

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN THE 21st CENTURY:
A CONVERSATION WITH BROOKINGS PRESIDENT
JOHN R. ALLEN

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PARTICIPANTS:

JOHN R. ALLEN
President
The Brookings Institution

ALEXIA D'ARCO
President
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy

JOSHUA J. MARCUSE
Founder and Chairman
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy

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PROCEEDINGS

MS. D'ARCO: Hello everyone, thank you so much for coming. We're delighted to be here at Brookings. I'm Alexia D'Arco, president of Young Professionals in Foreign Policy. We are absolutely thrilled to have on stage, Josh Marcuse and John Allen with us tonight. We're thankful to Brookings not only for finding time in the general's very busy schedule but also for hosting us this evening for what I know will be a very compelling discussion followed by a lovely reception.

For those who don't know us, YFPF is an independent international affairs organization that builds the leaders the world needs. We've been around for 14 years and in that time, we've amassed a global community of 20,000 professionals in over 80 countries, dynamic, diverse individuals from all sectors.

Tonight's event is the last in what we call our Burst Your Bubble series which featured service events, innovative panel discussions, dinner and dialogues and fireside chats with inspirational leaders, the like of which we have with us here tonight. This series encouraged our members, our partners and supporters to think unconventionally and to engage with peers from across a wide array of backgrounds, experiences and ideological perspectives. The campaign will culminate on November 10th at Sydney Harmon Hall here in D.C. with YFPF's annual black-tie gala at which we will honor two rising leaders. One civilian and one veteran who demonstrate the kind of leadership demanded by the challenges of the 21st century, innovative, agile, collaborative, and ethical.

Leadership is, of course, one of the many things we'll be talking about tonight and I can't think of a more dynamic duo than John Allen and Josh Marcuse to guide us through this discussion to take us both deep and wide on challenges and the U.S. role in addressing these challenges. Whether we're talking about North Korea or

artificial intelligence and what the U.S., in particular, can do to guide us globally as we address those challenges.

As I mentioned, we're here at Brookings where General Allen needs no introduction but for those who were not fortunate enough to have come across him yet, I just wanted to flag that he has spent over four decades, we won't talk about age, but four decades worth of experience. Still young at heart -- including, in that time period, serving as commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. He is currently approaching the anniversary of his first year at Brookings serving as the 8th president of this wonderful institution in over 100 years of its history.

Our moderator, Josh Marcuse, is YFPF's founder and board chairman and in his day job, sits across the river at the Pentagon where he is the executive director of the Defense Innovation Board. Josh, John, over to the two of you.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you.

MR. MARCUSE: Thanks very much. First of all, let me echo Alexia's thanks. We're thrilled to be here. We've gotten to enjoy a number of extraordinary conversations with Brookings junior staff and senior fellows and presidents over the last 14 years. This is a great installment in that proud tradition. We'll talk about a lot of different foreign policy issues. We'll talk about some inside Washington issues, but I figured given your long history of public service, let's start with a national security question.

We are fond of talking about what we call sort of the top five threats that have been prominently featured in U.S. national security strategy as CRIKT; China, Russia, Iran, Korea and Terrorism. So, I was hoping you might say a word or two about each of those and give us a sense of your assessment of our current posture and where you think we'll be with that country or that issue over the next decade.

MR. ALLEN: Wow. Well first, Alexia thank you for letting us host you here tonight, Josh and to the group. And let me just make the offer that if you want to consider Brookings your home, you'd be most welcome here. This is a really important organization. We have got to prepare the next generation to take the torch from this generation who has largely been pouring water on the torch for the last several years. But we're really honored to have you here and Brookings, I hope, can be a home for you when you need it for any events that you'd like to run. So, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

We talk about the four plus one or CRIKT. I'll try to simplify what I would normally say which I could spend a lot of time on each one of them. From my perspective, the R, Russia, Russia is a hostile force as far as I'm concerned. It's a power that is a revanchist power that has sought in recent years both to secure through its own internal governmental dynamics, secure its own capacity to govern over a long period of time through Putin but more importantly, the actions to sever the Crimea to create a separatist movement in the Donbas. To threaten the eastern flank of NATO very tangibly, to interfere in the democracies of Europe, I think, without question. I just came back from Paris literally, just recently came back from Paris where we had long conversations about how close a call we came with the election in Paris. And then, of course, the Russian intrusion into the U.S. system of democracy, our voting process. They were deep inside our electoral processes and they apparently still are.

So, the context of the *gracias mas* doctrine, the military change of the borders of Europe, the separatist's movements in the Ukraine, all of those things together lead me to conclude that Russia is a hostile power to the United States and we need to treat them that way. It doesn't mean we need to go to war with them, doesn't mean we shouldn't talk to them, but we need to be very, very careful about our relationship with

Russia going forward.

I feel differently about China, although I think, we have in many respects we find ourselves in a different place with China then we did just a year ago. When I talk to the Chinese and I do talk with them relatively frequently, I talk about what I call the four C's with respect to the U.S. relationship with China.

