winners and losers of modernization. And we have to -- we think how to restore the promise of liberal democracy, of equal opportunities, and of equal rights and a kind of participation in the social and political life of our societies.

The winner takes it all model, to say it a little bit more brutal, the winner takes it all model, is partly -- responsibility for that crisis, and we have to get rid of that.

MR. KAGAN: But I think, you know, your answer is the answer to Fukuyama, because it isn't boredom, and it's much more inherent in -- You say, I think correctly, that modernity creates its own opposition, basically. And I would put it slightly differently, because it's not so much -- in my view it's the Enlightenment Project --

MR. FÜCKS: Yes.

MR. KAGAN: -- that we've been engaged in. And the basic principles of the Enlightenment Project have been a cosmopolitism, a view that neither race, nor color, nor religion, nor national boundaries really divides anybody, that we are all the same, you know. And this reaches its, you know, height in Europe and to a lesser extent, but still to a dramatic extent in the United States with precisely the expansion of rights, and two people who previously lacked them.

And it just seems to me that that has created the reaction, because certainly the United States, I know that there was an economic element to the Trump phenomenon, but I think a much more important element of it was the perception particularly of Whites, particularly of middleclass and lower middleclass, Whites, and particularly of White males, that the whole country has moved away from them. That they have been -- that others are being privileged at their expense, and they harbor these deep resentments at what is happening.

This is not the first time in American history that that's occurred. I think the 1920 election bears a lot of similarities to the election we just had, that was also a rejection to some extent of the

progressive approach to the world. It was also a time of economic dislocation because people were moving off the farms and into the cities, into industrialization; there was also rejection of science, and the sort of Darwinian versus the Bible.

And you had all these kinds of reactions, and that's what we are seeing now. And I just think that this -- the Enlightenment Project is not the -- You know, we think of it as a culmination of progress, but it could be that it has created its own reaction. And unfortunately our method, I mean, when Constanze was talking about how we have to come to grips with this politically, I don't know if there's an answer, politically, that we could possibly carry out, because our answer, which you just said, let's go back to respecting the liberal values, and the rights of all.

But it's precisely those liberal values that people are challenging. So, how does a liberal political system answer that challenge? I don't really see the formula for it.

MR. WRIGHT: Constanze, do you have the answer?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Oh, God. I knew this was heading my way. Boy! I've been thinking hard about this while both of you were talking. And I'm not sure that I have something that's fully thought out, but I mean, obviously, you know, from a German point of view, we've seen the alternative, and my parents actually lived through it. So, you know, for me this is not quite so hard to connect to.

And I think for most of us Europeans, I think it's (inaudible) -- we have, for us, memories of war and economic deprivation if not in our space, then in our neighbors' spaces. And perhaps through these stories the narratives of the refugees who come to us, from our own neighborhoods, not to mention Syria, do have an impact in teaching us how precious these achievements are.

That said, I have had conversations with my own interns, people in their 20s for whom, I think until Brexit and the American election, and the events of this year, it was really hard to imagine that this wasn't something that you could actually take for granted.

So, I think right now we are living through a series of teachable moments; that is actually passing that experience on, but the question is: Are we actually being taught enough to preserve what we have? That is a question that I cannot answer. But in my sort of darkest moments it seems to me that what we are seeing is the flip from the assumption that growth would be forever, that the cake would forever enlarge, and therefore there would always be something to distribute. To a situation where,

suddenly, some of us are thinking that even in a Western democracy life is becoming a zero sum game.

In which there are winners and losers, and the permanently privilege, and the permanently excluded. Now, it seems to me that the nature of Western Liberal Pluralist Democracy is to prevent that from happening.

A decent society, by our understanding, and that is what differentiates us from places that don't have this model, is that there will never be a permanently excluded class. But how do you achieve that when we are on the cusp of industrial automation that will permanently disconnect the labor market from the available jobs? In other words, where there is a very large and possibly very able working population that will never again find an entry into the labor market.

