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GROUP INSTINCT AND THE FATE OF NATIONS

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone. And welcome to Brookings. I'm Michael O'Hanlon with the Foreign Policy program. And my colleague, Bob Kagan, and I have a special treat today, to welcome Amy Chua, the famous 'Tiger Mom', but more importantly, for today's discussion, although it's not irrelevant to our previous writings, the author of "Political Tribes".

A very, very important, I think, and cogent explanation of much of what's going on in the country today. And so we are going to have a great discussion with her, and you. Looking forward very much to the special opportunity.

And before I go any further could you, please, join me in welcoming Amy to Brookings. (Applause)

So, I wanted to begin by really just giving Amy the floor to tell us a little bit about the big themes of the book. I'm sure a lot of you are familiar with the book, it's gotten a very nice book launch so far, including with J.D. Vance, her former student. This is also, by the way, the woman who helped persuade J.D. Vance to write "Hillbilly Elegy," because he had written some of the raw material for it in a course that she taught at Yale.

And so they've had a discussion in town, and she's been around the country doing quite a book tour. So, I'm sure many of you are familiar with some the themes of what she's been talking about, and writing about already, but Bob and I agreed, we'd like to just hear, and give you the chance to hear from her mouth a little bit of how she would summarize the big-picture ideas of the book.

Then I'll follow up with a few questions for both Amy and Bob, and then we'll go to you by about the halfway point. So, Amy, again, welcome to Brookings.

And I'm not going to go into a more elaborate introduction, except to say one more thing, which is that I mentioned Tiger Mom, and you see I brought my props. I

also brought *World on Fire*, which is a very important book Amy wrote 15 years ago or so, before 'Tiger Mom', and before therefore her fame in many of the morning talk shows.

And this was the book that really began to establish her thinking and writing as a foreign policy scholar, in which she coined phrase "market-dominant minority" and talked about a lot of the stresses in many other countries around the world, across different sectarian and tribal lines. And I think much of the thinking that ultimately shows up in political tribes had its genesis in this very important book as well.

So, I will simply say that, as well as the fact that, as you all know, she's a Professor at Yale Law School, and a very, very accomplished writer across many domains. And now, my friend, the floor is yours.

MS. CHUA: Thank you, Michael. Thank you, Bob. And thank you all for coming today. So, I'll try to be very brief here. I originally started writing this book three years ago, purely as a foreign policy book. It was actually to try to get away from the 'Tiger Mom' thing, and to go back to my, you know, areas of expertise of a couple books on foreign policy.

And so, on foreign policy side, the broad thesis is that America, in stark contrast to the British in their heyday, we tend, for interesting reasons I can go into, to think in terms of grand ideological divides. You know, capitalism versus communism; or then that was followed by democracy versus authoritarianism, and then, you know, terrorism versus freedom, or something.

And as a result, kind of blinded by these ideological prisms we are spectacularly blind to the group identities that matter most to people on the ground, in the countries where we are trying to help.

And often those identities are not national, but ethnic, religious, regional, sectarian. And I show that this blindness to the power of this tribal identity, or ethnic

identity, has led, really to some of our greatest foreign policy debacles in the last 50 years, from Vietnam to Afghanistan, to Iraq.

And a lot of it has to do with the fact that we romanticize democracy, and again there are historical reasons for that. It's been a very stable system for most of our history, but we tend to think of democracy as almost like a panacea, even for group conflict, and group divisions. So, the idea is, you know, maybe there are these ethnic and tribal divides, but if just have elections they will melt away, there will be interparty -- you know, ethnic alliances, et cetera.

So, we really didn't pay enough attention to schism between Sunnis and Shias and Kurds. In Afghanistan I can talk more about, we thought of the Taliban as really just a fundamentalist movement, when in fact it's also very much an ethnic movement. It was founded and established, and largely populated by the Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, and a lot of the development of the Taliban was that they were afraid of losing their dominance in that country.

So, what happened is, how the book came to be in its current form, is last February, a month after President Trump took office, I was teaching a class that I've taught for 20 years, called International Business Transaction, it's actually not just about business, I use it talk about democracy and all this stuff that I'm interested in. And I was making a point that I've made for 20 years, citing *World on Fire*, saying you know -- talking about how, because development countries have political and social dynamics that are so different from our own, we always mess up our foreign policy. We just don't understand those other developing countries.

So, I'm reading a passage from *World on Fire*, saying, "In developing countries under certain conditions, populist leaders with no political experience can sweep to power to the horror of the establishment, tapping into deep social resentments

and, you know, racially-tinged anxiety."

And I stopped, and 80 people are looking at me, and all are thinking the same thing which one student articulated, you know, she said, it sounds exactly like you are describing the United States.

And I had been reading a passage about Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, so it was really this wakeup call for me, I had to kind of rethink things, why it is -- so that's kind of a big part of the book now -- that we in the United States, for the first time in our history, and we can talk more about this, are starting to display some of the dynamics that historic -- destructive political dynamics that, historically, have been more associated with non-Western or developing world, and including ethno nationalist movements, elite backlash against the popular side of democracy, hate mongering, erosion of trust in our institutions, and so on.

And I can explain a little bit later, but the book kind of explores why we are starting to see these. And I also think, and this is the last thing I'll say, that starting to see, for me -- I think we are also confused -- how do we get to this place? You know, how can America look like it does right now?

And when you step away and see the United States this moment as part of a larger, global pattern, not just comparing us to the far-right movements in Europe, which is what everybody does, but actually seeing us through the same lens that we would view Venezuela, or Afghanistan, or Iraq, that we think have nothing to do with us, and I think it actually points the way forward, I mean the way out of this.

And I'm an optimist, believe it or not. So, I think that's my nutshell.

MR. O'HANLON: That's a great start. I want to draw you out on more big-picture idea that I've heard you speak about before, and then talk a little bit about an historical perspective on how we've gotten here, and how bad it's been before in our

history, and we'll of course bring Bob in on that discussion as well.

But when I first met you, it was about a-year-and-a-half ago, it was before Trump won.

MS. CHUA: Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: And at that point, it was, I think July 2016, and most of the people at conference we were attending, I think expected that Trump would probably lose, it was clear that he was going to be the nominee. But you were already worried about some trends in the United States, and you write about them in the book, and you saw some of them at Yale, and some of them were about elite attitudes towards the middle-America part of the country. I wonder if you could say a word more about that.

MS. CHUA: Yes. So, there is a huge racial dimension to this. I was one of the few people at Yale not surprised by the election actually. And I mentor a lot of different students, a lot of minority students for obvious reasons, but also a lot of conservative students, and so I've gotten to know people from all walks.

And I was worked about the situation in the polls coming out, because first of all, I knew all the people working in Hillary's -- you know, she's a Yale person, and Yale is bastion of Hillary support, the Brooklyn Office, where all my students, all my former students, I knew every last person in there, and I don't think there was a single person from a working class background or middle.

I mean it was very -- First of all who has time to take off two years to volunteer, I mean, that there was a class dimension, but secondly, it was the fact that there was probably only one open Trump supporter in the entire Yale Law School, among the students, because you just could not say anything.

But underground, just quiet voices, it wasn't that there were that many more Trump supporters, but there were a lot of people whose grandparents, or cousins,

or friends, who were from different parts of the country, who responded very negatively to hearing, basically, their sisters and brothers and parents being described as stupid, fat, racist bigots.

I mean it was very -- and I could hear all these conversations that we were having, and it is a difficult -- a big thing that we can talk about is, I think that if you don't allow people to air their grievances and say things that, you know, we are so -- we have such a vocabulary now on college campuses.

Like, if anybody is going to express something about immigration, I'm trained to say everything in a complete -- in a non-offensive way. I know all the vocabulary, it changes all the time. You know, Latinx is not just Latino, I mean, just very complicated, all the gender things. So, I think there are a lot of people in the country, they have not many minorities, they speak in a way that we -- it sounds offensive to us.

But if you instantly brand people who start talking about immigration, or worries about limits, it's oh, my, god, you are a racist, xenophobe, Islamophobe. What I've seen, is it just goes underground. And that was something that I noticed right even just on Yale, one of the most liberal places where -- And I'm not saying these people became Trump supporters, but it was just a weird dynamic, where I could feel it was just all this stuff going underground, and what was being reported which is -- it was just out of sync.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. I want to now talk a little bit about how we should view where we are today, relative to previous areas of American history, and in some ways this is, you know, one of the conversations I've been most looking forward to with the two of you, because I've learned over the years a lot from Bob Kagan as well about how to think about American history.

