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NO FRIENDS, NO ENEMIES?
TRANS-ATLANTIC RELATIONS AFTER TRUMP'S EUROPE TRIP

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WRIGHT: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Wright; I'm a senior fellow and director for the Center for U.S. and Europe here at Brookings. It's my pleasure to welcome everyone here to today's events on trans-Atlantic relations after President Trump's recent Europe trip. Not eventful, as I'm sure you all know. I'd like to also welcome those of you joining online. This will be webcast.

To look at this vital set of issues we have an outstanding panel for today's event, which is organized with TÜSİAD, the Turkish Industry and Business Association. TÜSİAD is one of our Center's core institutional partners and their long-standing support and collaboration have helped make possible our research and program in Turkey, most notably through their support of the TÜSİAD Senior Fellowship, which is held by Kemal Kirişci. I am delighted to be joined here by colleagues from TÜSİAD here today, including their CEO, Bahadır Kaleağasi. As many of you know, TÜSİAD is one of the most influential business and civil society organizations in Turkey and a staunch advocate for reinvigorating Turkey's EU accession process for governance reforms, for strengthening of democratic standards, and the rule of law. And I will add that we are pleased to host an event on Turkey's political future after the election a few weeks ago.

Today's discussion will look at a broader lens on the trans-Atlantic relationship. We'll also get into U.S.-Turkey relations and the future of the West, but we're looking at President Trump's visit to Brussels, Helsinki, and London, and the fallout which is continuing even today. We are joined by Susan Glasser of The New Yorker, who will moderate the panel, and the other panelists, who are Kemal Kirişci, who is a senior fellow, as I mentioned earlier, Bob Kagan, who is a senior fellow in the Project on International Order and Strategy, and Angela Stent of Georgetown University and a nonresident senior fellow here at Brookings.

So before we turn things over to Susan, I would like to invite Bahadır to offer some introductory remarks.

Thank you. (Applause)

MR. KALEAĞASI: Thank you very much. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Eleven years has passed since the initial launch of the Brookings-TÜSİAD program. In 2013 we enlarged the scope of the program to constitute a U.S.-Turkey forum at Brookings here. The Brookings Turkey Project, under the coordination of Professor Kemal Kirişci, has been very productive, with panels, reports, analysis, publications that has stimulated a debate on topics of relevance for the U.S.-Turkish relations, but also for the trans-Atlantic relations, as it is the case today.

The independent bipartisan thinking and debates at Brookings are crucial for the success of the program. I extend my thanks to all our colleagues in Brookings for their intellectual and organizational contributions. They have been remarkable.

TÜSİAD, as you know, is an independent (inaudible) organization. We are interested in all the issues that are for global relevance. Today we will discuss the common challenges encountered by Turkey, the European Union, the United States, with specific focus on the future of the international order and globalization. We are in a period of economic and political turbulence. This is valid for the global level, for the European level, and for Turkey. The populist search is the basic challenge to the western norms, so rules based system is challenged by deal based transactional relations. The transnational security alliances are questioned from within. Majoritarianism and polarization dominate over pluralism and consensus. Identity politics, triggered with the challenge of migration outweighs economic issues. (Inaudible) delusion contaminates reliable information. Democracies qualitatively and quantitatively need to be updated and reloaded to meet the challenges of our century.

The American scholar, Yascha Mounk, argues that liberal democracies are decomposing into either a liberal democracy or undemocratic liberals. The institutions of the 20th century have become insufficient to meet the challenges of the 21st century. However, this does not mean that they are obsolete, as some populist

politicians imply. They need to be harmonized to the complex contemporary challenges. Global problems and common challenges require transnational institutions and these institutions should be the platforms of our planet's solutions, not the era of new conflicts.

Strategic alliances based on common values and interests still matter if we want to be political and economic rule makers instead of passive and vulnerable rule takers under this fluid age. The major pillars of the trans-Atlantic alliance should the responsibility to reverse this regression and formulate new policies that make globalization more inclusive, democracies more consequential, to ease the social discontent.

We should also be ready for the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution. Digital technologies, coupled with globalization, have dramatic effects on the societies. On the one hand they create new opportunities to connect and disseminate ideas in a faster way they raise our living standards, and they prompt competitiveness, but on the other hand, its impact on the labor market and the true information is contentious. Our challenge is to reinforce its positive democratic and economic potential while correcting its social and cognitive shortcomings.

Ladies and gentlemen, no global source of power other than the West offers various norms and institutions for a rule based global order different from a world with transactional and unstable relations. Trans-Atlantic values have been the relatively successful synthesis of democracy, welfare, and development under the umbrella of multilateral liberal order, which is now challenged both politically and economically. And all the elections throughout the world are good case studies for this.

Challenges in Turkey are mostly not different from the other problems of the trans-Atlantic world. This gathering with our prominent speakers is a timely opportunity to discuss our common interest, values, and challenges. There is no sustainable economic development without progress in democracy and fundamental rights and rule of law. This is true especially for a country which wants to avoid the

middle income trap and move to a higher income level. Our experience as a business community in Turkey is whenever Turkey had better relations with the trans-Atlantic world and with the European Union in particular and moved to a more liberal rule based social progress and market oriented policy framework, the Turkish economy performed better. This is why we believe that despite current problems, Turkey's accession process to the European Union is still vital for the Turkish democracy, social development, and the economy. Turkey's problems can be overcome by strengthening liberal democracy, ensuring the rule of law, protecting fundamental freedoms. Our vision for Turkey entails a democratic order based on separation of powers, checks and balances, secularism, a strong parliament, and an independent and impartial judiciary. Big challenges, of course.

Our geography position and historical trajectory designate the European Union as the unit that will help us secure these ideals firmly. We know that the European Union has to change towards a better organized differentiated integration system, however, between now and then the orbit of Turkey should be preserved. We believe that Turkey is part of the European Union's system of values and interests of both parties, converge in a union that includes Turkey. And we look to our European and trans-Atlantic partners in supporting this vision for Turkey's success. Turkey is more than a political regime, Turkey is a pluralistic society.

The U.S.-Turkey relationship has also been in decline for an extended period of time. Differences in priorities and threat perceptions, quarrels over multiple judicial cases in both countries, in addition to the deterioration of Turkey's image in Washington and anti-Americanism in Turkey have weakened ties. There is unfortunately mutual mistrust and even a degree of mutual contempt in Washington and Ankara that needs to be overcome. However, historical perspective is important. It has been over 90 years since diplomatic relations were established between the United States and the modern republic of Turkey. This relationship has endured dramatic ups and downs, but has always recovered. That is because a strong partnership serves the national interests

of both Turkey and the United States and strengthens the larger trans-Atlantic alliance.

There is a larger point to be made. We believe that the merits of the U.S.-Turkey relationship must be based on an understanding of shared values of fundamental rights, democracy, rule of law, secularism, and free market, not just on an understanding of strategic interests or transactions based on tactical interests. We need to return to the fundamentals, fundamental values and overarching interests.

Thank you for this opportunity. (Applause)

MS. GLASSER: All right. Well, I guess it's too bad there's nothing going on, right? (Laughter) I'm sure you guys are here for a reason. I want to thank Brookings, of course, for hosting us today and to our Turkish partners as well. I can't think of a more timely conversation than to talk about the future of the U.S.-European relations on a week like this. And forgive me for staring down at my phone. You know, news is happening as we sit here (laughter), you know, and I -- please, by the way, feel free to interrupt us throughout this conversation should anything we're saying be proven to be inoperative (laughter) by the latest revelations. I was just told, in fact, during the introductions it does appear that President Trump, to the delight of all, has invited President Putin here to Washington for a fall follow up meeting. I am not joking, that is not an Onion headline.