How do you do that? Thus, we know that suddenly conservatives in this country, and in mine, are discussing the minimum wage, and are suddenly becoming accepting of it, because that is seen as one of the bulwarks against social unrest in the case of widespread automation.

But surely that's not enough. Surely that doesn't solve the problem of the dignity that work and employment affords us. In other words, we haven't even begun to factor in all these problems in our definition of what a decent society under the premises of globalization and integration is. And again, I think the -- in America the temptation is always to think: oh, we can just disentangle ourselves from the world, because we have such a huge space and internal markets are natural barriers, and strategic resources that we can do strategic autarky.

Whereas, we in Europe, you only have to look at a map, obviously can't, if we cut ourselves off from the world we are gone. That's it; end of the European Project. But I suspect that that is an overestimation of the American capability for strategic autarky, and that even America would find itself very damaged. So, I think that the challenge of the age for us is to figure out how we create this kind of resilience for our democratic system, under these conditions that we can't change.

What I worry about though is that the sort of more hardcore ideological component of this American administration seems to think that globalization is just an ideology, is just a negative attitude, and that if you recant from it, like from a bad religion, or a sort of bad philosophy, then you can somehow go back to some mythical time and space where, you know, states are sovereign and control themselves and where none of this is a problem.

That's the biggest possible fallacy, and if I think there is one recipe for disaster, particularly in this country, then it is that assumption, sort of becoming the driving principle for American policy.

MR. WRIGHT: In some ways I think it was the fact that Trump's view was to go back to the '50s, right? That meant that he was unable to execute effectively on his policy. I mean, it's remarkable they didn't have -- you know, Trump didn't have a set of think tanks, trying to think about how to turn his views into policy. They hadn't prepared anything about governance, even in Europe some of the nationalistic movements, like hadn't really thought very hard about governance, but now that people realize that this type of nationalism or protectionism is popular, presumably some enterprising politicians will begin to think about how to operationalize it. And they'll be smarter, you know, and more --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Subtle.

MR. WRIGHT: -- subtle than Trump, but that would be hard, it's a low bar, but they would be more subtle than him. And I guess just, you know, are we seeing, and Rob, maybe I could put this to you, to some part that Bob and Constanze mentioned, I mean, and what you mentioned. Are we seeing a realignment for it's not longer left versus right, but as many people have said, it's open versus closed, or you may see a combination of the left and the right, on the one hand, and then a combination of the left and the right on the other.

And what does that mean really for our societies, and then for the, you know, international system and order more generally?

MR. FÜCKS: Yeah. Interesting question, we are struggling with that, for a couple of years. And I would say, the traditional left -- right divide of the political landscape will not disappear, it's still a paradigm within people are identifying themselves and localizing themselves in the political specter, especially if comes to a economic and social policy than issues. But I would agree that meanwhile another line of conflict, or a line of divide has become more important, and is becoming more and more dominant.

And this is just this kind of contradiction between those political and societal forces who, I would say are promoting liberal value in its -- than best tradition, including cosmopolitanism, openness, multilateral global system, cultural diversity, equal opportunities than for all within, say, a solid framework

of democratic institutions, balance of powers.

And another camp which is nationalistic, anti-globalization, anti-migration in Europe anti-EU, and is flirting with some kind of strongman rule, you know, this resentment against parliamentarian democracy and the idea that democracy is unity between leadership and people.

And this is, you can find further from -- traditionally mark left or mark right, in both camps, you can see it now in France with its interplay between Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen, you can see in the programs of these parties, they are all protectionists, they are all believers in national serenity as the highest political principle. Yes, the main axis today, internationally forces, and domestically, is the conflict between liberal and anti-liberal political forces.