The first C is to seek opportunity to cooperate where we can with the Chinese. I think there are many ways that we can cooperate with the Chinese. And while some might call the Chinese an enemy state, I don't view them that way. I've had a long relationship with the Chinese in many different places in the world and I view them as a state with whom we can, in the second C, find ourselves competing. I think we do find ourselves competing on a regular basis but competition isn't necessarily bad and we ought to be looking for opportunity in the context of competition.

But I worry about the third C which is, as we continue in a downward spiral of bombast and negative rhetoric and in this, what we thought was going to be an easy to win trade war, we're finding ourselves increasingly with the Chinese in an environment of confrontation. I've been in those environments before out on the edge of American influence or in world affairs where you are on the edge of a tinder box and it will not take much in the Taiwan straits or in the South China Sea or somewhere with respect to North Korea. It will not take much for us to move very quickly from confrontation to the fourth of the four C's which is conflict.

We are two great nations. We both need to recognize that there is far more that can be accomplished between the United States and China when we cooperate or when we leverage opportunity out of competition then if we find ourselves in conflict. We need to be very careful in managing that relationship. Right now, I have very strong concerns about where we are with the China relationship and in much of that

I can understand the trade issues associated with why we wanted to change certain dimensions of our trade and economic relationship. I think the Chinese have made efforts to try to change that. We're never going to change it in every possible way we want to. But the bombast, the unnecessary negative rhetoric which is, in fact, causing a deterioration of the relationship we have.

We have to be very, very careful here because we have the Belt and Road Initiative which may or may not be good but I have my own views on it. We're going to need the Chinese help with respect to North Korea. If you don't know anything about the Taiwan relationship, that's a go to war issue for the Chinese in the event that the Taiwan's ultimately determine that they are in a place where they could declare independence, the Chinese will not hesitate to use military force in that regard. And then the South China Sea is a jump ball, from my perspective. They didn't need to fortify it, they've done it anyway and I think we're going to have some problems there. We don't have a comprehensive China policy and in the absence of the comprehensive China policy one off events tend ultimately to negatively trend the whole relationship.

Iran, I think Iran was one of the -- I think it was the I in CRIKT.

MR. MARCUSE: Oh yeah, it's in there.

MR. ALLEN: Iran is, without question from my perspective having spent much of the last 25 years in the Middle East, is the principle source of destabilization in the region. And apart from the current problems we have with the Saudis and the kingdom and the assassination of Khashoggi. The Iranian's have sought ultimately to both drive a wedge between the United States and our other Arab partners in the region but has also taken advantage of the outcome of the Arab Spring to take advantage, obviously, of instability in Lebanon, instability in Syria, instability in Iraq, instability in Yemen, instability in Bahrain and they've taken advantage of that.

At the same time they've done all of that, they have very clearly pursued a nuclear weapons program and the result of that, of course, was the JCPOA. Which even though it was flawed, it curtailed the capacity of the Iranian's to have a complete nuclear fuel cycle for a period of ten years. It would ultimately become a UN Security Council resolution which made it a matter of international law, now we've walked away from it.

We should be very careful, the United States, walking away from any agreement where the United States, China and Russia, the other members of the P5, the EU and Germany and Iran. Any agreement where all of us sign that piece of paper, we walk away from it expecting we're going to get a better deal to have the Iranian's shovel all the rest of their regional behavior into that agreement, it's irresponsible, frankly. So, I think we're at a point now where the next shoe could drop and we could find even more instability in the region.

North Korea is North Korea. We need to be careful not to delude ourselves that denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as we understand it will be the same kind of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as Kim Jong un understands it. I was part of the six-party talks years ago where I think we had the capacity, ultimately, to get farther in that process bringing all the relevant parties in. And, of course, all of the same relevant parties are involved now. But we need to not confuse ourselves at photo ops double for serious diplomacy.

I know a lot of people in the government are working very hard at the State Department. I have such strong feelings for the State Department and our diplomats and our foreign service officers. We need to not delude ourselves into believing that where we are right now is going to get us to a completely denuclearized North Korea. What that means is, we need to have a close relationship with the Japanese, close relationship with

the South Korean's. We need to leverage our relationship such as it is with the Chinese. We need to ensure that the Russians are not vetoing the work that we're doing and make it very clear to the North Koreans that there are benefits that can come from a complete denuclearization but there is also very severe sanctions that can come if you seek to gun deck us on this thing. That's a Navy term, by the way.

And then finally, I guess the other consonant is terrorism. I want to be very careful that we don't create, as we have it seems through the 2015-2016 campaign, this sense that this is about Islam. If terrorism equals Islam, and it doesn't, it is important that we are able to make the distinction that much of the Jihadi activity we see in the world today comes out of a doctrine of Salafi jihadism. And if you understand what the Salafist doctrine is, it harkens back to that period of time in the early days immediately in the aftermath of the Prophet Mohammad where the idealized Muslim community at the time, the community of believers was known as the Salaf. And so, in the minds of elements within the faith of Islam and the confession, the Sunnah confession, returning to the time of the Salaf is the greatest moment of purity of the Muslim community. And it occurred during the first four Khalif's, the righteous Khalif's, the righteous companions of Mohammed known as Larash Adune.