And some of the ebbs and flows and cycles, you write about it in the

book. You talk about various places and times in our past, like the Jim Crow period, where we've had a lot of tension. This is not unprecedented, in our own history what we are facing today, but I wanted to, again, draw you out on that, and then turn to Bob as well for his view.

And I'm going to use one more prop with another Brookings scholar involved. E.J. Dionne wrote a book 25 years ago, many of you know, which really took him to fame, and it's called *Why Americans Hate Politics*, and this came after the period of late-'80s and early-'90s, there was a lot of divisiveness back then.

Clearly, we had a very nasty period in politics then, clearly we had an extremely nasty period in politics in the McCarthy era, in the Vietnam era, and Bob can talk about, and you can talk about other periods before that.

So, to simplify, and put it as a question: How bad is today compared to the other troublesome political crises in our past?

MS. CHUA: Great! So, yes, a lot of what we are seeing here, we've always had nativist movements with every wave of immigration, but I'm going -- I think that we are at an unprecedented moment, with some unprecedented challenges. We've seen echoes of them, and this is for two reasons.

First of all, because -- so, America, part of the reason we've always romanticized democracy, and felt that it went together very well with markets, is because we've always been a country that is, for 200 years, economically, politically and culturally dominated by a White majority.

Obviously, with a wider-moving target, there's certain groups that are considered White today, that were not before, but that was the basic dynamic. So, when you have such an overwhelmingly big majority that dominates everything, it feels very politically stable. And it's not that there's no tribalism in all terrible group identity and

identity, you know, going on, it's just that there was one dominant tribe, sort of speaking and projecting, and all these other groups are silent.

What I see in the book is when you have a very dominant majority all kinds of terrible things can happen, oppressions, slavery, but people can also afford to be more generous.

What's happened today is with the massive demographic change that we have been undergoing, with Whites on the verge of becoming a minority, around 2044, is what the prediction usually say, Whites are no longer going to be a majority at the national level in this country.

As a result of that, and it may not feel this way to people in this room, we are at this weird situation where every group in America today feels threatened. Not just African-Americans and minorities, Whites feel threatened. There are a couple of fascinating statistics that I quote, that I had to go double-check, because I just couldn't believe they were true, but there are Pew, there are -- 67 percent of White working-class Americans feel that they are the subject of war, of discrimination and persecution than minorities.

Sixty-seven percent of the White working-class; and more than half of Whites in general, in this country feel that way. Asians and Latinos feel threatened, not just Muslims and Jews feel threatened, Christians feel threatened now. You can really see that in the political rhetoric right now.

With Donald Trump in the Office, women definitely feel threatened, but with the Me Too Movement, men feel threatened. So, straights and gays, both feel threatened, liberals and conservatives, and everybody views other people's claims of being threatened as preposterous, but that is exactly the point of political tribalism.

So, what happens is, when people feel threatened, that is when they

become more tribal, again, this is also, there are studies showing this, that's when they get more insular, more defensive, more us versus them. So, that's point one of what's different about -- yes, we had that in some southern states, at the state level, with Whites losing their majority status.

The second point too, is something that I think is lost a lot when people just fling around these terms, White supremacy, or racist country, one of the most -- this goes back to the question Michael asked me before -- one of the biggest changes, I think, in this country is the new White against White resentment, that is the divide between, for lack of a better term, I'll say, coastal Whites, urban -- basically everyone in this room with me.

You know, people who view themselves -- have interacted with a lot of minorities, view themselves as tolerant, multicultural, cosmopolitan, you know, worldly, liberal, progressive. You could be Republican or Democrat, but that group, the difference that group and the, you know, kind of Trump space, the inland or heartland Whites, is so stark now that it -- I've been writing about ethnicity for 20 years. I have one article that was a 20-page footnote, describing what ethnicity is.

You know, the constructivist theory, and all this stuff, but while we are simplifying, the divide between coastal Whites and inland Whites, or rural, is so stark now that it's almost like and ethnic difference. There was so little interaction and inter-marriage, it is actually much more likely for a Caucasian person in New York City, or New Haven, or D.C., to intermarry with somebody from Asia, or a Muslim, or Africa, than it is from, you know, Kentucky, actually.

And it's just such a stark cultural divide going back J.C. Vance's book, people look different, they speak differently, so probably we find each other offensive. They eat different things, something Donald Trump has tapped into. You know, when he

says he gorges on McDonald's, you know, we are much more, we are a lot more recyclable vegan, that they dress differently, different sports.

I have a section, one of my favorite chapters is on worldwide wrestling, and Nascar, and all these, again, prosperity gospel, these mega churches that are huge in America, that we, elites, and I don't mean wealthy, just educated, we miss, we see -- and partly because we look down on them. You know, these churches where people pray for money, these are very much a part of America.

And so that's the other divide, and I talk about. So, I think those are the two big differences that have -- when Michael raise this idea of a market dominant minority, I'll come back to that. It's a big concept for me. I used to say for 20 years that the United States didn't have one. We had all kinds of other problems, that our country was dominated economically, and politically, by a majority, so we didn't get --

So, the classic case of a market-dominant minority is Indonesia where 3 percent, a tiny Chinese minority controls 70 to 80 percent of the private economy, and all the major conglomerates. Three percent ethnic Chinese controlling 70 percent of Indonesia's economy, and there's all this resentment. It's very taboo, when I coin this, America is very uncomfortable with that.

It feels like: are you stereotyping, and I just document the numbers. And what I say is that when you democracy in these conditions, it's actually very destabilizing, because the majority weaponizes its vote, the poor, disadvantaged majority, and will often target that market-dominant minority, I say that that's actually what happened in Iraq, or the Sunnis, for very different reasons, were a market-dominant minority, 15 percent of the population; they had been long-dominant, first under the Ottomans, which is a Sunni power, and then under the British who love to divide and rule through that Sunni minority, and finally under Saddam Hussein, who is a Sunni, who favored them.

So, when the United States comes in and says, let's have majority rule elections, you're giving that to the long-oppressed Shia what's going to happen, and it's exactly what I predicted afterward to *World on Fire*, that you are not going to get peace and prosperity, you are going to get the oppressed majority using that majority power to revenge, you know, seek revenge, payback time.

And I'll just say, coming back to the United States, that with some caveats, and I just published a *New York Times* op-ed on this, but I think this is maybe the most interesting thing. You can start -- I think we are starting to see the emergence of a market dominant minority in the United States.

It's not like other countries, we are always different, and it is syncretic, and we are not an ethnic nation, but I think that you can start to see these, again, "us" coast elites as America's own version of a market-dominant minority that breeds resentment against this, like poor, less-advantaged group.

And the rhetoric -- it's really weird -- because we are not an ethnic, and coastally it's obviously they are not an ethnic minority, right. We are not like a racial or -- we are not a religious minority. But wealth in the United States is extraordinarily concentrated, wealth and power on the coasts, between Wall Street and Silicon Valley, and Washington establishment, and Hollywood, the media.

And we are coastally; we are, as I mentioned an extremely insular group with our own way of speaking, very judgmental, morally superior. And here is the piece where Trump comes in. One of the most disturbing things about countries with a market-dominant minorities, is you frequently see demagogues whipping up ethno-nationalist movements, targeting that minority and saying, they are foreigners, they are not real people in this country, we are the real, you know, Serbs, we are the real Zimbabweans, we must take back our country.

And because coastal elites are viewed as being pro-minority, pro Black Lives Matter, pro immigrants, pro helping the poor in Africa and developing countries, it's easy, and many in the heartland, there are a lot of demagogic voices that depict coastal elites as wanting to sell the country to foreigners, as not real Americans.

So, you can see in President Trump's rhetoric, the way he came in, "make America great again," he actually used a certain language that: we need to take back our country. So, we are at this point where it's like two -- we are almost like two Americas with each side saying, the other side is not -- that does not represent real America, those values are repugnant to me.

So, so that's why I think this lens of looking at other countries is actually very helpful. You start to find parallels. Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic. By the way, listening to you, I think of Richard Reeves' recent book, *Dream Hoarders*, which has some of these same kinds of arguments about how the privilege 20 percent is in a different place, and in some extent an isolated place in our country.

I wanted to bring in Bob, and really it's the same question, about where we stand today compared to previous periods? But I just want to remind all of you, most of you know Bob's writings very well, he's such an influential and important and foreign policy voice for the contemporary debate, but whenever I hear him self-identify he describes himself as an historian, first and foremost.