And especially for people coming from the left, you know, there had been a long-term, I would say reservation from the left against liberal democracy, it was seen only as a kind of façade of capitalist rule. And for the traditional left, the crucial question was not democracy or authoritarianism, it was capitalist, more socialism. And this is one of the -- I think the tragic historical errors we have to overcome. The difference between authoritarianism and democracy, this is the main conflicting line of modernity.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Before we go to the questions from the audience, I have a question for both Bob and Constanze. Bob, for you on, one country we haven't yet is Britain, which is really interesting because the U.K. has, being a key partner of the United States and upholding the liberal and international order. But for whatever reason, over the last two years, both left and the right seem have to gone slightly mad. And we had the left sort of implode, and Rick Corbin, you know, and the right sort of moved toward Brexit, and sort of hard (inaudible) and Theresa May, she seemed certain to be returned as Prime Minister.

And so my question is like, where is this headed? Let's assume Brexit happens, let's not talk about negotiations, but assume that occurs, what role would Britain -- do you think Britain will take in upholding the liberal and international order? Will it continue to be outward-looking and global and a partner of the U.S.? Or are we looking at something very different?

MR. KAGAN: Well, it's a great question. And it leads me to mention one thing, which I think is important, which is that, we can't -- there is a global phenomenon that we are witnessing, but

everything is different in each country, because each country has very different circumstances and very different histories. So, for instance, I don't really think there is an alternative to the democracy in the United States, because that's the only thing the United States is, it's the only thing it's ever known.

It's very hard for me to imagine how that happens. Now, things can get worse, we can violate people's rights, we've done that historically in the past. But the democratic system itself, I just don't see any plausible alternative, whereas most other countries in the world have had alternatives, they've been -- you know, France has been France, not being a democracy and like that's true of every country in the world, so that's one thing.

The other thing is, you know, you asked me -- if you talk about Britain, I find, even though we think Brexit is, from short-term point of view, or current moment, it seems like it was not the smartest thing for Britain to do. There's nothing more natural than Britain separating itself from the Continent. I mean, you could just say that the aberration is not Brexit, the aberration was being part of the EU in the first place, or being that closely associated with Europe in the first place. That's not Britain's traditional posture.

So, the question is, how much do you want to read into this, other than normalcy? And therefore you get to the question that you are asking. The problem that Britain has is that it has been, in pure terms, in hard power terms, Britain has never recovered from World War I, and has been basically in secular decline as a military power ever since. It fought about its weight throughout the Cold War, and to some extent after the Cold War, but the trend has been toward decreasing power in the international system.

And I think that trend will continue. I don't see anything in the British mindset now. There were people who were optimistic that once Britain exists, it then goes back to being the old Britain, it's the old partner of the United States. I'm not sure that that's true and I don't many people in Britain who even aspire to that.

I think that what you are likely to see is a small England, possibly just an England by the way, because I still don't think you can rule out Scottish independence. So, I think it would be foolish to bank on Britain as a major partner, in upholding Liberal World Order in the years to come.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Constanze, the final question to you before we go to the

audience: You know, Chancellor Merkel has been described as leader of the free world. There's lots of people looking at her, including today, more praise for her today, meeting Vladimir Putin, speaking up for human rights in Chechnya, and also in Russia.

You know, looking beyond Chancellor Merkel, I mean, is this a mantle that German people are willing to take. You know, obviously Germany can't replace the United States, but in terms of the all the things the U.S. does around the world. But is there something that the German people want to do, if there was a vacuum that they would want to do more to play a bigger role.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: It's a mantle I wrap myself in every morning before I leave the house, yeah. But to be serious, look, actually I'd like to respond to what Bob has just said.

MR. WRIGHT: And dodge my question? Okay.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: And I'm not going to dodge your question, I'm coming to it. Don't worry. But I think there's ways in which the U.S. can abandon democracy without forsaking it. And it seems to me that the fundamental principles of the American Constitution Order have been challenged in the last six months, overtly, in word and deed; in ways that I would have thought unimaginable.

The independence of the judiciary, the freedom of -- and the special privileges accorded to the press by the First Amendment. The separation and balance of powers, and I could go on. That to me was unimaginable, and I think it ought to be challenged, and it ought to be identified as such. It is a questioning, a fundamental questioning of the American Order.