So, the Salafi Jihadi's are the elements within the Sunnah confession of Islam who seek to reestablish the community of purity in the world today. What they choose not to embrace is that Mohammed called for the proselytizing of Islam in two ways. One was, and it is the most important way and the vast majority of Muslims, I think, adhere to this, is emulation. Live your life in a pious way so that those around you who watch you in your day to day interactions would want to emulate this high moral standard of your faith.

But there is another way and that is through coercion through the logical violent extreme of something called the jihad which is really about the struggle. So, the

Salafi Jihadists, not interested in emulation, seek to carry through the fire and the sword, the conversion of segments of the population.

So, that's more than you wanted on those four plus one but I'm telling you, every single one of those in the environment that we're in Washington today where we have difficulties with the formulation of coherent policy creates for us an ongoing challenge that we're going to have to watch very closely. Sorry to go on so long.

MR. MARCUSE: No, that was fascinating. Let me turn to a different way of addressing those. You talk about alliances. So, the National Defense Strategy elevates alliances and partnerships to one of the top three priorities for the whole department. I think I can diplomatically say that the White House seems to favor a more unilateral approach and is somewhat more skeptical of international organizations like, for example, NATO. How do you assess U.S. leadership in the world today?

MR. ALLEN: Well, a couple of things. The United States has, and certainly in the aftermath of World War II and the Cold War, been at its very best when we were engaged in multilateral organizations and multilateral relationships. And at the outer edge of that, from my perspective, has been the great work of American diplomacy. And foreign policy wielded by in large through our ambassadors and our foreign service officers. That's the convincing edge of American leadership from my perspective. We are at our very best when we are part of organizations and subsets of the community of nations.

So, you can approach this one of two ways. You can approach it as we seem to be approaching it today which is transactional in a bilateral relationship and America first in many respects means, America isolated. Or you can approach it from the confidence and the sense that America as part of a multilateral organization or an ad hoc coalition has a transformational role in that process. I really believe it's the latter, not the

former. And transformational means that all of us together, the sum total of the community of nations engaged in that organization or in that task or toil, all of us are better because we transform each other by growing and taking strength from each other. But when it is transactional someone is on top and someone is number two.

When it is bilateral, then we lose the potential synergy that comes when similarly minded nations gather together either to deal with some of the greatest daunting issues on the planet or to elevate human kind. So, relationships are utterly important to the United States. And when I talk to our friends overseas, I tell them that sometimes when you get frustrated with what appears to be U.S. leadership, please remember that there is a stratum of leaders in the United States who are American leaders who, in fact, remain committed to multilateralism, who remain committed to the transformational role of the United States in the world today. Don't despair and don't make any formal long-term structural decisions in your relationships. Because there will come the day when someone is in the White House who absolutely does, in fact, recognize the transformational role the United States plays in the world today in multilateral organizations and in the community of nations.

MR. MARCUSE: At risk of getting a little bit off topic, I just want to reflect. It's fascinating to me that that is the message that you share because it actually shows another important role that civil society institutions like Brookings plays in sort of balancing out the totality of the sort of American polity. It's sort of interesting that that's a sort of a natural organic check and balance on some of the sarcastic swings perhaps in our policy that may give whiplash.

Let me turn from current events to future trends. We have an interesting way of trying to pulse you on future trends, sir, if you'll heed us. We actually did an informal poll of our members to try to figure what they thought the salient future trends

were over the next 20 years of global affairs which, I know, is sort of the era of their careers where they're going to watch this puzzle unfold either fall apart or come together. So, here is what they said, this was their top five and then I'm going to ask you to react to it.

MR. ALLEN: Sure.

MR. MARCUSE: Economic globalization, climate change and environmental degradation, demographic changes, especially aging, mass migration, particularly urbanization and littoralization, the moving of people to the coasts and last, accelerating technological change. So, what would you add or drop for your top five list?

MR. ALLEN: Well let me just tell you, I've spent a good bit of time over the last several years dealing with something I call the mega trends. In many respects, what the members here identified are the ones that have most concerned me. I do worry and I perhaps come from a generation and an era where we worried a lot about this first and then other things later. I do worry about nuclear proliferation. We just walked away from the Iran deal. Some of you in here probably might have even been working with me on the issue, I was one of the folks that authored the war plan to deal with this if we needed to. It's a very real issue.

North Korea has an ICBM and probably a miniaturized warhead that can be delivered, if not on the United States, certainly close. The Iranians, we didn't know that they had the capability of spinning a lot of centrifuges for a long time. You bury it deep enough and it's difficult to find. There are other states out there who are going to watch the way North Korea unfolds and they're going to watch the way we deal with Iran and recognize that if you're able ultimately to achieve a nuclear capability, there is a certain amount of security and a certain amount of impunity that will come from that.