And so I really look forward to how he looks back at our previous in history, and our previous troubles. Also, I love all of Bob's books, equally, but he once told me that his own favorite, I think the only one he really is happy with, which is the way he put it, was *Dangerous Nation*, which was a book that talked about how the United States got to where it was as of 1898/1900.

And how a lot of the antecedents of what we've become in the superpower and the post-Cold War era, could be found even back then. So, I really look forward, Bob, to how you are going to describe today versus the past.

MR. KAGAN: Well, thanks, Mike. I appreciate it, and it's a pleasure to be on the panel here with Amy, whom I've admired for a long time, and the book is great, and I recommend that you all go out and buy it immediately.

You know, the hardest thing to do, from a historical perspective, looking at the present, is trying to filter out what is new and what isn't new. And it's also, you know, we tend I think, or the average prejudice is, everything is new, and maybe to slight the degree to which things are.

So, it's a tough balance, and I don't -- you know, I'm not claiming, but let me just make a devil's advocate case that things aren't really that new. You know, this idea that the Eastern elites are running the country, and can't be trusted, that goes back to the beginning.

The sense that the elite, you know, you'd think about Boston Braum and, you know, the New York commercial community, the Eastern newspapers were dominant, and this was much resented by people in the Midwest. There's a long history of resentment against Eastern elites, and a long history of Eastern elites looking down on the rest of the country as a bunch of bumpkins.

I mean, you know, there's the famous *New Yorker* cartoon showing a New Yorker's view of America which, sort of, you know, it's flyover country on your way to L.A., and that's just -- that just goes back a long way. And it's worth recalling that the United States at the very -- at its very birth, there were three distinct regions that exercised independent political influence that had to come up with a bargaining strategy to deal with each other, because they were considered so distinct.

There was what was called the West then, which was basically out toward the Mississippi. There was the South, which had its own distinctive quality for obvious reasons, then there was the Northeast, and the Northeast tried to succeed, and later the South tried to succeed.

So, you know, the country has got a very regional -- we sort of felt that had gone away, I don't know why. You know, what was George Wallace? You know, what was the segregationist Democrats in the South, you know? I think these things don't go away. So, that's one thing that I would say.

It's interesting what Amy says about the panic of Whites today, as the minority, and there's no question that that's going on. The only thing I would have to say though is, the Whites have been panicked all the way through.

I mean, Jim Crow is a panicky response. The incredible explosion of the Klan in 1920 which was, you know, its second round, which far exceeded its strength even in the -- you know, in the Jim Crow era, or in the post Civil War era, that was a panicky response to the perception that African-Americans were, you know, moving up and joining people who didn't want them around.

And so, that was also a response to Catholicism, et cetera. So, I don't think it's -- we shouldn't assume that the Whites were -- they may have been comfortable, like for the first 30 or 40 years of the country. I'm not sure they were comfortable again.

And this sort of gets back to my sort of larger point, and I'll end with this. The one thing that surprised me about your book, in talking about America is, and I even looked in the index to see if this was true. You never mentioned the Declaration of Independence, and I think the great tension in American life, from the very beginning, has been the tension between the stated principles of the declaration, about equality, and natural rights, and that all men have, is the way they put it, and the fact that there is also

a feeling of ethno-nationalism.

So, America has this completely unique notion of nationalism, and in this respect it is exceptional. You are an American because you accept the principles of Declaration of Independence; that is what binds everybody together, because it's an immigrant country otherwise.

It isn't even the Constitution, because as Lincoln said, and in order to make the case for fighting the Civil War, the Declaration supersedes the Constitution, it's the principles that drove it, he called it the "apple of gold in the frame of silver," the frame being the Constitution. He says the frame was made for the apple, the apple wasn't made for the frame.

And this was the big, sort of, the key element of justifying an essentially extra-constitutional war against the South. And I think this tension can be seen, running through the entire era of American history, and the irony of course is, the Founders of the Republic were Anglo-Protestant men, and they assume that Anglo-Protestants would dominate the country and that culture.

They didn't think Catholics, Asians, Muslims, African-Americans, or women for that matter, were really fit to run a democracy, but, and this was the crucial thing, because of the reason for their separation -- because of the separation from Britain, they had to declare that their rights didn't derive from the fact that they were English. They had to declare that they were universal rights that everybody had, and that's how come we can separate from the King, because he's depriving us of our rights.

That which was almost an expedient argument at the time, although I don't think that many of them believed it, nevertheless took on real life, and you could no longer say that the success of American democracy had anything to do with ethnicity, or anything else, because everybody had these rights.

And this, as I say, we've been at war over this for a long time. Now, I'll just -- I said I was going to end with that, but I'm going to end with this, which is: I have a hard time looking at this debate that you're talking about. This is personal, but I have a hard time regarding both sides of this debate, as equal.

MS. CHUA: Oh, no, no.

MR. KAGAN: Because I think that we have always had people in this country, from the days of slavery, to the post-Civil War era, all the way through, you know, to today, who are in a sense rejecting the principles of the Declaration.

Who are in a sense insisting on an ethno-nationalism, and Trump is the first President to articulate, in his own way, but clearly and ethno-nationalism which is not about the declaration of Independence. And I don't view these two arguments as equal. I have no sympathy for people who want to negate the basic premise on which our nation was founded.

I don't care what their beef is, even, let alone that the Whites feel that they've been overrun by the fact that others have been granted rights. That has been offensive to Whites for two centuries.

MS. CHUA: Can I just?

MR. O'HANLON: Please.

MS. CHUA: So, first of all, absolutely brilliant. And I don't think that we -
- I actually don't think we disagree, I don't think they are equal either. In fact my concept of -- I don't mention the declaration, but the concept that I want to come back to is I think that America is unique, really, among all the major powers is a super-group, and a super-group is a -- a country is one that has a very strong national identity that can bind very diverse people together, and the reason we have one is because even the Founders, as individuals, may have been racists, or whatever.

The principles we have are -- in our Constitution and the Declaration, are such that this country is ethnically and religiously neutral that is we -- our overarching national identity does not -- is not ethno-nationalist, and it's very special. I'm fascinated to learn all the different reasons why, but it does not belong to any ethnic subgroups.

So, I totally agree with that this new thing is just virulent and un-American, not our principles, so I'm not doing -- again, it's so interesting, I felt like this book, *Political Tribalism*, I don't pull any punches on either side, and I feel like everything is -- that the response that I've gotten is very politically tribal, because I am not equating White supremacy and racist -- I'm not saying that, you know, the Ku Klux Klan is the same thing as identity politics. No.

There are enough people mad, and some other people are already saying how terrible the situation is, how racist everything is, how racist the country is. My response is: how do we understand how we got here, and how do we -- So let's say we want to get past, let's run it let's move to where Bob wants to be, where we all want to be. How do we do that?

And so I have no trouble calling out race that, you know, racism, these acts that should be called out and sometimes are not, but when you are talking about -- let's talk about the people who voted, the 60 million people who voted on the other side. I guess maybe this is where we do differ.

I think 60 million people is a lot of people, it's half the country, and it's true that many, many, many millions of them may have voted for the worst reasons, but because I've studied ethnic hatred, and discrimination, and stereotyping for all my academic career, I see it as it's almost the definition of a prejudice and a stereotype to ascribe characteristics and a set of traits to a large body people that you've never interacted with or seen.

So, as soon as the unit starts to get better, maybe you could say that whole school is racist and bigoted, okay, I mean I still think you are going to miss something, or that whole town is. But once we are at 60 million, so that's my -- my book comes at things, and I notice that a lot of the books are on one side or the other.

Like our social media is in the grip of political tribalism, books are either so anti-tribe, or whatever, or also the -- and culture, and it's just -- so I didn't want to do that, my lens is different.

So, I don't think I have any disagreement with Bob. Like, I'm not, you know, equalizing or making any equivalence, but if you asked the question differently, which is: how did we get to this horrible moment we are? And how do we have the next election come out maybe in a different way? What is the best strategy for that? And is that just to say, do you know what, everybody on the other -- who voted that the other way is an ignorant bigot, is that going to -- I mean I've heard that.

Let's just whip up the base, or whatever and, again, I think once we kind of look through these different lenses, like Venezuela, we are also -- some of the fun studies in the book are about how we, when we connect with the group, human beings, we see everything through the lens of that group, and I'm not -- and sometimes we are just right. Sometimes it's facts, and sometimes -- it's not like when you see things through the lens of your group that every group is right in its own way. No.