On the U.K., I tend to agree with you. I think that Brexit is premised on the notion of checking out of the kind of deep integration that the EU has pursued. I often haphazardly, often in ways that are burdensome or bureaucratic, but mostly are supposed to be in response to the -- are supposed to be an acknowledgement of the fact that we have been growing together.

And as I was saying earlier, the financial crisis proves that that's true even of the Trans-Atlantic space, and it's certainly true of Britain's role in Europe regardless of whether they are sitting on an island or not. The geographical -- the geospatial positioning has nothing to do, sadly, with the fact of economic and social and political integration. So, I think that the Brexiteers are going to have a very, very unpleasant awakening. They will find themselves having promised a return to state control of outcomes and policy that they cannot possibly fulfill, and they will then find themselves in a very tricky place.

Now, to answer your question about Germany: look, Merkel was the first to repudiate this notion of Germany as the savior of Europe, but I mean the truth --

MR. WRIGHT: Savior of the world?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Savior of the world, yes, I'm sorry, that too. The reality -- I mean it is true that Germany has found itself in a role that is somewhat similar to that America and the West, in that we are being asked to take on responsibilities for -- at least for regional and European Order in ways that previously only the Americans have done; and in that you will find the German Government and German policy elites, and academics and intellectuals, actually trying to provide a response to this in policy and in practice.

That's really new for my country, and I think it's worth acknowledging that at least it's trying. That said, we couldn't be more conscious that we are not in the position of America, and that we will -- that there is no way of Germany, perhaps, taking on a burden commensurate with its economic power, and its size as an economy, that doesn't include our making some very significant tradeoffs, and concessions with towards our neighbors.

And I would say that on that particular count we have been, at best (inaudible) successful, and in fact there have German Government policies for which we are going to pay, we either are already paying, or will pay in the future, because they've made us critics or even enemies within Europe and beyond. I'll stop here, because I'm sure there are a lot of questions.

MR. WRIGHT: Let's go to the audience. So, we have a microphone. And so let's take them in threes actually; so, the lady here in the front row, the gentleman behind, and the gentleman here; yes. And could you just say your name.

MS. WORTHHEIM: I'm Mitzi Worthheim with the Naval Postgraduate School. This has been really fabulous, I mean really fabulous. I was stunned this summer that none of the think tanks, except Hudson, were thinking about the folks who were feeling left behind, and what that was doing to us. Now, I think the whole question of technology has turned the world upside down, and it's not clear how we are going to get out of that.

But my question is, when the intellectuals get so caught up with their way of thinking, and they are not accepting these concepts of complexity, because everything seems to me is so

interdependent, but we don't get enough of that explained at the public. How do we get to that point of explaining to the public? I mean, the things are written in code, nobody can understand how the government works. I mean when I say that three-quarters of the U.S. voters didn't know we had three branches of government? You know, we are in trouble somewhere, and it seems to be that think tanks --

MR. WRIGHT: Including the President.

MS. WORTHHEIM: What?

MR. WRIGHT: Including the President.

MS. WORTHHEIM: Oh. (Laughter) The U.S. citizenship plus an extra --

MR. WRIGHT: The gentleman behind, the gentleman behind. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Stephen Shaw. Two brief points. Could anyone explain the enduring power of the Dolchloss Legende, that it has crossed the Atlantic, and it has, in the speeches, not just of our President, but of Sanders as well, of the innocent American people victimized by those nasty others. With the others might differ, but it's essentially the same appeal to resentment and hatred. And even if we could restore the -- we seem to be in a paradox that for some, if only we couldn't restore the liberal democratic order that would make America great again.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. And we actually have two right here, so we'll just take them together, and then we'll go back to the panel. Yes?

SPEAKER: I'm Samuel Garbon. Thanks to the panel for the usually stimulating and unusually depressing discussion. (Laughter)

MR. WRIGHT: We try. We try.

SPEAKER: This is 2017 and 500 years ago there was a current event, which apparently is a very well-kept historical secret, called the Protestant Reformation. And historians of the Reformation, whether they are Catholic or Calvinist or Lutheran, or a Baptist or secular, are now -- for centuries have insisted that while the church was in the interest of a strong -- the pre-Reformation was there for anybody, except the Papacy, to read it and so on.