So, for me again, from the generation when, as a small child I huddled

under my desk in drills for nuclear attacks, I'm very sensitive to us never taking our eye off the ball. That nuclear non-proliferation is an essential dimension of our policy and nuclear proliferation is something that we have to keep our eye on and worry about all the time.

I think there is lots of things that worry me from moment to moment but I believe we have the capacity as a nation and as a people to deal with China and Russia and eventually handle the Iranians and deal with the Koreans. But there are some things coming at us which, I think, really do worry me and it reinforces, I think, the views of the members. Climate change is, I think, one of the great challenges we're going to have in the 21st century. You used the term coastalization. I'm not so sure that climate change doesn't work an exact opposite or as a countervailing force with respect to coastalization.

We're going to face a time, I believe, with rising sea levels, the change in weather patterns as a result of the warming of the sea surfaces. That the enraged weather patterns and higher sea levels are going to drive large segments of populations away from the coast because they no longer simply can afford to live on the coastline.

So, I worry about climate change, I worry about rapid desertification and that then will drive what we call climate migration. I think climate migration is something we have to account for. We see conflict migration, we see economic migration but I don't believe we've really as a community of interested parties and as the community of nations paid enough to what climate migration is going to look like. And if you don't like the other two, you're going to hate climate migration when it finally starts to hit around the middle of the century.

Rapid urbanization is another outcome, I think, of what we will see as a result of climate change. As we know in many cases, in the developing world, mega cities which are 10 million or more, we're going to see a huge influx of population into

these cities. By the middle of the century, almost 75 percent of the global population will be in mega cities or urban centers. Many of these are going to be in the developing world where there is frankly very limited capacity of the central governments or the municipal governments to provide the kinds of services and law enforcement and education and infrastructure necessary for these populations.

So, what we will see and you know this well from the world you live in, Josh, we will see more and more talk about something called the mega slums. Which are millions of people that blister onto urban centers because they have no future on the ground of because of desertification and other aspects of climate change or conflict. And now you have Mumbai like slums where sometimes people use the term, ungoverned space, but I don't like the term, I prefer that we not use it because government is going on in there but you can't stand it. It's non-state actors and it is transnational criminal networks with connectivity and networking and resources which rival many sovereign states. We've got to pay attention to this, the rapid urbanization.

And then, of course, again I would concur on demography yes, we're going to age. By 2050, 20 percent of the world's population will be 60 years of age or older. When I was your age, 60 years of age was one foot in the grave. Now that I'm going to be drawing social security at the end of this year, I happen to think it is a very robust age with lots of potential future ahead of them. But as the population ages, the work force shrinks so we're going to have to think about productivity. This is where robotics and artificial intelligence will come in. But as the work force ages or as the population ages, now we have insurance issues, we have healthcare issues.

But if you flip that same coin over, in much of the developing world, we're seeing the population expand at a very rapid rate and becoming much younger. Much younger in areas where the central governments have very limited capacity to provide for

the aspirations of these young men and women. What that does is it creates frustration, it creates migration, it creates radicalization. Radicalization which then can be pushed into the arms of extremists and then you have the proliferation of terrorism.

Look we've got to deal with what's in front of us and that's CRICKET. But for you all, the leaders of this generation and the next generation are these global mega trends that are immutable that we've got to begin to think about at a strategic level. So, we walked away from the Paris Climate Accord. We've got to be thinking about what that means. Thank God that there are large numbers of American leaders in the United States who have chosen in their roles as either governors or mayors, to continue to embrace the Paris Climate Standards. But we've got to deal with this and if we don't deal with this, the emergency that we will face towards the end of the 21st century will be very difficult, frankly.

MR. MARCUSE: With those five issues, obviously we looked at the significant threats each one of them poses. Is there one of those trends that you think is an opportunity that this generation can seize?

MR. ALLEN: Well technology, I think, is incredibly opportune for us right now. I've got my phone somewhere but there is more computing power on that phone than we had at our fingertips to put a human on the moon and it's only 10 years old. Think of, many of you may not be able to remember beyond that but think about what this has done for us in terms of the networking capacity of humankind to be in touch with each other. Plus, the advent of super computing soon eventually to become quantum computing. What that does with things like natural language processing or deep natural language processing, machine learning, the overall rubric of artificial intelligence. I think there are opportunities for the improvement of the quality of life and the length of time that we live as healthy human beings that we can now not imagine.

Technologies of modern cities. Technologies in healthcare.

Technologies associated with education. Education is going to shift very, very dramatically from how you teach to how you learn. It is profoundly different. Teachers will be profoundly different in the role that they'll have in the classroom. And virtual reality in conjunction with artificial intelligence and the context of teaching is just going to change everything.

So, I think that the advent of technology, while there are dark sides to that and we're going to have to watch it and in the world you live in, I know you've got an eye on that every single day. I think the potential value of well-regulated, well-intentioned technology in a public/private partnership with the private sector working very carefully with the public sector ultimately to ensure that technology creates corporate social responsibility. I think it is really a boundless moment for us and I'm quite optimistic about that.