But we do tend to cling and want to defend. Just think of your sports team, your favorite sports team, you don't care what the umpire says. You know, the New England Patriots don't care what anybody says about their quarterback, and you know, however real. But we also derive actual pleasure from sticking it to the other side, neurological lights go off, yeah.

And so I think we are in this moment right now where there's so much

anger, justifiably, especially among minority students, women just outraged that that it's interesting to figure out how to move forward.

And so I think that the book is just written from a different posture. And what I was going to say was, when you move away from your tribal anger or your party anger, and look at Venezuela, which I'll come back to later, that was a big oil-producing State it was -- before 1998, I mean we had a lot of problems, huge inequality, it is a starvation State now.

And that was a battle between a very sophisticated market-dominant minority and a very frustrated majority, and it was a fight to the death. It was where the two sides, that the pro-Chávez, and the anti, just like, I despised the other side. I have no interest in talking to them. And it was a fight to the death.

So I think, again, if you pull back and kind of look at this America through a bigger lens, I want to show that the stakes are very high. You know, let's say I agree with everything Bob said, which I think I do, I mean just on feelings. So what? Should we just cut the country in half? I mean should we just should we just have two Republics? Or, I mean, how do we keep the America that we have? Like what's the step forward?

MR. O'HANLON: So, I want to follow up with Bob, I could, and you may want to respond also to Amy. But I know that -- here's a sneak preview -- I'm not going to say a lot of your forthcoming book, *The Jungle Grows Back*, which is not going to be out for a few months, I don't want to get you too fired up about Bob's next book, but --

MR. KAGAN: No point selling you a book that you are going to forget by the time it comes out.

MS. CHUA: The title is unforgettable.

MR. O'HANLON: But I have read it and draft already, and I know that,

Bob, you are worried about where we are. And actually anybody in this room who's been reading you, knows that you are worried about where America is at this stage in its democracy. And it's more than just Donald Trump that worries you. So, I wondered if you could now be sort of devil's advocate of your own argument, and explain why, I think it's fair to say, you are fairly worried yourself about the state of our country at this juncture.

MR. KAGAN: Well, I'm worried because I think we are behaving the way we have in the past. I mean it's not that I think we've, necessarily, embarked on a new type of behavior, I think it's that a lot of people, there are only historical frame.

I mean Amy is right. We need to have a wide frame. We also need to have a long frame, and our historical memory -- well, for most people today our historical memory goes back to about, I don't know, Bill Clinton. (Laughter) But for those of you in this audience, you probably remember the Cold War too, but that's what our historical memory, that wasn't the crack, like the way you are taking it. I remember the Cold War.

But, you know, America has a long history, and if there's a long history that preceded the Cold War. And what I see is a country looking a lot more, you know, obviously there are major difference about what's going on, but a lot more like the country of the '20s and '30s, which was at a time before we felt threatened by, you know, totalitarianism, about a fascist variety of totalitarianism, of the Communists.

We really thought, you know, the rest of the world could basically go to hell, and we'll be fine. And I think we are in much more that mode, and that's my big concern. But you know, we are also, I think, returning to a certain kind of, you know, we just forget, as Amy has pointed out, there is this long history of unattractiveness, let's say, of Americans that we tend to paper over, because it all worked out.

But the fact is, this kind of seething cauldron of anger, including among

ethnic and racial groups, is part of American history, and we shouldn't forget about it.

But one thing I wanted -- in responding to Amy, and in general, so for instance, the 1920 election looks to me a lot like this election. What you had was certainly a rejection of internationalism. You had a rejection of progressivism, you know, the progressives have been dominant, basically, since Roosevelt. So for, you know, almost 20 years you had a lot of progressive legislation, a lot of changes were occurring, there were also a lot of cultural changes.

Again, you had African-Americans, you know, moving north in greater and greater numbers. You had scientific revolutions which were challenging people's, you know since -- it was challenging Christianity. If you want to talk about Christians being in a panic, they were in a panic at the time of the Scopes Trial, right?

And so the 1920 election -- and there was also, you really had peaked, sort of, after a very long period of unrestricted immigration, you really had a reaction against all that immigration. And the 1920 election was, in many respects, a backlash against all this sort of progressive, modern world.

The difference was, and so they elected Warren Harding, you know, who was kind of a nonentity, but he was a nonentity, you know, and if you go through all the various different periods of history where you've seen these kind of mass mob movements with demagogues. In the '30s you had Huey Long, and Father Coughlin, and Charles Lindbergh was very popular.

But the parties never let those people get the nomination, and part of me won't think that it was the fact that the Republican Party so democratized its primary system, which it had not been the case, and which Democrat Party, after the McGovern election had de-democratized their party system, basically lost control the nominating process.

And at any other time in history, there's no way the Republican Party would have allowed a guy like Donald Trump to get the nomination, it just wouldn't have happened. Now, people say, well, it's good that they democratized the primary system, but it isn't. (Laughter)

No, no, no. And it's not because I'm not pro-Democratic Government, I very much am. It's that the parties are not themselves democratic entities, historically. They are a party, they have a party interest, and traditionally, throughout all of American history, the leaders of the party decided who should be the nominee.

And then you had a democratic system to choose among the nominees. And I think this, it's almost like a fluke, in a way, that you got Donald Trump instead of, you know, Ted Cruz, who I think would have been -- I'm not a Ted Cruz fan -- but to say the least, but Ted Cruz is not -- even Ted Cruz is not Donald Trump. In fact, Ted Cruz tried to be Donald Trump and failed, basically, and the real Donald Trump came along, anyway.

MS. CHUA: Can I? Michael, could I say one thing? I now know why you asked me that additional question. Yes, again, you just know so much history, that it's very interesting. I think we just have come at things a little bit differently. Again, I'm an optimist, I see changes already. So, one thing I say in the book is, we are at this weird moment where there's almost nobody left championing a kind of a -- the group transcending identity, right.

For the first time we have Whites -- I mean not for the first time -- but openly felt, more openly --

MR. KAGAN: More openly, right.

MS. CHUA: -- than in many generations and we -- there are conferences that are covered by the *Atlantic*, but I mean, you know, that wasn't true 20 years ago, and

because of reasons I understand, the minority groups, and marginalized groups are -- well, I explained is in, the left's watchwords was always equality and inclusiveness for a long time.

It was very group transcending during the Civil Rights Movement, at least that was the rhetoric, but what happened, and I run through this history is, it's started around in the Reagan era, a lot of progressives noticed that this group, blind rhetoric, you know, universalist rhetoric, was actually used by conservatives to block affirmative action, to block any kinds of policies to correct racial inequities.

So, starting in the late '80s and '90s, there emerged, on the left, what we now call identity politics, even though it's actually been around for a long time, but it's where the left just -- it's group conscious. And on college campuses today, group blindness is the ultimate sin among progressives. You will instantly be labeled a racist if you are trying to be, you know, proposing any kind of group blindness.

And I understand why. I think you are erasing, it's Black Lives Matter, we are not saying only black lives matter, but you are trying to erase and not let -- you know, you are just trying to cover up the very particularized oppression experiences of these different groups, and with intersectionality the idea is that a Latino woman's experience is very different from an Asian woman, it's very different from a White woman's. I mean these are -- so it's very group conscious, and you're seeing this from both the right and the left.

And the optimist in me, I think there were a lot of mistakes. I worked with one, very closely with one progressive student who, I think we were talking about the trailer park, it's a particularly -- something I really like in the epilogue, I quote a student whose father is actually undocumented, he's from Mexico, a Mexican American, lived in a trailer park, super poor, absolutely brilliant, as progressive as you could possibly be.

And what he said is, you know, I think we made a lot of mistakes on the left. He said, we cried wolf too many times so that when the real wolf, Donald Trump came along nobody noticed. And what he talked about specifically, he's a Mexican-American, he's like: so what? You know, for him, the cultural appropriation thing. Okay, so what if they are wearing a sombrero in a restaurant?

I mean okay obviously some things are terrible. Black -- I mean there were just terrible things, but let's just say a well-intentioned restaurant is serving inauthentic nachos, that's racist, if that's racist; or, you know, if every -- it's a the line -- if everything is racist and sexist then nothing is.

And I saw in the special elections, and we saw, I don't know how to pronounce her name, but the transgender woman who won in Virginia, Danica Roem is her name, I remember after the election the social media, the news, what do you think about Bob? The candidate who opposed you, he was so horrible with the transgender bathrooms.