So, the question, let's just to the historiography of the Liberal Order. Was the Liberal Order so liberal? Was it so well rooted? Was it so orderly? Or are we now, so to speak, experiencing things we didn't previously see or wish to see? And finally, for Bob Kagan, and American democracy, I

think that because of age I couldn't claim to be one of the few people in this room who in 1941 participated in street demonstrations against America First, outside Madison Square Garden.

There were street battles, and the America First Movement was not merely a movement of withdrawal, but had real authoritarian and fascist tendencies; whether there's some connection to the Trump family or not, is quite an interesting question. (Laughter)

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. A final question, to this gentleman here -- Go ahead.

MR. GAGLIANO: Lou Gagliano. It seems to me that both the United States and European group have two issues. One is domestic and how do you make yourself more effective to those who have been left behind. And the other is World order, at least Regional Order; and I think the U.S. defines it as the World Order. And what I mean by World Order is how do you control some of the rogue nations with proliferation of nuclear armament, and when the United Nations can't do anything, except to have meetings? So, what is the role of both of these entities? Thank you.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Invite them to the White House.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Great! So, let's go back to the panel. Just a lot on the table there, everything from the Reformation on forwards, so that 45 seconds -- No, I'm just kidding you. Ralf, why don't we start with you?

MR. FÜCKS: Maybe just two remarks, the first one concerning the Dolchloss Legende. It's typical, you know, for all these stab-in-the-back thesis of anti-Weimar Republic --

SPEAKER: Stab in the back, it's referring to the German political attitude to the defeat of (crosstalk) --

MR. KAGAN: Leave it to the Americans to do the translation with the Germans at the (crosstalk) (Laughter)

MR. FÜCKS: So, this is part of the worldview of all these kind of right- and left-wing populist movements. You know, reducing the complexity of the modern world, to this kind of conspiracy theory, there is somewhere a headquarters of evil. But also I will see my own political community is not completely free from that (inaudible), so the financial capital. But you have this kind of thinking exploded with the new social media. It is directly related with the structural change of our public debate.

And social media now have become a kind of multiplier, and catalytic for these

completely disconnected worldviews, really involving themselves, and this is part of the challenge. How to reach out to people who are meanwhile moving in this kind of parallel worlds? I can think of -- depend that this is also a challenge to think tanks and political foundations, and this is especially to remark, political education matters.

Political education matters to enable people to read complexity and to deal with this enormous storm of controversial information, and to build up their own enlightened than political attachment. This is a kind of precondition than democratic political culture, and this is a huge challenge to both our educational system and to our media.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Constanze?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Well, I have been fascinated by the whole the stab-in-the-back Dolchloss Legende thing, because it always seemed to me that that was a characteristic of fundamentally authoritarian cultures. In other words, it something that I have encountered in Russia, in German history of course, in China, if you go to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, officials will spend a long time explaining to you the rape of the Sun Palace, and so on, and how opium was brought to China, et cetera, et cetera.

And I've always thought that if you saw that popup in your own backyard, we are going to be in trouble, which is why I'm so concerned at it popping up not just in the electoral narratives but also in Europe. And very often, I mean, and this we certainly know from German history and from the Nazis, the Nazis always portray themselves as victims, while they were preparing to kill people.

I mean, frankly, the best case in point is the famous Himmler Speech, you know, to an Assembly of the SS, where he said, you know: "It's really horrible that we have to do all these nasty things, but we are the ones who are taking on the responsibility for the ethnic cleansing of Germany." I mean, that is the definitive version of that narrative.

And it's as revolting in that version as it is in any other version. It is self-serving, it is hypocritical and it is frankly evil, and it needs to be resisted. But it's also a sign -- I mean it is a sign, I think, for something toxic festering underneath what we have been thinking of as the healthy and functional state of our democracies, and I think we need to pay attention to it. And I think the biggest challenge for us is then distinguishing between what are real and legitimate, and imaginary or illegitimate grievances.