MR. MARCUSE: So, AI optimist. I wish I could have asked you just 25 questions about only AI but we're going to move on. But I would say to everyone, do a quick search and look up some of the things that John has written about AI, particularly his notion of hyper wars. It is really one of the most thoughtful commentators about AI and its impact on public policy. I know that's something you're dedicating a lot of effort to at Brookings right now.

MR. ALLEN: That's right.

MR. MARCUSE: So, let's talk a bit more about Brookings then for a couple of questions. So, in the era of fake news, hyper partisanship, social media, shortening attention spans and growing populism, how do you run the worlds highest rated think tank?

MR. ALLEN: Well, let's see, is Jen in here somewhere? Jen and Emily.

Emily is my new vice president for communications. The way we do this is to first of all recognize the strategic environment in which we operate today. And you've just gone a long way towards describing it. Short attention spans, electoral cycles, alternative sources of information, alternative facts, what Rand calls truth decay. The environment we live in often called the post-truth environment.

Think tanks have got to be agile. In other words, they've got to be able to shift quickly onto an emerging issue and they've got to be flexible within their organization so that you can both harvest the quality of scholarship possible and concentrate that scholarship on a particular issue as you shift the institution onto a key issue. You've got to be able to move quickly, number one.

Number two, Rudy Giuliani said once, truth is not truth. Okay well that confused everyone but let me just make a point. Truth is a matter of accuracy and when a think tank produces a product it is the very best objective, evidence-based scholarship that we can bring to bear. From my perspective, what I believe, I really believe this and there are probably folks in here from other think tanks and thank you for the work you're doing every single day. I think that the Brookings product, in terms of the quality of the scholarship and the accuracy of its output, is as close to truth as we can define it at any particular moment.

Now, what I mean by that is we're going to work hard inside Brookings to bring to the campus the capacity to bring both big data and predictive data analytics as a matter of natural routine for the scholars. Now we have many scholars to do it as a matter of course. Where Emily plays an important part is, the capacity to bring big data analytics happens to sharpen your capacity to make conclusions because it is supported not just by objective and subjective scholarship but now you have a capacity for big data analytics that gives you the statistics with very high levels of precision that can support

ultimately the product as well. Once again, it is a matter of the accurate product. It may not be full truth because we're still discovering information. But it is as close to accuracy as you can get. And I want to bring that kind of tool set to our scholars so that the work that we do, the public policy that we produce, the recommendations we make for the President and for the Congress and for those who need to make policy decisions. When they look at a product coming out of this institution, I want them to have high levels of confidence, it's the most accurate and the best possible swag that we have towards truth. That's really important from my perspective.

So, you've got to be organized inside to be able to shift quickly. Your funding sources have got to be readily maneuverable to that you can shift funding quickly within the organization so you bring the scholars together on a particular issue, fund it quickly and they move out sharply to begin the research on the scholarship.

But it's a critical moment for think tanks and from the moment that I took over Brookings, I said I want the institution to help the President to govern and the Congress to legislate. If we can help the President be successful with the work of the scholarship that we're doing and the policy recommendations we make, then we're all successful. If we can help the Congress to legislate, to pass laws in support of the American people, then we're all successful. So, from my perspective, we're not lining up against anybody. What we want to do is produce, again, nonpartisan, fact-based, research oriented public policy recommendations that can help the President or other leaders to govern and this Congress and other legislatures to pass laws. And if we're successful in doing that then we're doing our duty. If we're not pulling out all stops to try to make that happen, then we're sub optimized.

MR. MARCUSE: Brookings is a venerable institution. But when I think of establishment, it might be the first thing that comes to mind. What advice do you have

for younger people, like those in our club, who want to help your industry by disrupting it?

MR. ALLEN: Disrupting it. Well, I think we're pretty impervious to disruption, actually. I've been President for a year although it feels like it was most of the last hundred. I think many of the folks in this room see the world differently than I saw the world when I was coming up. I happen to think that it's frankly far more complex and, in this institution, one of my hiring objectives beyond an absolute commitment to doing all we can for diversity here because I truly believe that we are a nation that thrives because of diversity and we fail because of divisiveness. I want to hire younger scholars. I need the youth, first of all, who are willing to stay here for a few years. But I want the youth that younger scholars bring to the table at this institution to give us the perspective, the unique and youthful perspective from the environment in which we live today that can help to make the products even better.

So, the unique experiences you've had in your education, the unique experiences that you're having in your day to day duties, whatever those might be, that's a very different youthful experience than mine was given the time that I was growing up. I think that bringing that into the process of the formulation of public policy is absolutely vital and it goes back to what I said about passing the torch. We did the best we can in the Cold War, we've done the best we could in the aftermath of the Cold War. We've got to hand you the capacity to make the contribution of public policy by virtue of the unique perspectives that you've had based on your youthful experiences. Both in terms of networking with each other and the education experience you've had and growing up now as young professionals in an environment which, I think, is far more complex than it was when I was your age.