And she was such a class act. I mean she just insisted on talking about parking -- traffic patterns like for the things that people cared about. And she said, Bob is now my constituent, and I don't attack my constituents, I served my constituents. And so I feel like there were a lot of mistakes, and I'm not equalizing. Again, this is not to say that --

MR. KAGAN: I wasn't even aiming at you, Amy. (Laughter)

MS. CHUA: Yeah, yeah. I've got, I think I'm on the offensive, because I've had this moral equivalency thing. You know, because yeah, people were so upset, and I'm just -- For me it's like: how did we get here, and how bad is it? Can we get out? And I think if you look at Bob's lens, it feels a little bit more pessimistic, because it's like, there's bad America, good America; we've just got the cycle through.

I feel that America has extremely high learning curve. That there's a lot of adjustment going on and just -- So, anyway, that's kind of my, where this political correctness and identity politics comes back in, and how it, I think, is a possible source of optimism, because I think people are rethinking what is the right way to project a message.

And by the way, on the left, you know I think -- for a different topic but it's also in this book -- I think that the progressives have made a mistake seeding too much of the American Dream to the right. You know, progressives on college campuses, it's extremely important for us to expose the American Dream as a sham, and this is right.

Like, do you know what, we keep saying -- we actually have less upper mobility here that most European countries for most of our history, know huge blocks of the country could not vote, could not even be considered human beings; the American Dream has not really -- we have structural racism, so we need to have massive redistribution and institutional reform. As I say, a lot of struggling, ordinary Americans of all races actually don't want to hear that. They love the American Dream, they hunger after it.

That's why if you look at popular culture, they're watching *The Voice*, *The Apprentice*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Keeping Up with a Kardashians*, *Shark Tank*, *Shark Tank* is so -- you know, people want -- so again, I think there's a lot to be learned, and which is why I spend some time in the book saying that -- you know, we talk about inequality in a way, but I think we miss it, we miss the how the groups that matter most, the people on the ground, most of us elites don't know anything about them.

We don't know anything about these prosperity churches which actually were a huge source of support for Trump, we don't know anything about, you know, the Cult of Santa Muerte is huge in this country, 12 million, and it's described as a fringe, but

a lot of those people they have a political role, you know.

So, we don't really understand the poor -- the lower classes very well, and we just project, sometimes a kind of elitist: here's our agenda. You know, socialism on the Bernie platform, is much, much more popular among highly-educated students.

It's not -- a lot of working-class Americans love capitalism they don't -- what I'd say a lot in my book is: being anti-establishment America is not the same as being anti-wealth. Populist movements throughout most history, in Latin America and other countries, populist movements have, historically, been more left-wing.

Our populist movement, they voted in a billionaire, and I think you can start to understand there's something unique about America that, to me, once you put through this lens, I don't know, it makes sense of it.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic! I think we should go to all of you. I've got a foreign policy question, but I'm going to suppress it for now, and maybe come back to it later. By the way, just so you know, it's a thought experiment on what we should have done in Iraq; and the ideas that might have alleviated some of these concerns. But we'll come back to that.

Let's start here. We'll take maybe two at a time to start. And please wait for a microphone, and identify yourself before you pose your question. So, we'll take these two in the front.

MS. ORCHOWSKI: Thanks. I'm Peggy Orchowski, I'm the Congressional Correspondent for *The Hispanic Outlook*. I've written two books on immigration, and I really agree with you about the 1920s when you look at the 1920 Immigration Act, how it changed in the '60s that we got what we have, and now we are going back to a more restricted idea of immigration that really fits that.

But in that context I want to ask you about citizenship and the challenge

to the whole idea of a sovereign nation-state, I think that lies behind a lot of this. That you say, you can't look at the big -- look at a big group, and in the past, being an American was the thing that resolved that identity politics, the Americans going to war, the Americans you know embracing civil rights, and being an American, being a citizen, which is different, it's having citizenship has different rights than an immigrant has. If you can't even talk about American citizenship that, to me, is the main way you can absolve this, that kind of unity.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And one over here, please?

MR. BENDER: Yes. Thank you. This discussion I think is fascinating --

MR. O'HANLON: Identify yourself.

MR. BENDER: Oh, yes. Sorry. I'm Ted Bender. I think of the conversation here linking up with a recent book by Robert Reich called *The Common Good*, where he articulates principles of democracy as promoting the common good. And he's a terrific speaker as well as the people up here. He described that night when -- were at the airport, somebody recognized him as a public figure, and just walked up and said: What do we do now? (Laughter) So, I'd like to ask the people up here, could you articulate more, or focus more on: What do we do now?

MR. O'HANLON: Very good.

MR. BENDER: And this, it dovetails into this comment about citizenship.

MR. O'HANLON: Great! Thank you. Amy, do you want to start?

MS. CHUA: So, I don't think I quite -- I may not fully understand the question about citizenship, but I'm just going to tie it to immigration, which is, I think this is a very, very difficult issue. I'd be curious to know what Bob thinks.

Yes, I remember the 1920s and this -- you know, when some people think that we actually need to go back to have assimilation occur. I'm not going to

answer -- what I want to say is that I am the daughter of two immigrants, I'm a huge fan of immigration. My second book, *Day of Empire*, was all about how immigration has been our lifeblood, and what vaulted us to being a great power.

So, I'm a huge immigration fan. But I will say that if you look at these some of these studies I cite, something very interesting has happened two views about immigration in this country. These are all new. It used to be much more of an overlap between Republicans and Democrats, if you have the Venn diagram, a lot of people are kind of in the middle, not sure.

Right now the views among Republicans and Democrats are so extreme now, and it's not just that they are separate from each other, the left is way more left on immigration. I don't know if it's quite open border, but it's much more -- it's just much more open to the idea of immigration without -- and not strong on restrictions.

And then the right is way, crazy, shutdown. I mean it's just much more polarized. So, I don't know what's going to happen but, you know, I mean you got this -- you know, you're right about these trends, but you're right about 1920s and the Act and everything, but you we do have changing demographics now with much more political power among minorities and non-Whites, and I'm curious to know.

I mean, I think a lot of minorities who hate the disease of whiteness have told me -- I've actually talked, what next? And like, we need to get as many immigrants as possible to root out the disease of Whites in this country. Okay? That is actually a -- this is how virulent the language is becoming on all sides, you know, and I'm not in that camp, you know, because we have nothing --

So I, two things, and I'll turn over. I think first of all, having said that I'm a huge immigration fan, that again I think we made mistakes, I think we need to be able to talk about this. Immigration is a very difficult issue. I don't think we are having any

conversation at all, actually. I think it's more of a, gotcha, we are just named throwing.

You know, as soon as anybody starts to say anything, like you know but -- you reveal yourself, as a conservative do you say: but you know, should the immigrants all come from this country? And what kind of rules should there be? What about illegal? Oh! Great! You know, and certainly on a college campus, it's you can't use the term illegal you know, and that, if you don't have people who are -- especially in the middle of the country, I know Rob Bob takes a bleaker view of them. But I'm more sympathetic.

I think that you can be a person in the middle of the country who has never interacted with a lot of Asians, or African-Americans, or Muslims, who is worried about the changing face of the country. That they see the Grammys, and the Oscars, they are worried, they feel they are losing their country. I feel that that can be consistent with not being a horrible racist.

Or if it is a racist feeling that by talking and persuading exposure we can change them that. That is, I think it's a natural human instinct to worry if you are suddenly seeing something unfamiliar, and to instantly say: you can't talk about it, you're racist, it drives it underground, and that's what I see, and I'm so worried about.

I think if you don't talk to people, don't try to persuade, don't try to interact, it all goes underground, and that's where the ugliest part of America is, and that's what terms me a pessimist.

You should see these emails I get, and I cannot believe it. The anti-minority, anti-Semitic, it's just so -- and I'm hoping they are just fringe people. So, I so I feel like they are good -- they are terrible people, and then I feel they are people who are just worried.

You know, so as what to do; this is going to sound very Pollyanna, but I my favorite studies in this book are, there are actually quite a lot, that that show that if

you can pull people out of their tribes and have them interact as human beings, huge progress can be made. This is different than just saying, more diversity or more exposure; the studies actually show the opposite.

If you put just a lot of diverse people together, that can actually lead to more hatred and division. You literally have to have two people pull them out of their groups, have them interact. So, you take somebody who voted for Trump, somebody against, and put them together and have them talk about their children, or pets, dogs, you know, or sports or something.

And one great example I describe is the integration of the military in the 1950s, when they proposed that it was, no, public opinion, the military, no. When they did Studies after they did it, they found that the effectiveness of those integrated groups was as equal to or superior to the all-White groups, and when they interviewed people, it was amazing. It wasn't just Black and White.