So we have excellent news, not only midterm elections this fall, but our very own Russia summit and Helsinki follow up here in Washington. We'll see if that happens. But as you might imagine, I personally have been looking forward to this conversation with, you know, really several of Washington's smartest observers of the complicated and increasingly troubled dynamic between the United States and Europe at this moment in time. And so I most mostly am going to conduct this conversation as the kind of conversation and interview I'd like to have, as we're all group processing in real-time what the events of last week and this week mean in terms of American foreign policy, in terms of Europe and Turkey. And so we'll of course look forward to your

questions as well.

I was in Helsinki for the summit, so I am going to go ahead and start with that. It was, for anyone who has paid attention to Russia as I have over the last two decades, an extraordinary moment by any stretch of the imagination. I think even to the extent that Russia watchers were bracing for something most out of the ordinary, even they probably could not expect what has actually occurred. And, you know, I want to start with that.

You know, Bob, you have staked out a position here in Washington as the voice of doom and gloom. (Laughter) It's actually a great --

MR. KAGAN: Just doom. (Laughter)

MS. GLASS: It's a great position to be in because everything can then be plugged into that framework. So we're going to start with you. Was there anything that actually did surprise you or that you didn't expect in this interaction with Trump and Putin? And, also, what the long-term consequences are, aside from doom and gloom, for the European alliance?

MR. KAGAN: Well, thank you, Susan, and thank you for labeling me on the far edge of the doom analysis in Washington.

MS. GLASS: Oh, I didn't say you were on the far edge, I just said you staked out a position there.

MR. KAGAN: That's good enough -- fair enough. I mean, you know, the funny thing about this summit is that it was clearly meant by the planners -- and I would say probably by Putin too -- to look like a very ordinary kind of summit. They met, they had a list of issues -- Syria, nuclear weapons, Ukraine -- they would go through the issues, they wouldn't agree, they would look for common ground, they would say see you later -- I don't know whatever they said to each other privately, we don't know that yet, and then people would say, well, that was the summit for you, and that would be it. And I think Putin tried very hard to play this game when he said that he went out of his way to

point out that they disagreed about Crimea, which was kind of unusual for him to do that. But I think he was trying to help Trump sell the idea that this was a very normal -- and Trump didn't come as a lackey, he played hardball with him -- Putin was trying to help Trump. And I think that the thing that I couldn't have predicted, and I'm sure Putin couldn't predict, is that Trump would crumb the play by then saying he agreed with Putin as much as he agreed with his own intelligence services, et cetera, et cetera. So we were supposed to have a very normal boring summit in which Trump looked like a guy who, you know, was a world leader, and we didn't get that.

The reality, in my view, is that instead of this being a normal summit between two adversaries who were going to agree and disagree and look for common ground where possible, you really have two guys who are allied in a fundamental way in their global objective. And their common global objective is actually to destroy the liberal world order. That's Trump's objective for his own reasons -- which I don't want to go on forever, we can get into -- it's certainly Putin's goal, to divide and demoralize the West. Trump had already delivered that for him before he arrived at Helsinki. What Trump accomplished at Brussels, at the NATO Summit, was everything that Putin could have asked for and more. And so Crimea in that regard is a detail, Syria is a detail. Trump did more damage to the West at Brussels than Putin could have hoped for. So it was a great victory for Putin. As I say, he did his best to try to make it look like it wasn't and Trump was unable to play his part of the game.

MS. GLASS: I want to bring Kemal in here for the European perspective, but, quickly, Bob, there are as you know all too well, over the last year and a half we've heard a lot of push back times on this view, that there are real consequences to Trump's rhetoric, to his tweets, in particular on Russia. You know, we've heard over and over again, well, you know, don't pay attention to the tweets, we actually have a really good Russia policy. And actually even President Trump at times, not at other times, but at some times he has also parroted this line and he said, you know, we have been tougher

on Russian than any other administration, they cite a list of actual policy decisions that most people would agree, you know, would have been taken by either a republican or a democratic administration at this point in time. Does this summit fundamentally undercut that? Will we keep hearing that line of argument from those who have defended Trump's Russia policy, if not Trump himself?

MR. KAGAN: It's a question of whether you're looking sort of at the granular issues of the day to day or the sort of what I regard as the big picture of where things are actually going. And, you know, you could say the same thing about the NATO Summit. You know, substantively we've increased our forces in Eastern Europe, substantively NATO continues, et cetera, and the rest of it is just Donald Trump's rhetoric. And similarly he didn't give anything away at Helsinki. And so what's the problem? But I think, you know, in the real world, people have a hard time -- they think the real world is where troops are at any given moment, which is true, but the real world is also does anyone trust the United States to be an ally, does anyone believe the United States is still committed to defending the liberal world order that it created? So, therefore, when Trump makes it apparent as he did in his tweets to the American people that whatever he is doing with NATO he thinks NATO is a terrible deal for the United States, that it's something that is costing us and gaining us nothing, that Germany is not a reliable ally. At the end of the day that alliance depends on public support. And if you are undercutting public support and saying that it doesn't matter, you will destroy the alliance. You can't go to Brussels and insult all your major allies and expect everything to just chug along just because of those agreements.

And, similarly, it's very clear that Putin and Trump have real commonalities. That has seismic impact on the decisions of the all the powers around the world.

MS. GLASS: All right, I see some heads nodding here, but, Kemal, do you think there is a lasting impact on NATO? And, also, I want to ask you about the

NATO Summit. It seemed that one of the few leaders that President Trump really seems to get along with is President Erdoğan.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks for the question. And I'd really like to respond by picking up from where Bob left in the first round, the destruction of the international liberal order. I belong to a generation where I hear the word "Helsinki" -- Angela, I think about 1975. And we got to learn about 1975 as the beginning of the breaking up of the Soviet Union. That was the occasion, that was the summit when the U.S. leadership, the West, was able to put forward the very basic norms and principles of that order. And I think this is from where we came to this Helsinki Summit where I fear, I genuinely fear -- I was in my early 20s then -- I hope people who are in their early 20s today won't be looking back at this particular Helsinki Summit as the Helsinki Summit that repeated the one from 1975 but in the reverse order.

NATO, of course, is in the midst of it and I wonder whether the first summit could have achieved its objectives without NATO itself. And, moving forward, the world has watched what has happened in Helsinki, the world has also watched what preceded the NATO Summit, and will draw their own conclusions. And, as you pointed out, at that NATO Summit the two buddies were Trump and the Turkish President Erdoğan. I learned -- I am always kind of behind developments -- I learned the word "fist bump" on that occasion. (Laughter) I mean I know the gesture, I see it all the time in basketball games, et cetera, but I didn't realize that there was a word for it. I learned that. But what maybe we missed out at the NATO summit, that there were others who were walking ahead of Trump and Erdoğan to have that family picture taken that would have loved to join Erdoğan and Trump walking in the back. And that's part and parcel I think the concerns we have about the international liberal order as we move forward.

Bob didn't mention that his piece -- to me the word that struck the most about the piece is at the very beginning -- "illusion". How are we going to turn what has become an illusion back into reality as Bahadır was pointing out in his introductory

remarks there?