MR. MARCUSE: So, you mentioned diversity and I actually wanted to highlight this because this is something you all may have missed. You actually, when

you got the internal report from your staff at Brookings about the diversity numbers, you actually chose to publish it on the website. Which, I think, is a courageous act of public self-reflection highlighting for you but as well as your board and your donors and your own employees that you wanted to Brookings to do better. I thought that was an incredible example of transparency. Why did you make that decision, which could not have been easy, and what advice would you offer for other organizations and I'll follow your example. I would say Young Professionals in Foreign Policy fits that description of an organization that needs to do better in diversity. What would you recommend for others that want to show that kind of leadership and commitment?

MR. ALLEN: Well, I think, the last few days have been pretty awful for us as a people. The proliferation of hate speech, the wedges that have been driven into the society of America along race and gender and preference, ethnicity, faith. All of those things fragment the unity and the synergy that comes from all of us being together in a diverse world.

My context is having been an infantryman in the Marine Corps and at the latter part of my career in two wars as a uniformed officer and then a third war as a diplomat. I have seen my Marines and soldiers go forward under fire. Every race, every ethnicity, every preference, every faith and not one of them gave a damn about any of that with respect to the others and they were willing to shed their lives instantly for the other. And if that is the strength of diversity, which I think it is, then I believe that we have an obligation in an institute like this which is supposed to set a public policy example, we have obligation to do the same. And we're not anywhere where we need to be.

It's, from my perspective, diversity isn't an end state it's a process. You first commit yourself, you first as an organization commit yourself to being diverse. That's not rocket science, it is an acknowledgement that we as a nation are better together in all of

our many different forms and fashion than we are apart. So, you commit yourself to diversity and if you're serious about it, you're willing to talk about it publicly. I'll take some hits over time because those needles aren't going to change very fast but by God, we're going to work at changing them all. Part of it is going to be the age, part of it is going to be the diversity, part of it is going to be the things that we do. There is diversity in many different ways. But I think an institution that is serious about being diverse ought to be willing to put their numbers out there and then try to move the needles.

MR. MARCUSE: If I could just take a moment to harp back to one of the things you said at the beginning about Islam and the importance of emulation of a morrow example, I would say that what little power Alexia and I have with the stage we have at our disposal we use to shine a light on leaders who share the kind of character that we think our members should look up to.

MR. ALLEN: Good for you.

MR. MARCUSE: What you just said on this stage was very moving and I think we did a good job in asking you to share your views with this group, so thank you for that.

MR. ALLEN: Honored to be with you, thank you.

MR. MARCUSE: Well, let me close with a couple of questions about the topic of leadership because that is first and foremost, what this organization is about even more so than international affairs. It's about developing leaders. So, I wanted to ask you two questions. The first one is, what was the best piece of leadership advice you received as a young officer?

MR. ALLEN: That in everything, you should strive to be a humble servant of those you lead. It is never about power, it is never about lauding a position of authority over another, you should be a humble servant. Humble meaning humility. It is

never about you, ever about you, it is always about everyone else, it's always about the mission. You have to square the two, it's mission first and people always and sometimes executing the mission you pay a price for it. But the leader, and this doesn't mean a uniformed leader it just means a leader. A leader who is both a humble individual and is oriented on servitude serving the people and the organization, those are the finest qualities and there are many qualities that I would talk about if you wanted to.

One of my commanders said to me, if you're a humble servant and somebody accuses you of that then you should render yourself guilty as charged. My own experience was the opposite often of humility is an arrogant leader and I've got no time for arrogant leaders. Because arrogance, and I'm not being jingoistic here but arrogance is just a very small distance away from ignorance. Ignorant, arrogant leaders do more to deprive an organization of its potential, full potential than almost anything else. And in a world I came from, ignorant, arrogant leaders got people killed. So, I frankly got rid of them as often as I could. But I had an obligation to develop the people who work with me. I don't say work for me, they work with me. So, a humble servant is the very finest and that commander helped me early in my career to try to live that way if I could.

MR. MARCUSE: I hope you sent your HR director to the reception after this because I think everyone wants to send a resume to Brookings right now. I really think that we've hit the highpoints in this interview and let's turn to audience questions. Please ask a one-part genuine question so we'll get as many as we can. Please state your name and where you work and we've got microphones circulating. I'll start with the gentleman in the back who is the fastest on the draw with his hand there and then we'll turn to this gentleman in the front next. Please go ahead.

MR. WILKINS: Thank you. My name is Louis Wilkins. I work for my own business selling expertise in (inaudible) tutoring by Louis. My question is about think

tanks. We may be a little bit biased. I think it is fantastic for think tanks to be nonpartisan. What role do you think there is in the public discourse for think tanks that have an ideological perspective or funded to advance an ideological perspective, assuming the conclusion rather than purely looking at the facts. Are they useful, do they have any role.