I mean Swedish-Americans had never met Mexican-Americans, who had never met Italian-Americans. But what they said is, when you all are sleeping in the same quarters, dealing with the same issues, when you put your lives in other people's hands, it doesn't matter the color of their skin, it doesn't matter.

Attitudes towards same sex marriage, the same thing; 30 years ago 90 percent of Americans opposed, 90 percent. Thirty years later, that's a very short time, a strong majority in favor.

Why? Ruth Bader Ginsburg put it well. She said: it's when people started realizing that this faceless group was their child, their cousin, their neighbor and their friend, their colleague. And once you humanize it people actually become -- enormous progress can be made.

So, I wrote this op-ed I mean *The Washington Post* thing, I heard about

this *Better Angels* thing, which is trying to bring people together. I have this huge student group, its students, they are Generation Z, I don't know which -- they are, you know, you guys all messed it up, but our generation wants to reach across the divide. We have a bipartisan thing.

So, I feel -- I know it sounds like not a very good -- usually we like policy proposal, but I think we need to have a collective will to want to do it. I always liken this to, every one of us has been in a fight with a significant other, or a child, or a friend, and you say: you know I'm really trying, but you know deep in your heart that you are still just furious.

You know that you are really -- I think we all know the difference when we are really trying, to really reach out the other side, or when we actually just want to hurt them more. And so I'd like to think that we are -- you know, because I think that there is no hope if we are just -- if we get to a point where we view the people who voted on the other side as not just people that we want to disagree with, and debate, but literally as immoral enemies who are not America, we are really in danger of a fractured country.

MR. O'HANLON: Bob?

MR. KAGAN: Just a couple things. I mean one is, it's sort of a -- it's not a prescription, but it's about avoiding extremes. I mean immigration, for instance, the country is allowed to control the flow of immigration. You can be more open to immigration or less open immigration, but ultimately immigration policy is the consequence of a debate between people who are more open and less open.

So, I don't like this idea that, you know, you are not allowed to say anybody is an illegal immigrant. I also don't like the idea that we are going to go back to the '20s and have, you know, everybody come from Norway. And not to insult, I love

Norwegians, but I'm not saying, you know, we want more of them. (Laughter)

But you know one little anecdote, the Immigration Legislation of 1924, which was the most draconian in our history, made one person very nervous, and that was Adolf Hitler, because he was worried that the United States would become the Aryan Nation before Germany could become the leading Aryan Nation. So, he was very troubled by that.

But, you know, in terms of what to do, I have a kind of objective optimism, which is that, if you look at them history, despite all the attempts to push it back, despite all the ethno-nationalist tendencies and everything, the Declaration has actually always won in the end.

MS. CHUA: Yes.

MR. KAGAN: There's one consistent pattern in America from the very beginning, which is the continual expansion of protected groups, including what Amy was just talking about. Once a group designates itself as needing protection, sometimes the court says no, but it's amazing how eventually, almost invariably, and to a point where now we have rights crossing over each other and clashing into each other, but that's the trend.

And the bottom line is, you could talk about ethno-nationalism and White nationalists all you want, America can't go there. It can only go to the universalist-nationalism of the Declaration. There's no other place for Americans to go and it still be a country.

So I think ultimately we get back on track. I don't know exactly how, but we have in the past. Sometimes we'd fight a civil war, that's a minor problem.

But in the case though, I have to say honestly, I would say the most important thing we need to do right now, is to defeat Donald Trump, because -- and I'm

not saying that -- yeah, hold your applause (laughter) -- because, you know, America is a big clash of movements, and ideas, et cetera, but it is also a political system in which the winner of the political battle sets a tone for the nation.

I think it is clear that having -- that even from the time when Trump got the nomination people felt more willing and able to say what they really think after having felt that they were shut up all this time, and that, and since he's been President things have gotten worse. If you had a President who was trying to tamp down this stuff, instead of every day trying to fuel it, I think we'd be moving, at least, back toward keeping these things under wraps -- not under wraps but under control.

And I just want to say one thing. I like the idea of everybody should be able to express everything they feel, except that that's like a disaster. I mean one of the good things about -- I believe that political correctness has gone to some absurd extreme, especially on the campuses, but political correctness is a good thing also. I don't want people expressing their racism freely as a way of healing our problems, it's not going to heal it. You know, it's going to make things worse. You know, it's dangerous too.

You know, before World War I, there were interesting polls taken about whether America should be neutral or not, in areas of high German American concentration there was very high support for neutrality well beyond the German-Americans, and a lot of it had to do with: they are German-American neighbors, didn't want to offend them, you know, there was a lot of, we have to get along with these people.

As soon as we got in the war and people felt free to express what they really were thinking about German-Americans, a lot of really ugly and violent things happened. So, there is something to be said for telling people: keep it to yourself.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm just going to add one point before we go to your next round of questions. You just heard a Conservatist say that defeating Donald Trump needs to be our top priority. I don't disagree with Bob necessarily, but I want you to hear a Democrat say that I think having a better vision for the economic future of the middle class should be our top priority. And I'm concerned that the political debate is actually not promoting bipartisan attention to that question, even though I think there was a bipartisan message in 2016 that that's what voters need.

And I've got a few Sanders friends in the crowd, so forgive me for getting him wrong, but I heard a lot of a strong economic message from Sanders, which is part of why this 74-year-old Socialist from Vermont could actually keep defeating Hillary Clinton in primaries even after she had wrapped up the Democratic nomination.

The Party, voters didn't really want the de-democratization of the party to go to the point of, you know, Hillary being anointed before she had actually had to deliver a strong economic message of her own. And we know that there are amazing statistics that backed this argument up, and I won't go through them in any kind of great detail, but one, you know, that's been highlighted, in the 1930s and '40s, if you were from a working-class or middle-class family, you had a 90 percent chance of ultimately living better than your parents.

And that's sort of one way to define the American Dream. Today that figure is less than 50 percent, and that's a stark change in our country. The direction in the basic well-being of people in different quintiles, the 60 percent and below, are just not doing that well.

And it's not just about financial means, it's also about sense of purpose, sense of career, longevity, sense of loyalty from your employer, there are a lot of things wrapped up in that, and I think that fuels some of the anti-immigrant resentment when

people feel, rightly or wrongly, that some of the new arrivals are taking their jobs. So, that would be my own personal answer.

But let's get back to you. Let's go to the back part of the room this time. So, we'll go all the way to the back, and then, yes please, the woman in the white blouse, and then we'll take one more.

QUESTIONER: Langye Yoon, Foundation for Empowerment. I was a former Senior Economist at the World Bank. I'm not an American but I have lived in this country more than 30 years, but as a Korean, as a foreigner. So, my observation here, Amy, is that, you know, you are really lively, and not only Tiger Mom's popularity, it's just really exciting. And then I have two questions, even though I have many questions, I will limit myself two questions.

The first, you said that America is now special, it is part of the other -- so if this is a trend, world trend like Venezuela, and other things, as a development economist, I understand why Venezuela was in the situation, and all these things. I would rather think that, yes, this is not only special in America, this is the world trend in advanced countries, especially Europe and all democratic countries.

Since 1945, 70 years ago, it has been very, very special, and now it is a sort of like: okay, which economy or democracy we should have? There seems to be a struggle in every country. So, I would rather strongly ask you, to really think of America as part of the advanced countries, and other countries actually should look after this -- take after these countries? And then how -- the second question is that, you know --

MR. O'HANLON: I'm just going to hold you to one, because we've got to keep moving. Thank you. Let's take one more up front.

QUESTIONER: Okay. I'll leave it --

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. Let's take one more up here; there was a hand

about in the tenth row that I saw just a second ago? We'll take one more question before we come back to the panel. Okay, anybody. So, we'll come back, the gentleman here, in about the fifth row, please? Behind you, and --

QUESTIONER: Pardon me --

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. We'll, take both of you actually, and then we'll go back.

MR. GLUCK: Thank you. My name is Peter Gluck. I wanted to come back to Robert Kagan's point toward the end of his comments about the Republican Party would never have nominated Trump. But I think you could say the same thing about the Democratic Party, Bernie Sanders I don't think ever ran as a Democrat. And would you agree that sort of the history of that could go all the way back to the McGovern Commission Reforms that allowed McGovern to be the nominee in 1972?

MR. O'HANLON: I'll take this last question, and then we'll come back to the panel.