MS. GLASS: Well, I'm thinking back to, you know, your original point about the original Helsinki Accords of 1975, right, and this idea that we're all looking at the mirror version of, you know, the unraveling of the Cold War and the revival of something new.

Angela has spent more time than anyone else on this stage thinking about Russia professionally, including serving as the National Intelligence Officer for Russia during President Putin's first term in office, during the Bush presidency.

MS. STENT: Actually during his second term.

MS. GLASS: Second term?

MS. STENT: Right.

MS. GLASS: Okay. During Putin's second term or Bush's?

MS. STENT: Putin. Putin's second term.

MS. GLASS: Putin's second term. I want to ask just a little bit -- it's kind of a Washington question to start and then we can go more global, but I think it would be useful for this audience, how different is this summit than any previous meeting of an American president and a Russian or Soviet leader? I mean I think we're all struggling to get the right language and vocabulary, there's no reason to add extra hyperbole. But try to help us understand, it doesn't seem that the normal preparation was taken, the normal communication with the entire rest of the U.S. government that would normally occur. That's the subject of my column today, but, you know, I mean normally we would already know what's agreed to, right?

MS. STENT: Sure. Well, first of all, there would have been much more preparation. I mean it's true that Regan and Gorbachev met for the first time in Geneva and they did have a session without anybody else present except for the interpreters. And there wasn't that much preparation for it because President Reagan wanted it to be a get to know you summit. But, of course, the results weren't bad, and so we can look

back on that and say well that was the preparation for what came afterwards and, you know, it leads to the end of the Cold War. So normally you would have preparation, you'd have an interagency process, you'd have coordination on all of these things.

You talked about a Russia policy. We have at least two Russia policies in this administration, and one of them is the policy of the President himself, and the other policy is the policy of all of the rest of the branches of the Executive Branches of government, and it doesn't look that different from previous Russia policies, because the issues don't change, Ukraine, Syria, arms control, those issues have been there on the table.

So I think one unusually thing is the lack of preparation. And then, you know, there was this two hour meeting between the two Presidents with only their interpreters. And what really is amazing is we've had the Russian's, particularly today -- President Putin talking to Russia's ambassadors and Mr. Lavrov saying that all these agreements were reached and now we've got to implement them. Well, we don't know what these agreements are. Nobody has told us. We have the State Department -- unless I've missed something in the last hour -- hasn't come out with any briefing, the White House, Mr. Bolton, nobody has given us a briefing. So we really are quite in the dark. And that I think is unusual. The American people would normally have some idea about, you know, what happened.

And then if you go back to the press conference, I would say that the first part of the press conference, if you take away the last 15 minutes, was rather typical of previous summits. The two presidents given an account of what happened -- I think President Putin was a little bit more articulate in what he said, he had clear messages. President Trump had a number of things to say. And it's really only when the issue of election interference came up, which of course is such a neuralgic point for President Trump, that the whole thing got derailed. And I've never seen another press conference like that. So, if you go back to 2001, when President Bush met President Putin for the

first time in Ljubljana, and he gave the answer when someone asked him about what he thought of Putin, that he looked into his eyes and he got a measure of his soul. And after that -- and Condi Rice writes about that in her memoir, she said, you know, we hadn't prepared him for that question (laughter) and that at that point one thought that this was, you know, oh, dear, what happened. But I mean compared to that moment this is just extraordinary because it turned so much on what President Trump himself feels about the fact that if you admit that there was Russian interference it takes away from the legitimacy of your having been elected President. And that is, you know, unprecedented.

MS. GLASS: Well, that's right. I mean I'm really struck, you know, today in particular, as you said, with President Putin himself coming out and personally confirming that there were "agreements" made in the private session. How much of his presidency Trump has staked on a private conversation with a Russian leader who has been our adversary. And that in and of itself is so different. To your point about we don't know what we don't know here, and that in and of itself is unprecedented.

They just posted while we're sitting up here my latest column which has a quote from a senior U.S. official in Europe whom I spoke with today after President Putin said that there were agreements made and I said well, are you -- this is someone whose job involves dealing with Russia -- are you aware of this, are you aware of -- have you received any briefings about the results of the summit, have you received any talking points. The response was "Nothing. We are completely in the dark". Completely". Not normal.

MS. STENT: No.

MS. GLASS: No. All right.

MS. STENT: I mean usually, by this point -- I don't know how senior this person is, but the State Department would have released information to ambassadors and other people like that, at least having a sense of what happened.

MS. GLASS: Yeah. That person I quoted is quoted in the piece as an

ambassador. And I also mentioned in the piece that there was a briefing for a smaller group of senior State Department officials on Tuesday by the Assistant Secretary for Europe right off the plane. He wasn't in the meetings, but he was in Helsinki. They were told of no agreements. And, you know, now the President has personally announced that in fact there was an agreement for a follow up meeting here in Washington. That was not information given to the small circle of State Department officials whose job it is to deal with Russia.

So I think we have an indication of the dysfunction. But, Tom, you've been closely following both the personnel and the politics of Trump foreign policy and how those two things interact. You've written a lot about the players here, Secretary of State Pompeo, National Security Advisor John Bolton. Bolton in particular an enormous Russia hawk in the past. In fact it was one year ago this week that John Bolton wrote an op-ed in which he said that the Russian hacking of the 2016 election was akin to act of war. That was the quote that he used. And then we all saw the extraordinary picture of him sitting silently at the photo op in Helsinki at the lunch with Putin and Trump shortly before President Trump denied that there was any such hacking.

So, you are a good Trump decoder, tell all of us, and me too (laughter), did these people -- do they just keep going on here? What's going on? I mean have they changed their minds about Russia? Is Trump going to have to be at war with his own foreign policy apparatus to pursue this great relationship with Russia that he again and again is the point of his policy?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, it's a great question. I mean for John Bolton hell is getting what you want, you know. He's wanted this job his whole life, he's wanted a nationalistic president, you know, his whole life. He's wanted all of his and how he has it and the first two things that he does is basically implement a diplomatic strategy to North Korea that he totally opposed the last time he was in government, and implement a visit to Russia, which he seems to completely oppose, and to do so with a smile -- insofar as

he smiles -- and pretending that it's fine. I mean it's got to be tortuous for him. But basically he is deciding, it seems, to suck it up and to say that he's implementing the President's vision. And I think it is humiliating for him at some level, but I think it's also the reality. You know, everyone -- I think the biggest analytical error that's often made about Trump is -- and we all hear it all the time -- which is John Bolton will never allow that to happen or Mike Pompeo won't allow that to happen, or this person, this advisor, you know, they don't -- they're hawkish in Russia or they're hawkish in North Korea or they don't agree with trade tariffs, and they won't allow that to happen. But the point is that the most important person in this administration is the President, right, and last year he was constrained by his team and he hated it. From last August on he began to push back and order his team around. And he was still boxed in, so then he pushed out some of the key members and he sidelined some of the others and he brought in Pompeo and Bolton, moved Pompeo obviously and brought in Bolton, because he believed that they were loyalists who would implement his agenda. And he is telling them what to do, he's not really I think listening to them, he's not sort of taking their advice at the strategic level about the overall direction. And this year is one long list of his, you know, presidential bucket list. Like it's all the things he wants to do. He wants to do a deal Kim Jong Un because he admires the fact that he killed some of his family (laughter), and he consolidated power. He wants to impose trade tariffs on the EU, he wants to sit down with Vladimir Putin, he wants to trash the JCPOA. So all of these things he's sort of cycling through and I think it's exhilarating for him, I think he feels like he's accomplishing what he sort of really believes in as, you know, wrongheaded, as I or others may think that is, and we're in this sort of action phase, you know, where he's just acting. And next year I think we'll get to the hangover point at some stage where it begins to settle in that, you know, he's trashed the JCPOA, what does he do now to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, or how does he deal with the fact that Kim Jong Un has no intention of denuclearizing, or that Putin is making him look like an idiot. But we're still in the phase

where he is hubristic about all of this, and I don't think -- I mean, you know, the advisors are not going to save anyone, right. It's really about him and I think that's sort of the main -- at what point does he sort of change his mind? I don't really think he does.