MR. WRIGHT: You are not suggesting we see that extent in the democracies today?

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: No. But what I'm saying is that it's part of the narrative of the extreme left and alt-right in this country, and it's been normalized by some of the people who are a little closer to power, and I'm going to put this very carefully. And I think that that ought to give us -- and the fact that that clearly has resonated, it's struck a chord, with a large swath of the American electorate, and it's striking a chord with the French electorate, the British, and even the German; if you look at German state and local elections.

Then that has to give us pause for thought. There are clearly people who are vulnerable to this narrative and, who, while they know that the people are peddling it are pursuing strictly self-interested and parochial purposes. They know that it may empower them as well. And so, again, I mean I think at the very least what we need to do, is look at whether their grievances are real and legitimate and try to address them. And as Bob rightly says, they are going to be different in different spaces.

Norman, I would not have been surprised if you said that you had been protesting the Protestant Reformation as well but (laughter) -- I would believe that, but I think I take your point. I do take your point that the much wanted liberalist and order was occasionally illiberal, and often not orderly, and that there was exclusion there as well. I mean, we have reason to examine our own track record. I'll leave it at that, but I think we know we can talk on this at length.

MR. WRIGHT: Bob?

MR. KAGAN: You know, I would try a case for optimism since there hasn't been a lot of that here. But to explain what I think about -- just thinking about the United States, because of course you are right, and it's very important and we, too easily have glossed over our history as just one, you know, marvelous experience of democracy, and of course it has been anything but in some respects.

And the kind of seething anger and hatred and racism, has always also been part of the American experience. And lest we forget, for the first 80 years of our history we were a sort of -- a democracy in part, and in part a totalitarian dictatorship, because that's what the South was. Based on racism, but it was dictatorial even toward its own people, because it didn't permit certain kinds of discussions to be had. That was America until 1965.

And you could go through every period of American history and find, you know, the

ugliness, and also violations of the Constitution. During World War I, we talk about the freedom of the press, the press was not free during World War I, treatment of minorities, you can only look at German-Americans in World War I, and Japanese-Americans in World War II, and the McCarthy period, et cetera, et cetera.

So, you know, the only thing I would say in making that point is that the question is not whether America has always lived up to its ideals because it certainly has not, the question is, has it better than many alternatives in the real world. And I think I would say, I feel safe in saying yes.

But there two things about this that I think are important now. In my view the Constitution does not save us, because the Constitution has been and can be run over, and what saves us is something entirely different and almost religious, which are the principles of the Declaration, which have an unbelievably powerful life in this country.

SPEAKER: That's true.

MR. KAGAN: That continually overcomes all these other horrible tendencies. You know, Abraham Lincoln who was the greatest Philosopher of America, he said that you have to think about the Constitution as a frame of silver -- I think this comes from somewhere in the Bible, and maybe you Protestant Reformation people know that. And the frame was around an apple of gold, and the apple of gold was the principles of the Declaration.

And he says, "The apple wasn't made for the frame, the frame was made for the apple." And his basic point was, it wasn't ultimately the Constitution, it was ultimately those principles. And so if you look at the long sweep of American history, and especially recognizing all the horrible ways in which we have violated our principles, and violated the Constitution, yet, the overall story of America is the constant expansion of rights. Not the continual expansion of rights, because there are setbacks, and then there's deprivation of rights, but the overall trend is a constantly expanding rights, which means that it's the principles of the declaration that have continued to drive America forward.

And that's why, even though I can see terrible things being done in the short term, in the long term the history of America suggests that that is the most important element. And that makes the United States different from every other country in the world, honestly. The only country that that comes close in that regard is Britain, it seems to me, which, in a way, knows no other form of thinking other than

one that involves liberty.