MR. ALLEN: I wouldn't call them a think tank if that's the way they operated, frankly. We have three principles that we operate on here. One is independence, the other is quality and the third is impact. All of them are really important to us. We hope it is in our DNA but of those, if I had to choose one, starting point is independence. So, the institution, this institution and I won't speak for any others because I'm not part of any others, this institution seeks in every possible way to be as independent as we possibly can be on a subject.

So, when we begin the process, we have a thesis or a hypothesis that we're seeking ultimately to research but we don't start with a conclusion and reverse engineer it for anybody. As you may know, we have to raise some money from time to time but a very key point in that and it's in every document that we would ever hand to someone who would be interested in supporting our research is the absolute requirement that two things happen. The first is that our work is independent and the second is that we will publish the work. So, nobody is going to have a secret relationship with us and we're producing product or producing outcomes that will not be exposed to the light of day.

So, there are entities out there that call themselves think tanks that may operate differently than ours. But from my perspective, independence is the first and probably the most important dimension of a real think tank.

MR. MARCUSE: Great. You're next sir and then the woman in white

and green.

MR. BARTON: Yes, general, my name is Cami Barton, the Pakistani spectator. My question is about declaring victory in Afghanistan. Given you don't seem to have any contempt for Islam contrary to prevalent notion that is Islam is a legion of terrorism, it's very easy for you to negotiate with Taliban because the first thing that they demand is respect. They are very poor but they want respect from other people because that's how (inaudible) people are. Number two, I think I forgot the name of the Pakistani general who did very successful operation in that part of the (inaudible) government. Number three, you called China and U.S. --

MR. MARCUSE: First two is probably fine, sir.

MR. BARTON: Do you think we should trust Pakistani government and Chinese government to participate more in that part of the world so it could help us to return from Afghanistan. Because you would be doing a great favor to Trump who just came back from that part of the world. Thanks.

MR. ALLEN: I'm not sure I followed all of that because you had a lot to say. I think the United States ought to be seeking to bring as many of the stakeholders in peace in that region to the table as we possibly can, obviously. I spent a lot of time on Rawalpindi and Islamabad speaking with Pakistani leaders and I've got great affection for them. There is no secret that we have a lot of tension between our government and Pakistan but we also recognize that there was a time when Pakistan and the United States lined up with each other against the Soviets. So, it depends on where history begins.

For me, I remember when the Pakistani force in Mogadishu went out the day we lost a couple of black hawks and at a great cost to the Pakistani forces, rescued the American Rader force that came in. So, lots of us don't forget that Pakistan every day

loses people in the federally administered travel areas fighting against the insurgencies there and other places. So, I think we need to be objective in our view with respect to Pakistan but we still have tensions.

I also recognize that there is a close relationship between China and Pakistan. You've described yourself as Pakistani so I'll say you. Pakistan describes China as its all-weather friend and America as its fair-weather friend. Okay well look, we can vary on that but, I think, China who I believed had an important role to play in Afghanistan has also an important role to play in Pakistan. So, why wouldn't we seek to have a relationship, the United States with China, that can both stabilize a democracy in Pakistan and also create relationships in Afghanistan that could perhaps create a peace opportunity for peaceful conversations and economic opportunity and continue.

Just as I would say there is a role for India in this process also. So, when the United States is at its best it seeks to bring -- the United States brings two things to all challenges in the world. Convening power, strategic leadership and global reach. We should be using our convening power and our global reach to bring as many stakeholders into the future of Afghanistan as we possibly can. Recognizing that a stable, sovereign, prosperous Afghanistan in Pakistan's rear, creates stability for Pakistan as well. I think that's an important outcome. I don't view anything that occurs in Afghanistan in isolation from how it might be helpful to Pakistan, how it might be helpful to the region. And I think we need to think strategically like that and not myopically focusing solely on the Taliban in Afghanistan. I think it's a broader conversation than that.

MR. MARCUSE: Ma'am, you were next with a very pithy one-part question and then you ma'am in the front will be next.

MR. ALLEN: Does pithy mean short?

MR. MARCUSE: It does. Brief, succinct, we'll use of the adjectives for short.

MS. BELKENBURG: My name is Sara Belkenburg, I'm from McLarty Associates. I was hoping you could elaborate, perhaps, upon the non-traditional spaces that the United States could fill in regards to foreign policy formation. Especially as we see the U.S. pulling back from those traditional forums such as intergovernmental organizations.

MR. ALLEN: Sure. Well again, the United States is a nation that I think is a group that has the capacity to contribute in many non-traditional ways. There have been other administrations that made a huge difference in AIDS research and in the solution to AIDS in the developing world. There are many states that are in very serious trouble with respect to economic progress. Here, the United States through USAID and non-governmental organizations and the use of sophisticated computing and artificial intelligence can make a huge contribution to many of these states in the context of agriculture, education, standing for the rights of women in the world. These are areas where the United States, I think, has very important roles to play that are not in the context of traditional diplomacy, that are functionally oriented, that contribute to segments of the population regardless of how borders have cut them into smaller pieces.