And just one final thing, you mentioned -- I mean there's things dribbling out about these agreements. There was a story earlier that the Russians are saying that Putin offered to host a second referendum in Crimea and that Trump thought that was an interesting idea. Obviously there was a whole thing about Mike McFaul and Browder, which is just astonishing that that was discussed, there's the visit. So this is beginning to dribble out, but it's largely coming from the Russians rather than from the White House. I don't think Trump is sort of telling people what he's doing, and that tells me that, you know, Putin is trying to make him look a little bit foolish. And will Putin overstep the mark where Trump feels like some of this has gone too far? It's really hard to tell I think.

MR. KAGAN: I'm sorry, but are we sure that he's trying to make Trump look foolish, or he just wants to make sure that all the things they agreed to eventually like get out since he can't -- since Trump can't be bothered to tell anybody. I mean I don't think that Putin is trying to make Trump look foolish, I think Putin is actually trying to prop Trump up.

MS. GLASS: Well, it's interesting. I mean the fact that we're even having this debate. Before the conversation started we were talking about this and, you know, I said there's three alternatives, right, when it comes to these agreements given that we're in this extraordinary situation where the Russians are putting out information that the U.S. government is not. And that's been true consistently, by the way, in everything having to do with the Trump-Putin relationship, including this meeting, which was first -- the existence of which was first broached by the Kremlin putting out this information a couple of months ago. But there are really three possibilities right now, and I can get everybody to weigh in on what they think.

All right, you could say well, there are no agreements and the Kremlin is

just making it up, you could say there are agreements and Trump simply has, you know, not told his own government about them, or is there some sort of scenario where Trump believes he didn't make an agreement and the Kremlin, Putin believes that he did and they're just both living in alternate realities. But those are basically the only scenarios here. And again, I find that remarkable. You know, we are in a permanent situation that seems like where facts have not only been devalued, but they're no longer even provided as part of what the government does. It used to be we argued over the interpretation of the facts and not the facts themselves.

Angela, what do you think?

MS. STENT: Well, I was going to say, I mean there are no signed agreements, right?

MS. GLASS: Right, right.

MS. STENT: We have to be careful, what do you mean by an agreement.

MS. GLASS: That's right.

MS. STENT: So once you get the point, well this is what I say and did he hear what he said, then it all becomes, you know, more malleable. So they probably did agree on the arms control, but they should -- which they can do unilaterally or by Executive Order extend the new start agreement on strategic nuclear weapons by five years. So that's kind of a no brainer.

Now, the interesting thing, to come back to Mr. Bolton is he's passionately against these kind of old fashioned arms control agreements, but I guess he may have to sign onto that too.

And I mean you can infer from what they said that they probably did discuss and agree that Russia would use its influence, and Putin sort of hinted at that, to restrain what Iran is doing in Syria just near the border with Israel and Jordan. So I mean there are a few things like that -- and probably there was an invitation to President Putin

to come here, but don't forget that was already extended earlier on, just after he won the election.

Now, I think another thing that is worth mentioning, as far as we can see from everything we know, this is not a meeting that most of President Trump's advisors on Russia wanted him to have, but he was able, as Thomas said, to sort of override them.

MR. WRIGHT: But all these agreements --

MR. KIRIŞCI: What might have happened on Crimea?

MS. STENT: What?

MR. KIRIŞCI: Do you think they had a chat over Crimea?

MS. STENT: Well, since President Trump had already said that he thinks Crimea belongs to Russia --

MR. KIRIŞCI: There's no need to (inaudible).

MS. STENT: -- and that, you know, as Bob noticed, President Putin had to come back and say oh, no, no, you know, President Trump doesn't think Crimea is part of Russia, but he has already said it is several times.

MR. KIRIŞCI: So he may have reiterated that indoors?

MS. STENT: Yes, I mean -- yeah.

MR. KAGAN: I mean if you look at all those agreements that you just listed, every one of those is beneficial to Russia in some way. So I think what's happening is Putin wants to make sure we lock down what we agreed to because Trump hasn't mentioned them so that we know. Because Russia wants the extension of (inaudible) obviously. Russia I think is signaling to Israel and the Sunni states that it's willing to help a little bit on what they're most worried about. So all of these things were things that he wanted to get out and Trump just hadn't done his part.

MS. STENT: And the one thing Putin can't get is sanctions relief because the sanctions are now congressionally mandated and they can only be modified

or lifted if both the President and the congress agree.

MR. KAGAN: And Europe.

MS. STENT: And Europe. But the Treasury Department does have some discretion as we saw with what happened to Mr. Deripaska when they first sanctioned him and then they had to walk some of that back. So you might see some tweaking there.

MS. GLASS: Right, at the Executive level.

MS. STENT: Yeah.

MS. GLASS: And then there's also the question of it is interesting to imagine that they didn't discuss Ukraine at all. So that makes me, you know, very curious why they're not saying anything more beyond this one exchange over Crimea, since we know by all accounts this is what President Putin certainly cares most about, is there an exit scenario for him from Eastern Ukraine, what about the sanctions, which clearly are a priority for Russia to find some way out of.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Susan, just as I was listening to you I thought of again the previous Helsinki. One of the norms that was adopted there, that was advocated by the Soviet Union, was that frontier borders would not change. And for the Soviets, coming out of the first Helsinki Summit, that was a victory. And now we are, as you put it, in the reverse image.

MS. STENT: Except there was one clause which the West Germans existed on, if you go back and read the agreement, which is, you know, by mutual agreement if something changes.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Which happened.

MS. STENT: Which happened.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Happened actually.

MR. WRIGHT: I just had a thought, by the way, you know, that if he extended the invitation for Putin to come to the U.S., maybe it's for his big military parade

that he's going to host on November 11. (Laughter)

MS. GLASS: All right. Let's go a little bit bigger picture, as Bob would say, and talk about what the implications of this extraordinary chaos -- at a minimum -- it may be a while before the real details are known, they may never be known, but it's certainly fair to say that already it's clear there's enormous confusion about what U.S. policy is toward Russia, and especially coming out of the context of the very same week in which the President went to Europe, called the European Union foes, was critical of allies such as Angela Merkel and Theresa May, and generally has called into question his commitment to NATO even as the alliance and the machinery of the bureaucracy was producing, you know, strongly worded communiqués on reinforcing its existing policies.

So I want to ask everybody, because this has been the big question in any conversation with a European interlocutor over the last year and a half, and especially over the last week, okay, you know, Europe is upset about the atmospherics, Trump is very unpopular, but so what? Is Europe actually going to take any concrete actions as a result of this, do you envision a scenario, Bob, where Germany or France play a different kind of leadership role than they have in the past because of the United States pulling away from that burden of leadership?