But that is unique and I think that's what saves us ultimately. By the way, and let me just end by saying, it doesn't just happen, people have to fight, you know, you can't just sit back and say, well, thank God we have the Declaration of Independence. But that is my reason for optimism.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. We are going to -- So we don't finish on a note of optimism, which I think is very important -- (laughter) I'm going to take a final lightning round of questions. We are going to go toward the back this time. So, there's someone right in the very back, and then a couple up here, but very, very briefly, because otherwise we won't have time to get to your questions, so just very quick. Yes?

MR. SELLERS: All right. Well, thank you. I'm a student at Howard University, my name is Jordan Sellers. And since we are talking about the center -- or the relationship between the United States and Europe, I wanted to talk about same-sex marriage, and marriage equality here in the United States, and how in the 21st Century, we've done something very social that has kind of cracked down on some type of hate crime towards that fight, for the LGBT community, or those who are either homosexual or heterosexual. So, what can we continue to do with that type of policymaking, so that the rest of world is embracing our social order?

MR. WRIGHT: Great! Thank you. And then the gentleman a couple of rows up; yes.

SPEAKER: My question I short, I'm not sure about the answer. I'm Mark Torqular. Could you address the relationship between the rise of the illiberal democracies or the illiberal non-democracies, Russia, China, Turkey, Hungary; and the populist movements among democracies? Is that cause or effect or vacuum-filling, or something else?

MR. WRIGHT: And then the lady here in the aisle. And then we'll go back to the panel.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Sana Bierling. I'm a Swedish Reporter working for a major Swedish newspaper. I wonder, it would be interesting to hear you saying something on how now we have in social media the most news are now shared in social media, and we have increasing days -- well-known echo chambers which provides us with something that is totally new, and how that can affect liberal democracies?

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. So, thank you for the questions. I think we'll go back just for

final comments, who can address the questions, who can address anything that came up in the panel, but I think it would be great just to sort of, you know, to look ahead a little bit about -- Bob already did in his last comment, but what the immediate prognosis is and what -- you know, if you've changed your mind in the course of this conversation about where we are headed.

So, maybe Constanze, we could start with you, and go to Bob, and then finish with Ralf.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: I don't know, but I think marriage equality is a good thing, and ought to be preserved.

MR. WRIGHT: Could you speak up a little bit, Constanze.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: I'm sorry. I think marriage equality is a good thing and ought to be preserved. I think that that is a civilization advanced as far as I'm concerned. I'm glad that my gay and lesbian friends don't any longer think they have to live in a closet. And it was a sad time when they did.

The relationship between authoritarianism and illiberal democracies, well, they are in direct relationships and that the authoritarian regimes, at least the Russians seem to be -- are trying very hard to advance these developments, and working towards that, sadly, I think it's possible for these countries to do that on their own. In other words, the Russian element there, is a necessary but --

SPEAKER: Absolutely (crosstalk) --

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: I'm sorry, is just an add-on. And I think, in other words, that if we focus only on external meddling, we lose sight of the fact that our own democratic vulnerabilities, our own lack of resilience are the real problem.

And the final point I want to make is to speak to what Bob just said about the American -- about the American democratic history being an expansion of rights. I think that today you -- or I'd like to make and one can make a similar argument for a European narrative, which is to say that the European Project has not just about been imposing bureaucracy, and removing sovereignty, but it has been about expanding peace, prosperity and democratic transformation on the European Continent, a Continent that has strong memories of wars and deprivation.

And that that is something of a utopian project on the same lines as the American project, which is why I am particularly troubled by the hostility to the EU, that you can hear from some corners of

this new American administration. That is truly troubling because it appears to diminish the European project to something that is inimical to America's interest, and to American values, whereas the opposite is true.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Bob?

MR. KAGAN: I totally agree with that, and I mean there are things to be critical about the EU, which I'm sure any European would know better than Americans do. But the alternative is the renationalization of Europe. And the renationalization of Europe is a catastrophe from every perspective it seems to me. It brings back old issues, like the German problem, and I think it undermines the support of rights. By the way, a German problem which would not be Germany's fault, but just as a fact of its power.