QUESTIONER: My name is Michael Measey. I wonder whether, to some extent, Amy is setting up a straw person, I'll use that term, in regard to the 60 million people, or so, who voted for Trump. You know, a lot of those votes probably, you know, three-quarters or more are what Alan Abramowitz and his colleagues refer to, as a result of negative partisanship, people are voting Republican because they are not going to -- you know, maybe they are called yellow dog Republicans in some ways, they'll vote for anybody who is a Republican.

And maybe we are sort of talking too much about, we need to address the disenchanting working-class, upset White male in -- but they are not -- I don't think anybody is calling all those people who voted for Trump, you know, deplorables, and so on and so forth, that's also what's happening.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. So, Amy, over to you, for whichever of those you'd like to address.

MS. CHUA: Just very quickly. I think you are -- I'll just take to the point - I couldn't quite get the whole question about America being special, but I think I'll just accept that. I actually do think America is special. I'm just saying that we are starting to display some of these dynamics, and I understand why.

Like, it's a very, when you have a certain resented minority, and a bunch of people who feel left out that they are losing their country for racist reasons, or whatever reasons, it's very common to see the rise of demagogues in these conditions.

I'm going to use this opportunity just to introduce a big concept in the book about, I do think America is special, when I said super-group, and I think this actually gets us out of this pointless fight about identity politics, with everybody pointing fingers at the other side, and then saying that we should stop it.

I mean my first words in the book are: humans are tribal. Some of these group identities that are now finally being expressed are incredibly important. They are the groups that were formerly suppressed, so you can't just get rid of identity politics.

But I think that America is special because we are a super-group, that is, it is actually very rare to have both a very strong overarching collective identity, and the second requirement of a super-group, is it has to be a country that allows individual subgroup identities to flourish. So, that you can be, I'm Croatian-American, or Libyan-American, or Korean-American, and very patriotic at the same time.

So, China is not a super-group. China is incredibly powerful, but it's got the first requirement, but not the second. That is, it has a very strong national identity, top-down, it's an ethnic nation, but it doesn't let groups like the Uyghurs, and the Tibetans, and all these, it suppresses those.

And interestingly, even France who seems so similar to the United States, I argue, is not a super-group. Again, it has a very strong overarching national identity, but it has this almost -- because of *laïcité*, people are -- minority groups are not allowed to wear their headscarf, there was the burkini ban, and a lot of people -- President Sarkozy said, this is the French concept of *laïcité*, if you want to be a French person, you have to eat like a French person, dress like a French person, talk like a French person, and many that were different than that.

So, you know, I think that we have actually the apparatus, Bob is -- it is actually related to the Declaration of Independence, because that overarching national identity has to not belong to any particular groups, but it has to exist there. So, you could have these sub-tribalism subgroup identities, but we can't only be about our tribes; which is why I think I keep wanting to find that connective tissue, because I think that's what makes America special.

And in this moment of anger it's very easy to not want to do that, to figure out what it is that can bind us all. And I'll say this is where the progressives have it right. I think the right thinks of itself as the champions of the big national identity because -- but having a strong American identity is not just a matter of singing the anthem very loudly, and waving the flag.

If you really want a very -- a national identity that resonates for all the people or, you know, that can bind us together, the system needs to be perceived as legitimate. People, if you want to ask groups to buy into this idea of America as a great country, you have to treat marginalized groups, smaller groups with the same dignity and respect, and not shoot them more in the back.

So, it's this project of having a big national identity that connects, us all is not just about flag waving, it actually, there's just a lot of work to be done. So, I don't

know. Again, I feel like with these concepts I can sort of -- I see the way forward, and I happen to think that people are moving in those directions.

MR. O'HANLON: Robert?

MR. KAGAN: In no particular order. I mean you're arguing that the McGovern Reforms were what kept -- that allowed Hillary to get nominated, right?

QUESTIONER: Maybe around Bernie Sanders, ultimately, he never ran as a Democratic candidate, the opinion later about the Republicans would not have condoned a Trump nomination, could also could said about the -- what people think about the Democratic Party.

MR. KAGAN: Well, I guess I just feel, I wasn't thinking about, obviously Sanders running as a Socialist or the Democratic Party, but I was mostly thinking about the fact that the Democratic Party, by creating these super-delegates, stacked the nomination in Clinton's favor, because it was a little like -- it was some little part of smoke-filled back rooms plus, you know, the democratic process.

So, I just think that the Republican Party went in the opposite direction, the Republican Party was sort of where the Democratic Party was in 1972, in terms of having -- you know, having really no check on what the primary voters did. On the, you know -- I'm sorry now I just forgot what the other questions were. No, no, remind me, what was it?

MS. CHUA: There was on immigration, there was a special question.

MR. KAGAN: Oh, well. And what was your question again?

MS. CHUA: The 60 million or not.

MR. KAGAN: Oh, oh, right. I mean the thing to say about the election story. I'm getting old. The thing about the election is that first of all, 99 percent of Republicans voted Republican, and 99 percent of Democrats voted Democrat. Now,

some of us were surprised by that only because if you viewed, as I did, Donald Trump as being -- there is no question to which the answer is Donald Trump, (laughter) whether it's middle-class or, you know, and so that's my prejudice.

And I just -- a lot of us in our East Coast snobbery, although Donald Trump is also from the East Coast, felt that this guy, whenever else you want to say, this guy should not be President. The interesting thing is, 99 percent of Republican voters thought: Why? What's the problem?

And of course, as you say, they also said, and, boy you know, between this Hillary Clinton, et cetera, et cetera, you know, we are not voting for her so -- and he's fine, and that to us, you know, who thought he wasn't fine, that was the big shock.

But otherwise, the election turned on a few tens of thousands of votes in Wisconsin, a few tens of thousands of votes in Pennsylvania, most of which, by the way, could have been made up for a higher Black turnout, which didn't happen, which says to me that the African-Americans are behaving more like a normal ethnic group. They are really mostly interested in whether one of their -- one of those guys is running, otherwise, they are sort of semi-not-interested, and they didn't see it as an existential threat enough to come out in those numbers.

But I think, you know, again -- so then you have to decide, so what was it that swung that? And the only thing I would say is, we just don't know, and I'm sure historians are going to be arguing this forever.

If you named a generic, I'm going to just pose for you a campaign, A versus B. One week before the vote the Director of the FBI is going to say that A may be under criminal investigation. Who would you say was going to win that election? So, you know, who knows what this was all about. There were a lot of moving parts in this election.

MR. O'HANLON: We have time for one more round. And so I think we'll go right here in the fourth row, just take these two questions right next to each other here in the fourth row. And then we'll have to stop, I'm afraid, to wrap up.

MS. NEAL: My name is Joan Neal, and I am with Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice. And my question is, what is your definition of what an American is?

MR. O'HANLON: Okay; and then the gentleman next to you.

QUESTIONER: I'm Fred Ackman. I'm retired. And my question is, could you interpret the East Coast, West Coast, as urban versus much less urban, and the fact that the country is becoming more urban will help to solve these problems?

MR. O'HANLON: And since you are so cogent and crisp, we'll go to one more here, and then we'll wrap up together. So, please, here in the front row.

QUESTIONER: Hello. I'm Marina Fessel, an African American Journalist. And I would like you to try and put your comments in context of what is going on with the allegations about Russian interference. Because, you know, as someone who is American, and yet I have an African identity, I watch all of this, and it seems that in the context of all of this, two questions constantly keep coming back to me.

To talk about identity politics, and put it in the context that you have put, and you are talking in your book, at the same time it seems that the main question should be: Is this democratic system credible and viable for the major population in the United States?

And if you do have some of your adversaries trying to influence your internal politics, which would be totally natural, especially an adversary that you've had rivalry with for over seven years, shouldn't there be more focus on reassuring the public, both domestically and globally as a democratic leader in the world, that your democracy

is intact? And while all the different organs continue to talk about this, and we still wonder whether there's an interference in your internal politics, this unfolds, but is that a sign of strength of democracy, or a sign of a totally being held hostage? And you, whether by design or default being divided among your different sectors?

MR. O'HANLON: Very good. Amy, would you like to have first or last words on this?

MS. CHUA: I'll say first. I'll keep it short, because actually, some of these questions I think Bob may know more about. So, just to the last question I'm going to -- I'm not an expert on -- I mean, countries try to interfere with people's elections all the time, and this is a terrible situation, somebody should be doing something about it. It's outrageous. I'm not an expert on that but it's dire obviously.