MR. KAGAN: I mean in theory, you know, in international relations theory, if you have a country behaving like the United States then other countries would figure out to counterbalance it in some way. I'm afraid that I'm worried that our problem in Europe is of a different nature, which is that Europe itself is on a downward trajectory. And this is -- you know, not only do we not need the United States dividing Europe and undermining Europe, but we actually need the United States to be working actively to support and strengthen Europe, and instead that's not what's happening.

So we already have the rise of populist national movements in almost every single European country, they won an election in Italy, we have people like Orbán in Hungary. I think the German political situation is extremely volatile now. I mean

Merkel is not going to last forever and I think you might imagine a rightward shift in Germany after Merkel. You know, we're one election away from a Le Pen government in France if Macron is not able to succeed. And Britain has sailed off toward Greenland (laughter) as far as being a great power is concerned. They've taken themselves out of the picture, which is a huge geopolitical and geostrategic shift, which is totally detrimental to European strength and European unity. So you couldn't pick a worse situation to call on Europe to stand up and either take the place of the United States or check America's worst behavior. I think, unfortunately, we're much more in a kind of synergistic downward spiral with the United States misbehaving on its side and Europe suffering from very serious problems on its side, and both of them making each other worse.

MS. GLASS: A synergistic downward spiral. Can someone write that down for me?

MR. KAGAN: It's probably not the best phrase in the world. (Laughter)

MS. GLASS: No, I like it, I like it.

MR. KAGAN: Best I could come up with right now.

MS. GLASS: I like it. I think it's good. But seriously, Kemal, what do you think? I mean there's always a lot of talk, but when you have a European Union and a NATO that's composed of 27, 29 members, the idea that they're going to step up and substitute for a superpower when it comes to dealing with Russia, it's a little bit credulous.

MR. KIRIŞCI: The one firm thing I can say, I won't be able to come up with such words and terms. But the nearest I can come to, looking at this from the shoes of Europe, it's a train wreck coming. And there are old habits that are established ways of looking at it. We talked about it. Angela, you give concrete examples of how things should have worked as far as this summit goes.

It's only less than 10 years ago we were still believing that this international liberal order's track was inevitable, this trajectory that the European Union would continue to enlarge and people, countries will continue to come on board, absorb,

adopt, the norms and standards of the European Union. And Turkey was one such country. Only 10 years ago it was doing reasonably well, both economically and in terms of liberal democracy. But that 2008 crisis I think derailed the whole process. And this is also the time, maybe the beginning of a process where you begin to have electoral reactions. And Bob, in his early remarks, he did point out how Trump does have -- that's how I understood it -- does have an electoral base that does buy his lines, and that applies to Erdoğan as well.

And another commonality, I think that emerges from that fist bump is the way in which the establishment is shunned to the side. And part and parcel to winning the hearts and minds of the electoral base is precisely to shun them away. And as you shun them away then you're encountering this complex international context that does need the people who are shunned away to be able to deal and manage that complexity out there.

In the European case, I think it becomes even more complicated because you had this beautiful project called the European Union, characterized by super nationalism that states were coming together for their own benefit, pooling their sovereignty to be able to better deal with the complexities of the time. But it's unraveling, it's unraveling on migration policy, it's unraveling on the continuation of dealing with the Euro crisis, you are seeing the Schengen disappearing, dismantling one of the biggest benefits of the European integration project, that you can move around freely within the European continent. That's unraveling because some are supporting, some are objecting to it.

So the picture out there doesn't look very promising, yet at the same time I would like to salvage something positive, that when you do read the media, when you do follow the debates in Europe, there is a push back, there is an attempt to salvage something out there. But the challenge here I think is the absence of the United States. The U.S. was so critical to moving along the train on that particular trajectory.

MS. STENT: So I recall I was working in the State Department in the latter part of the last Clinton Administration and the Europeans came up then with their plan for a common foreign and security policy, and possibly in the end defects. And the reaction then in the State Department was horror -- oh, no, no, no, we don't want them to do this because that will somehow weaken NATO. Well, it didn't happen very much. Now, again, in reaction to what the U.S. is doing, and not so much Russia, it's really in reaction to the U.S., the idea is being revived that at the Munich Security Conference there were discussions about this -- will it happen? And for all the reasons that Bob gave, you know, the weakening of the EU and the rise of populism. I don't know whether it will, but if anything is spurring the Europeans on to take amendments to defend themselves without having to rely on the U.S., it's really what's happening now.

And the Germans have now started in their planning to have a plan where the United States is no longer their ally, but could possibly be a foe. So this is something I'm sure they never thought in their wildest dreams in the post war era would happen.

So because of all these other problems in Europe they probably won't be able to really get it together to have a viable defense force, that this could push them towards it. Because I think no one should mistake the fact that even though the Brussels declaration at the end of the NATO Summit was very robust, very solid, very traditional, and they all came out saying they're going to spend more money, the tweets and the way they were treated by the President, it does have an impact and it's making everyone question how long will this really go on, particularly from a U.S. President who (a) says NATO is obsolete -- he didn't have to say that with Putin, and (b) on Fox two days again questioned Article V, why would anyone in the U.S. want to send their sons and daughters to fight for Montenegro.

MS. GLASS: So, Kemal, you raised something I'm really glad you pointed out, which is the war against the establishment -- you know, I suppose that's all

of us here certainly on this stage, probably in this room too. I guess you guys are all implicated too -- but this is an important point, not just about the politics I think, but actually about what's driving this alliance between trump and Putin in some ways.

And so, Tom, I want to ask you about that. How much does our human cry over the death of the liberal international order actually fuel the death of the liberal international order, how much -- does Trumpism exist with or without Trump?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. I mean it's a great question. There are definitely structural factors, you know, that drive some of this. You know, a lot of this, would happen without him. The first person to describe their foreign policy as America First a campaign was Ted Cruz in a debate, not Donald Trump. You know, clearly we've seen populist movements throughout Europe and I think Bob in particular has written very eloquently about this in terms of the largest sweep of history, but there is something to Donald Trump though that is unique and that wouldn't be happening under any other President. We wouldn't be talking about secret agreements with Vladimir Putin I think with any other president, we wouldn't be talking about a trade war with the EU where the U.S. President says it's worse than China under any other President, and we wouldn't be targeting poor little Montenegro, right, the other day in his interview under any other President. So I think with him, you know, there is the visceral beliefs, but there is also this unique sort of cognitive disposition, right, that just makes it particularly sort of volatile and particularly vulnerable to Putin. Because we know -- we're pretty sure exactly what Putin said to him when he went in, which was you and I get along really well, it's really the deep state that's undermining you and they're undermining me, and we're, you know, in a foxhole together trying to combat this and, you know, builds him up and talks about praising him on certain things. And all of that, you know, which makes Trump really predictable I think is what makes this moment particularly sort of dangerous. So I think there is an additional sort of Trump risk factor beyond everything else.