I'll just say -- I've already kind of made my big pitch on the U.S. -- but I do want to say something about the social medial thing, because it's really one of the great ironies, it's sort of instructive, because there was no -- at one time, if you read Tom Friedman back in the day, there was not -- the Internet was supposed to be the ultimate Enlightenment tool. It was supposed to break down authoritarianism, open up societies, and by allowing people to communicate with each other more easily, it would certainly bring them closer together, which was the original Enlightenment premise about commerce.

The Enlightenment premise is the more people get to know each other, they less they are likely to fight each other. And of course, unfortunately what the Internet revealed is that the reality of human beings is that in many cases the more they get to know each other, they more they hate each other. And that’s just a fallacy of the Enlightenment conviction.

But it's also proved to be a uniquely effective tool for those who wish to undermine democracy. And it can undermine democracy without anyone externally trying to do it, but there is no question that the Russians, and I think others will ultimately develop this capability, but the Russians are actively using social media to undermine democracy in the West.

It's a more powerful tool than they’ve ever had, more than any number of spies they ever paid for, more than the tens of thousands of nuclear warheads that they had. This may be the greatest threat that they have ever posed. And we are at the beginning, and I hope not at the end, of attempting to

address this problem, because it's going to be very hard to address.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Bob. Ralf, last word to you?

MR. FÜCKS: Yes. This too, than (inaudible) first -- as Constanze already commented on that, the relationship between liberal regimes and the anti-liberal revolt within Western democracies, I think we have to be -- I agree with Constanze that of course interventions of Russia and other authoritarian states is not the root cause of our domestic crisis.

But we have to be clear, especially -- you learned it during your last presidential elections, and for Europe it's even more obvious, that Russia has become the kind of headquarter of the new anti-liberal international, with a very constant intervention in public opinion than policymaking, within Europe, and so with a lot of channels. They are using financial channels, propaganda channels, corruption.

So Russia has become a force in European domestic politics, and we have to be clear about these kinds of interferences or interplay between right and left-wing populist movements and especially Russia. And we have it on -- I mean, already within the European Union, with Hungary more and more, and also with Poland.

So, there is no longer than a clear-cut difference between domestic and international. And the promise of China and Russia, the others of that kind, is less individual freedom, but more stability, more prosperity, and more belonging, national pride. And we have to address these, than promises. We cannot give the same answers, but we have to recreate a sense of confidence in the future of the liberal democracies, because the main emotional currency the anti-liberals are playing with is fear, fear of the future.

And as long as we are not successful in restoring that sense that we are able to form and to influence our future, I think we will keep in the defensive role. We have to recreate a new narrative of progress, I would say. We have lost the sense of progress.

MR. WRIGHT: Quite (crosstalk) --

MR. FÜCKS: And the last point. I agree very much with Bob's, I like that kind of narrative, of the magic of the Declaration of Independence, I would say together with the French Declaration of Civil and Human Rights.

MR. KAGAN: I know as a European you would have to bring that up. (Laughter)

MR. FÜCKS: Yes. It's not just about American exceptionalism, it is a about the project of the West, and the project of the West is liberal modernity, and this is what we have to adhere to.

MR. KAGAN: I wasn't talking about the United States as if nobody else mattered; I was just talking about the United States. I have one more important thing I have to do.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Do you?

MR. KAGAN: Yes. I do. Because Tom Wright, who is our moderator and therefore too modest to bring this up. Has a new book out.

MR. WRIGHT: Oh, thanks.

MR. KAGAN: It's called "All Measures Short of War," which is a brilliant discussion of the current geopolitical competition and what the United States and others need to do about it, and I just want to make sure you all know about this book. Now, I'm done. (Applause)

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: Very good. Excellent!

MR. WRIGHT: Very kind of you. Thank you. And thank you, Bob. Thank you, Constanze --

SPEAKER: Is it on sale in the back?

MR. WRIGHT: It's not yet, unfortunately. It will be in a couple of weeks.

MS. STELZENMÜLLER: The mini-series is in production already.

MR. WRIGHT: And thank you very much to Ralf. And thank you all for coming. And with that, we are adjourned. (Applause)

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