All I will say though, is it goes back: why is it effective? It's effective because we are a -- like he didn't -- the Russians took stuff that was already -- I mean they took stuff that's out there, right? The topic, it's not like they invented it, that we have these divides, there is this virulence, and then they magnified it. But it's terrible, and this needs to be addressed, and it's an emergency, the integrity of our electoral system.

What is an American? I could go -- I just go back to, I end the book with actually my favorite, oh, Langston Hughes's, America is aspirational, America, it goes back to the Constitution and the Declaration, we have never been the country we said we were, but I think it's aspirational. So I think of America just simply as somebody -- we have the Constitution, and we have rules, but who subscribes to the values of our Constitution which, by the way, we have repeatedly and shamefully not lived up to; but we, as Bob says, we are moving -- we try to move forward.

I also, embedded in that same fact, think that == that my book is very comparative, most countries in the world are ethnic nations, or more ethnic nations. Like

China is mostly filled with ethnic Chinese, speaking ethnic Chinese, very dominant. You know, Korea, mostly Koreans, ethnic or whatever. Even Poles or Germans, they may now try to be more multicultural, but they originate as ethnic.

Bob is right, we were founded by mostly Anglo-Saxon Protestants, but we started earlier with this kind of, many, many religions, and our Constitution was not; I mean interesting to know with the reason why, they relate to England, I didn't know that, but our Constitution was never only Anglo-Saxon -- you know, of we had three-fifths, I mean it was not perfect.

So I think that it's extremely important part of identity that we are not in ethno-nationalist country. So, here, Bob and I could not agree more, that to the extent that we have leaders and a President that is pushing us in this direction is just un-American and counter to our principles.

I think, the East Coast, West Coast thing, I'll just, maybe I'll -- I'm sort of, am thinking of the West Coast as -- maybe I'm just blinded. I just got back from L.A. and San Francisco, and I think of them as very urban too. So, I think you're maybe thinking of Washington State and Seattle or -- when say rural?

QUESTIONER: I was just saying you could explain those effects by urbanization.

MS. CHUA: Oh, I see. I see, yeah, interesting.

Well, going back, and just to end, I'm with Michael, in terms of what should we do to get out of this. If you look comparatively you see zero sum political tribalism when it feels zero-sum. You know, when people can rise and get out of it, I mean they don't feel they have to eat each other up for it, that they are not competing for limited spoils.

And it's not just that we used to have much more upward mobility, and

maybe this goes back to a response I had to one of Bob's earlier points, we have way less -- you are right though, relative to when. But compared to, say, 30 years ago, we have less geographic mobility right now.

One of my colleagues is writing about how the coasts are so expensive now. It used to be you could go to a public -- education used to be a much greater equalizer. You'd go to a public high school in the middle of the country, do pretty well at a state college, make it enough to get to New York or San Francisco. It's impossible to pay rent now. Education is out of control, tuition is so high, all this tutoring stuff, you know, even we can't even afford it.

How can somebody from a blue-collar family, in the middle, you know, get to a top university? And then you can't afford to even live in these cities. So, again, I have a colleague, and I think Brookings is doing some stuff like that too. Just, how can we change tax policy, finance policy, urban planning policy to not have the situation where people can't even be mobile across the country? That rigidifies the two Americas, like if people can't even interact.

Oh! Is this the last thing I get to say? (Laughter) Okay. One pet project that I have, that I actually thought of, but I didn't put it in my book, but as I traveled the country people were like this, what if-- you know how our kids have gap years, it's a big thing, or after high school they go, and mostly it's a pretty privileged thing. They often go to, like Australia, or the Netherlands, or Guatemala, and often with their own friends, so they are actually in the same group.

What if -- and I don't know if it's mandatory or whatever, -- what if children after high school, or even within high school, from one part of the country, went to another part of the country where they historically -- where they traditionally would never, otherwise, have gone.

And were forced to interact with each other on a common project, not as one group condescending to the other, let me teach you and help you, but like on a common endeavor. I think that would be -- I think that would be a great plan. I mean, a lot of our kids are just staying in their own bubble as they go to Australia, anyway.

MR. KAGAN: It's bussing.

MS. CHUA: Yes, Bob.

MR. KAGAN: That worked out great.

MS. CHUA: I have hope. I have hope. I have hope.

MR. O'HANLON: Bob?

MR. KAGAN: Are you going to go back to Amy again, at the end?

MS. CHUA: No, I'm done.

MR. O'HANLON: Well, we'll give her a choice, and a chance.

MR. KAGAN: Okay. Because I don't want to have the last word, I shouldn't have the last -- you should have the last word.

MS. CHUA: But you have the two tough questions.

MR. KAGAN: I have the two tough questions. I don't have two tough questions. We are we are still open to Russian attack in the way we have been because the Republican Party doesn't have an interest in stopping it, and so they control both Houses and the White House, and so we are not going to do anything about it. That's the reality of American politics. Isn't it wonderful?

In terms of what it means to be an American; I mean you know we have the lowest bar to what it means to be a national of our country of any country in the world. I mean Amy is right. In France or Germany, you know a Turk could live in Germany their whole life, they could be born in Germany, but they'll never be German.

In the United States of you -- there's basically if you if you follow the -- if

you follow the laws and pursue changes in the law through the accepted constitutional effort, you know, instructions, then you're an American. That's it. You don't even have to believe -- You know I personally would say, you want to believe in the principles of the Declaration of Independence, but that would wipe out, you know, huge swaths of Americans over history. (Laughter)

So, I can't really insist that that is one of the prerequisites. You know, it really is -- I think in obeying those laws and respecting that Constitution there does get created a certain commonality of values. You know, you take people from El Salvador who live in one kind -- live in one kind of way in their home country, they live in an entirely different kind of way in the United States.

And I remember having immigrants from Central America tell me, you know, this is what they love about America. If they follow the law, and they pay their taxes they are left alone. I mean that is the great; that is the great gift.

QUESTIONER: But the countries that have laws that have effectively eliminated the possibility of people who were born here, and claim American citizenship as their birthright, from being fully Americans, what do you think of that?.

MR. KAGAN: Right, and then we -- but then we passed other laws which negated those laws. I mean, Amy is right, obviously, and I know you tell me about the flaws in the American system, it's just a question of, to be an American all you have to do -- I mean, look, we had a constitution that was written with slavery built into it, and, well we had to fight a war to deal with that but -- you know, but then we spent another hundred years fighting back against all the efforts to deprive African Americans of their rights.

We are still not there, but we have been fighting and mostly successfully through normal constitutional practices and elections. That's all you could say. I mean

all I'm really saying is, you can't lead an armed revolution against the government, you know, other than it's free reign, that's what the American system provides. It doesn't mean you win, but it means that that's the chance that you have.

QUESTIONER: But I think a part a big of that is --

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to stop it there. I'm going to wrap.

QUESTIONER: -- but the mentality is different, when one person says, I'm an American, and another person says I'm American, they are very wealthy number one, it's a huge difference.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to say one last thing, by way of advertisement for the book, which you can find just outside the door, Dave Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal both endorsed this book, which is quite interesting given that Amy was critical of what we did in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, this speaks to the character of Patraeus and McChrystal, who are open to constructive criticism.

But also I wanted to come back to this one last theme, in closing, because when Amy showed me the book a couple months ago, I was mesmerized, and I said the only criticism I have, I think you were a wee bit too harsh on the efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And what I meant by that, was not that she was wrong, but that building a sense of Iraqi identity, or Afghan identity, is even harder than building on this sense of American traditional identity, and in a society that's been so fractured for so long you've got to do multiple things simultaneously.

You've got to have a leader who somehow rises above the fray, you've got to create systems of constitutional checks and balances on different institutions, you've got to create a legal system, perhaps out of nothing, that protects the individual, and you've got to have major political parties that are cross-sectarian in their basic

orientation. You've got to do all those things, and if any one of them fails the mission will probably fail.

And so that's the only reason why I thought that, in fact we didn't go into these missions quite as blind, or we learned pretty fast, but the task is so daunting, which is part of why I think she's ultimately correct about why this challenge needs to be remembered here as well, because human beings just don't innately behave in this way.

And as much as this dialogue was very good, that you just had, and as many flaws as we do have in our system, the notion of being an American is somehow a little bit stronger than in most countries around the world.

We should let you -- make sure that you don't have one last thing to say, and then we'll wrap up and thank you for being here.

MS. CHUA: No, no. This was a wonderful discussion, and we can maybe have a smaller discussion with individual people. Thank you for coming, and thank you for joining us.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Amy. (Applause)

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