Just on Europe, I mean as has been mentioned already, Trump is not

isolated in Europe. He's relatively popular in certain parts of Central and Eastern Europe. He's popular with the Italian government and to some extent -- and I think Gideon Rathman wrote this in the FT, that Macron's actually the one more isolated and Merkel -- you know, that Trump is pretty well connected with those populist nationalist forces that seem to be on the rise. I mean the way I -- what I worry about is that on Europe his administration isn't fully pushing against him, because Bolton is an opponent of the EU and is a Euro skeptic. At the State Department I think it's more focused on Central and Eastern Europe and sort of pivoted away from Western Europe. And so they could actually divide Europe if they wanted to, right, and they I think do sort of want to. But it's the three big relationships in the West that are really in freefall. It's the UK-U.S. relationship, which I think is in its worst state since the Suez Crisis. I mean it's just awful I think in every way, as we saw with the visit last week, particularly on the trade side. The Germany relationship, where he really has it in for the Germans I think in general. And then France, which Macron has a good relationship personally with Trump, but he got nothing on anything he asked for and they're having to rethink that too.

So I think it is sort of unprecedented to have those three major relationships all in such dire straits.

MS. GLASS: So I want to get to the audience questions. Before that I guess I would just turn back to -- you know, you've all done a pretty great job of outlining all the clear reasons for alarm coming out of the two summits of the last week.

I want to go back and ask if there's any way we could reinterpret any of these events in a more positive light. You know, putting aside the don't pay attention to President Trump's tweets, it's still fair to say that the United States has not withdrawn from NATO, that even President Putin is not claiming there was a secret concord to write off Crimea or to give away sanctions or some other thing. There's a sense that the trade war looms with both Europe and China, but it hasn't yet had catastrophic effects, there remains the possibility of negotiations. On North Korea, sure, the President made vastly

overstated claims for what he achieved in Singapore, but even if he achieved nothing we're no longer talking about nuclear war and at least we're talking to the North Koreans - - about talking. Maybe there are even more examples that I haven't come up with, but just in the effort to wrap our minds around what's actually happening, as well as what we're hearing is there anything to any of that, or am I just doing a very poor job of trying to represent the Trump foreign policy in a different way?

MR. WRIGHT: I mean I can take a stab at it. I do think there's a narrow pathway here where this works out okay because one of the things about Trump is that he has this desire for instant gratification, right, so he has to proclaim victory immediately. So when he went in to meet Putin he said this morning the relationship was the worst ever and today it's the best ever.

MS. GLASS: Right. In four hours.

MR. WRIGHT: Four hours. (Laughter) And Korea, it was before Singapore we were going to go to nuclear war and today there is no threat, right. So I'm not sure if this is right, but in his mind he may thing, boy, I've accomplished everything. In the last few months I've solved North Korea, solved the Russia issue, NATO he said was -- he was about to pull out and then after the emergency meeting he said they all agreed, so it was fine. So I wonder if he at some point sort of runs out of steam, right, because he's been checking through this list of things and he's sort of told himself that he has succeeded by the sheer power of his personality. You know, does he have the discipline to actually continue sort of a destructive -- you know, policies that are destructive of the liberal international order.

So I guess the optimistic thing may be that maybe he just -- you know, he sort of declares victory and then we're just vulnerable to events, which is a big deal. I mean events happen, then maybe, you know, we could be in a lot of trouble, but maybe we'll get really lucky and it will be relatively uneventful, except for crises of his own making, and we sort of get out of this with sort of damaged reputation and sort of missed

opportunities, but nothing really cataclysmic, you know, obviously will be a conflict or a financial crisis, or something else.

MS. GLASS: Anyone else want to --

MS. STENT: So, first of all, listening to you talk about where the President is now really reminds me of Stalin's phrase, dizzy with success. But anyway, if you look at the U.S.-Russian relationship, you know, there was nothing wrong in having a summit, in reopening channels of communication that were closed, even though it's true Russia -- there's still a war going on in the Donbas Region and people are still dying, but still, you know, you had to talk to Putin. And so if at a lower level people work on arms control, they work on these other issues and they're able to diffuse some of the problems, maybe find some solutions, I think there's nothing wrong with that. It was an abnormal situation having the Obama Administration cutting off so many channels of communication. I mean the military already have been talking to each other for some time.

So you can say, you know, there's nothing wrong with that, but I think you have to be realistic that in something like that, and that comes back to Tom's point, probably not as much is going to be accomplished as the President has now promised, just because it's very difficult dealing with Russia and things move very slowly. So one hopes that he then doesn't become somehow disillusioned with the lack of progress and then switch his course. Although, I think that's probably not very likely, but I think you have to watch out for that.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I had promised myself that I would give up my incorrigible optimism (laughter). I'll try to give it a stab and say that from the NATO Summit -- but this is really from a Turkey perspective -- to see Erdoğan, the President newly elected embarking on his first major external visit to the NATO Summit, I'd like to think there is a realism that is dawning onto the Turkish side or onto the government that maintaining relations with the West is something that is needed as he moves Turkey forward given

the geopolitical complexities of the area, what's happening in Syria, and the nervousness about being encircled by Russia, as well as Iran together.

But my fear then, the other side of the medallion, that picture we talked about earlier on, about him and Trump and the fact that amongst the group that was moving ahead of them, there are those who would have liked to be with them in the back. At the same time, I also fear that those personalities may begin to move things in the other direction away from those cherished principles of the liberal order.

So I see plusses and minuses, but also I see the way in which Turkey remains to be important for Europe at large, for its own security as well as its prosperity. And the reverse applies to Turkey too. When you look at its trade, you look at its economy, which is going through a very difficult period and is heading for a major crisis, the way out is again going through the West. But can something be put back into place, like the one that existed 10 years ago? I'm doubtful.

MS. GLASS: I know Bob is not going for (inaudible). Give us the best case scenario.

MR. KAGAN: Well, I mean the thing that you can say is that this international structure that was created after World War II, which is fundamentally this alliance system and this relatively open economy and what is still a predominantly democratic system, is very strong. There's a lot that holds it together. You know, these alliances are still meaningful because if you're in Eastern Europe or in the Balts or Turkey, you still have to worry about Russia. If you're in East Asia you still have to worry about China. And the United States is still your best option. And so all these countries, no matter how badly the United States is behaving, you just talk to them, they're sort of yearning for us to get back to normal as they see it. And so they may wait some time before deciding if they have to start moving in a different direction.

So there's sort of -- it's a stick system that's not simply going to crumble. So I mean that's the good news. I mean the bad news is I feel like world order is this

great line in the Hemmingway novel "The Sun Also Rises". Somebody asks somebody how he went bankrupt and he says gradually and then suddenly. (Laughter) And I fear that's sort of -- you think back on the 1920s, which seemed like a perfectly reasonable -- people were optimistic, but what was clear is that when the United States pulled out of the League of Nations, it had really pulled the rug out from under the system. Okay, so it didn't happen until 1930-1933. So we could be in one of these situations where things are kind of rolling along, then as you say, or someone has said, events occur and then the bottom begins to fall out. And that's kind of my worry. But it is a tough system to destroy, put it that way.

MS. GLASS: Okay, we'll have to take that as our good news from Bob Kagan. (Laughter) I know there's going to be a lot of questions here.

Anders, you're a very informed questioner.

SPEAKER: Anders, the Atlantic Council. Thank you very much. Very good discussion. I see a clear difference here between Bob and Tom, that Bob seems to think that Trump had a terrible summit and Tom thinks that this was good for him. When Trump came out to the press conference, what I saw was a dead man walking. And as Bob said, Putin tried to keep him up, but he didn't quite manage. And then he also fell for the temptation to ridicule Trump a bit, which was devastating.

So, for me, this was Trump is collapsing himself. Borrowing from what Tom says, he has made himself too independent of all advisors. So he can make all the mistakes he really makes. To me it seems that he is collapsing very fast. So I would like to hear your reaction to that.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, Anders, I mean it's a really interesting point, but I wasn't saying that it was -- I mean I think the summit was a disaster, right, and I think we probably disagree in terms of that, but I think for him he doesn't -- what I was trying to get at is he doesn't view these incidences over the last six months in foreign policy as disasters for him, he views them as successes. He thinks that the Singapore Summit

was a success, he thinks that he succeeded with Putin. Now, he may regret, you know, the fallout the in the press over the last question -- that's possible. But I don't think there's really anything that's happened that will cause him to fundamentally rethink his approach, right, that he's going to now listen to Pompeo or to Bolton in a way that he hasn't before.

So I still think we're in this -- I mean it's too soon to say after Monday, but certainly up until Monday we're still in the hubristic phase, which is why he's ordering people to do all of these things. You know, he's not having meetings in the situations to say what do I do about this, he has already made up his mind. And so it's not really whether it's good or bad, I think it's just an observation that as long as that's the case, he's going to be pretty unbound and we're going to be caught on the hop a lot as he announces stuff that he's just determined to do.

MS. GLASS: And to that point, actually, President Trump announcing just right before this event that he ordered his White House to put out the news that he had invited Putin here to Washington for the follow up meeting strongly suggests he views this as a positive in some way for him. So that's the interesting question of are there sort of alternate realities being constructed around this.

Okay, there are lots of questions here. Go ahead, Michael.

MR. MOSETTIG: Mike Mosettig, PBS online NewsHour. I know this is an international panel, but do any of you see any domestic forces inside the United States that will either be a constraint or whatever? I mean the walk back sort of started when Newt Gingrich issued his complaint, and that apparently took Trump completely by surprise. Is this a flash in the pan? I mean, Tom, you almost indicated he can do whatever he wants.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I mean he has constraints. Yeah. I mean of course there are constraints, but the constraints aren't failsafe, right. They don't fully constrain him, but they do exist. I mean the one that's obvious I think that would

constrain him is congress if they wanted to, but they don't. I think the response that you saw on the Hill, and from others like Gingrich, I think did have an effect where he did walk it back, but, you know, in that very narrow way of saying he misspoke. But it's very rare. I mean congress doesn't really do that on the broad principled issues, they really want to read the best possible version of anything he said. So with NATO, they say, well, you know, he's pushing in the right direction, we wouldn't have done it in that style. So, you know, I think the only real -- you know, the constraint that they could have is to deny him what he wants on the Hill, which of course they don't want to do for their own reasons.

The other constraints exist, you know, Mattis, of course, the entire bureaucracy, but the point I'm just trying to convey is that that's not enough. You know, he can still do these things because he's President, he's immense power. And the fact that his team disagrees isn't sufficient I think

MS. STENT: But don't forget that some of the Fox anchors, right, pushed back against his performance in Helsinki, and that apparently may have also contributed to him saying that he misspoke. But we don't want to exaggerate that either.

MS. GLASS: Well, and by the way, to the point about what we're seeing, in particular today, but in the days since, is not just the surprise of -- the political surprise to people like Newt Gingrich, but I think we're seeing the real time rift between the President and his government open up wide. So while we were on stage, there's also the Aspen Security Forum taking place, right, and Andrea Mitchell is on stage right now with the Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, interviewing him about all these events. And to the point of how the President's own government has not been informed by the President of what the results of this summit were, even as content, she announced during the middle of the interview that President Trump had invited Putin to Washington for the follow up meeting, as we talked about here, and there's this amazing video of the Director of National Intelligence on stage live saying, say what, (laughter) and laughing. I mean this is incredible. Okay, we're not talking about like low level State Department officials

who have not been briefed on this, okay. We are watching the real time public confirmation of an extraordinary rift inside the U.S. government.

So, who knows?

Here we go.

MR. STACEY: Jeff Stacey, formerly at the State Department, now managing Geopolitics. I for one was really optimistic. It's my day off, a couple of friends say why are you dressed so casually, it's a beautiful day in D.C. and I thought I'd stop by for the light fare of this panel, and you all ruined it. (Laughter)

But maybe a kind of shifting into a really deadly serious question. We seem to, today even after all that has gone in the last month and even the last week, be kind of smiling and chuckling and what have you, but what if it's actually worse? What if the private meeting consisted of a couple of different things, such as Trump handing Putin a list of which districts to interfere in the next time? And what if Putin said, you know, the way to really do away with NATO is we're going to make a little run at Montenegro and let's just make sure you don't respond. And that would be the end of NATO right there. I mean does anyone really think that Europe would move without the U.S.? And Trump could very well say we're not moving.

Or, do we have something still to hold onto? Isn't it also because of Trump that going into the big migration meeting in the EU when you had EU members on complete opposite sides of this question, there was no hope that they would get an agreement, wasn't it Trump that actually scared them into coming up with an agreement that just saved Merkel in time?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I don't think that happened because there's a State Department translator in the room and so there is someone else in the room. And there was a democratic motion yesterday to subpoena that person. That's not going to happen for reasons of executive privilege. But I think for Trump, if he was inclined to do that, which I doubt he would be, but if he was then I think he wasn't in a private setting. And,

of course, the Russians are almost certainly recording the meeting as well.

So I sort of take it at face value. I mean I think they probably bonded, you know, over the common sort of prejudice and (inaudible) views of, you know, the deep state and everything else, and then they talked about this stuff that's dribbling out. I think even for President Trump I expect that there are some limits on that relationship. But I might be wrong, you know, but I do think the fact that there is a career translator there is not nothing. Just in my view. I don't know, what do you think? (Laughter)

MS. GLASS: Well, we've got two next to each other. Why don't you both give us your questions and then we'll answer both of them?

MR. KIRIŞCI: That's a win-win approach.

MS. GLASS: Not everything is zero sum, not here at Brookings.

MR. ROSS: Andreas Ross with the German newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. You were talking about the European Union drifting apart, which it's definitely doing a very good job right now, and President Trump wanting to split it up, to enforce that trend. I'm wondering whether that last bit is not also an example of a policy that's failing. Whether his visit last week hasn't had a more cohesive effect. If you start, you know, shedding new doubts on Article V, that's not the stuff that the Polish are wild about. If you treat Theresa May -- he did -- that's pushing her towards Europe rather than away from Europe. So is that maybe the silver lining that is overplaying his hand and having an unintended cohesive effect on European unity?

SPEAKER: Michael Drinkwater with AICGS. So our questions go really well together because my question is also on the split in Europe. You mentioned there was a split in Europe with how to deal with Donald Trump, but could Donald Trump actually succeed in splitting up Europe, for example, on trade? Like if car tariffs are imposed, Poland would veto countermeasures.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I mean I think there are -- I can imagine quite a number of ways in which Trump is splitting Europe. Tom made references to how he's popular in

certain parts of Europe at the governmental level, but also in other parts amongst the public, and especially right wing populist political parties. But splitting Europe on trade would be basically destroying the European Union. There's an internal market out there, the rules and regulations on how that internal market works is very clear.

And the point about Theresa May, you know the way in which they just went through a storm I think is a reflection on how we didn't -- her own government, and I suspect just beyond it at the bureaucratic level, there is a growing recognition that Brexit somehow has to manifest itself in a way where there's some form of a customs union, not even free trade, but some form of a customs union. Now, would Poland -- dare I say -- have the guts to stand up and do it, I would expect that there would be resistance from within Poland to such an initiative coming from the Trump side. Poland today is recognized as the country amongst the last big round of enlargement that has done, thank you very much. So, well, never know, it might happen, but when you look at it from a more rationalistic perspective, I really don't see how this could happen without really unraveling the European Union.

MS. GLASS: Does anyone here think that it is the goal of President Trump to unravel the European Union? (Laughter)

MR. KAGAN: He's been pretty clear about that.

MS. STENT: He thinks it's the enemy.

MR. WRIGHT: I mean what's interesting about Trump and the EU is prior to November of '16 he didn't really know anything about the EU. Like he knew about NATO and he was opposed to it, but he didn't -- and I think something significant happened in August of '16 -- so up until August he didn't know anything about it -- which is he met Nigel Farage for the first time in Mississippi and they hit it off. And he started spending a lot of time with Steve Bannon for the first time. And those two individuals, I think, have really shaped his view of the EU, and Farage in particular. And it's fluctuated a bit, but now it's merged into this anti-trade agenda as well.

And so the real fireworks to watch are going to be next because Jean-Claude Juncker is here. And you know, relatively obscure European officials visit Washington all the time without much fanfare, but Trump keeps talking about this visit, like he keeps talking about Juncker's visit. He said last week, he said the EU is coming on the 25th of July and we're going to have to a showdown, you know (laughter), we're going to -- and today he said about the Google fine, he's like the EU is taking advantage of America, not for much longer. And, you know, Juncker, is sort of an unsympathetic figure in America at the best of times, you know, is --

MR. KAGAN: As far as anybody knows how he is.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, but this what's funny, right, is that most of the time people say no one really -- it passes without notice, but Trump is sort of fixated on this visit. And so I think next week is going to be sort of an eventful week on U.S.-EU relations.

Now to the questions, I mean, yeah, I think what he's doing has, you know, unintended consequences of encouraging Europeans to work together. And I would say the divide and rule strategy is being carried out pretty incompetently. But there are things they can do to cut bilateral deals and to work with potentially sympathetic governments. So I think there is a risk there.

MR. KAGAN: But, again, it's important though to keep some things in context. And Trump is a special guy, but nothing is -- historically nothing has been easier than to get Americans into an anti-European posture. That is after all our original and traditional posture. (Laughter) And it was only as a result of World War II and what followed that Americans took a different course. Republicans have been anti EU from the beginning. And as Angela says, even democrats have had mixed views about it. So some of this is Trump, but I think what should be even more troubling -- sorry -- is that the American people are entirely receptive to this. I'd hate to take a vote on the EU in the Democratic Party, let alone the Republican Party.

MS. GLASS: All right. We're almost out of time. I'll give you the chance for one more question and then we'll have to go home and process all this separately.

SPEAKER: Yes, I wondered that who are the stakeholders of these policies of the Trump Administration in the U.S. domestic scene? Not only politics, but who are the beneficiaries in materialistic terms?

MR. KAGAN: That's a really good question. And, again, because we tend to think about things in economics, we're looking for the particular economic constituencies. But I think that actually Kemal hit on the key thing, which is what Trump is engaged in and what he ran on is this rebellion against the international establishment, the international liberal order and the elites and the bankers and what have you. His constituency, and the most important part is that segment of the Republican Party that continues to support him no matter what because he has all the right enemies from their point of view.

And so what he is doing, by the way, when he lashes out at NATO, lashes out at the EU, lashes out at Germany, is he's feeding that constituency what it wants more than anything, more than money. Because he actually can't give them money really, but he can give them anger, which is what they have fed on. And that is in a way the key to the whole system. Why can't republicans oppose Trump? Because the majority of their constituents are these people and they will support Trump over him, so it doesn't matter if he's reversed republican policy on Russia, as long as they're happy republicans can't do anything about it. Therefore, that is the impetus for Trump to go after this international establishment, which means all the traditional political parties in Europe, all the institutions, like the EU, et cetera, that all of these people have been supporting against this crowd that is his core and unwavering support.

MR. WRIGHT: I have one thing on that because I think it's a really important question. I fully agree with Bob. I think an interesting test though is going to come up as the tariffs take effect, and particularly someone mentioned car tariffs as well

that will potentially be imposed later on in the fall. The response to that by the EU, but also by China, is highly targeted at Trump voters. You know, they're spending a lot of time figuring out how to target republican constituencies. So the EU targeted, you know, whiskey in Mitch McConnell's district, right, in his State to try to impose some pain.

So as this begins to take effect, do people sort of weigh those two things and say, you know, I'm being economically hurt by this trade war, but I really don't like those Europeans or the Chinese, and I'm supporting it anyway, or do they say to their representatives, you know, you've got to change, like this is crazy, my farm has been shut down or my factory has been shut down as a result of this trade war. And I don't know the answer to that. We haven't really seen the effects of them and we certainly haven't seen the scaled effects of them when they grow, as they almost surely will. And that's sort of one of the big unanswered questions I have about where we are that we'll find out I think in the next six months.

MR. KAGAN: Some of the early returns are surprising, by the way, because people have gone and talked to these farmers who are the first ones who definitely are already being affected, they're still with Trump, because they think he's fighting the right battle. And they understand they may have to pay a price for it, but it's the right battle. I'm not saying it's going to stay that way.

MR. WRIGHT: Right, right, right. We don't know.

MR. KAGAN: We just assume that if their economic interests are being hurt that they're going to turn against Trump.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I don't. I just think it's an interesting question.

MR. KIRIŞCI: He will have a lot to do, but with the narrative that Trump employs and feels. Now, with Tom, is there some kind of a tipping point somewhere that would kick in? But there was an interview with a good friend and colleague of mine in the Turkish papers after the election. Just one very quick minute. Running up to the elections in Turkey there was a lot of talk about how economics was going to kick in and

make it difficult for Erdoğan to win. And the symbol of the Turkish economy's down spiraling was the price of onions. And in this interview, the prof, this colleague, said it doesn't matter whether the price of onion is three Turkish liras or five Turkish liras because of the reasons that Bob cited. Identity issues and the narratives, convincing nature of that narrative from their perspective.

MS. GLASS: Right. So, Angela, I'm going to give you the last word while we're all contemplating the idea that we have a lot to learn from the political trajectory inside Turkey here in the United States.

MR. KIRIŞCI: And onions, the price of onions.

MS. GLASS: And the price of onions. Everybody go and check those out. But, Angela, stakeholders in the United States for Russia, it does seem like we're living in an Alice in Wonderland version when it comes to the politics of Russia.

MS. STENT: Right. So it's fascinating to me that more and more republicans now -- and Trump's base have always liked Russia -- I think there's a not very edifying aspect to that, and that's the kind of white supremacists and the people who look upon Putin as the savior of the white, anti-Muslim crowd, which of course fully misunderstands what Russia is, and has a large Muslim population. Putin is very careful what he does about it. So I think some of is -- and I hate to say this -- but it is also social conservatism. So a lot of Trump supporters, the people who don't like same sex marriage, the people who are anti-abortion and things like that, they look to Russia and they see Putin, you know, is the leader in this conservative movement.

So, for whatever reasons, you know, there's a base there that likes Russia and has responded to what Trump has said.

MS. GLASS: So I want to thank this great group for helping me think through this remarkable week, and all of you as well. (Applause)

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