So, I think that the United States has both a leadership responsibility and unique capacities to contribute. I didn't touch this but I spent a lot of time as a commander in Afghanistan supporting women and civil society. I can remember the conversations that I had with Hamid Karzai about how he can never hope to take Afghanistan from being a post conflict society to a developing society or even a developed society unless he brought, as we say, the people that hold up half the sky, unless women were brought into the main stream. It needs to be, it has to be a central

thesis in American foreign policy and foreign relations. That we stand for the rights of minorities, we stand for the rights of women, and that is a unique contribution we can make that almost nobody else can make because we could put the resources behind that national objective.

Now, are we doing it right now, look again, I could sit up here and wring my hands and nash my teeth on the particular issues that we seem to have walked away from. But I also have great confidence in the American people that we are a people that stand for the rule of law and human rights and to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. I believe that that's who we are, that's the idea of America. We might have a difficulty right now but I think that's a short-term problem. But we've got some domestic issues we've got to deal with right now as well if we're ever going to be able to project the kind of influence that America has the potential to project. I'm not sure I even got to your question. These are really important things from my perspective.

America has to stand for something. We've got to stand for something and if we don't stand for something, who else will. The smaller countries in the coalition that I led in Afghanistan, 50 countries, and then 65 countries against daesh, the Islamic state. Their concern was, if the United States pulls back, who will be for us. And if you look at the young democracies in central Europe today, constantly under attack by the Russians in some form or another. Who will stand for us? No one else on the planet can. There will be countries who will try to be helpful within the context of the size of their populations and their economies et cetera, but no one can organize the community of nations the way we can to deal with the most daunting problems that we face today. Whether it's climate change or the rights of women or leveraging all the advantages that increases in technology will bring us someday. Nobody but us. If we don't stand for that then what are we worth, from my perspective.

MR. MARCUSE: Ma'am, you were next and I think the last question will be, you ma'am on the aisle.

MS. BOSS: Thanks sir. Lauren Boss, I'm from McKinsey, obviously not here on their behalf though. I'm just curious. You spoke a little bit about the divisiveness in society today. I was wondering if you had any specific advice on how to engage with those that have very different views than we have and to try and change those mindsets. Especially now that we say people are using smaller and smaller circles to get their information in news.

MR.ALLEN: Well, I think we've got to be engaged publicly. The first thing, from my perspective, and I would assume this room is full of very reasonable people, is that we can differ in opinions without being enemies. And one of the problems that we have in the world today, in this country in particular, is that we've divided ourselves up. There are those who would have us be divided along certain lines that are difficult to bridge. And varying opinions are often perceived first and foremost as entrenched positions of enmity rather than a point of departure for a constructive conversation where we might find compromise.

It can't be, and I'm not proposing that your question conveyed this. But the outcomes of these conversations have got to be compromise. We've got to find a way forward where everyone has the capacity to benefit from the conversations. It can't be about who's going to be a winner and who's going to be a loser. While I am not happy about the rhetoric that seems to have stripped away our capacity as citizens to speak in a civil manner to each other, the one thing I will say about this administration is it administered a huge blow to perhaps my own personal complacency on where I thought we were as a nation.

The differences between us whether it is racial difference or gender difference or

ethnic difference, differences in faith, I think many of us believed that that was in the past. It clearly is not in the past. It's clearly something that deserves our attention which is why the number one research priority at Brookings today is the future of the middle class where we desire to study this at a very detailed level. What are those issues that create the stress on the American middle class. We define it as the floor of the bottom of the middle class is at \$25,000 of annual income. Can you imagine trying to live on \$25,000 as an annual income and many Americans today, many Americans in the so-called middle class, if they had an emergent \$400 unexpected expense, they'd either have to sell a personal possession or take out a loan. What the hell.

So, we've got to do two things. We've got to work within our capacity to address these differences in ways that can create greater unity, greater diversity going forward. Part of that is the civil discourse but part of that is truly understanding what it is like in regard to the inequality of race in America today. We have to challenge our assumptions.

This goes back to the disruptive influences in here. This is why you all are closer to this than I was. I am grateful, in some respects, for this moment that we find in American history because it has forced me to challenge many of the assumptions I had made about where we had delivered ourselves as a people. And if I'm uncomfortable with that, then that's a good thing. Because what this institution is doing, because it has embraced the future of the middle class, the global middle class by the way and the American middle class. If that's our number one objective, then I think that's a right orientation. The problem we've got in the White House right now, that's just a symptom. It is, it's a symptom. We've got to get after these issues.

So, to your question, if we understand first and foremost, we recognize that we are not enemies if we have differing opinions and if we all recognize that the outcome of a political conversation should be some form of compromise that benefits

both sides. Then we have a hope of going forward on almost all the hard issues and there are going to be some very hard issues. But if we don't come to grips with these, we're going to end up with one administration like this after another. It might be Democratic, it might be Republican but the nature of what will create our national politics will eventually trend to being simply unacceptable. And we've seen some of that play out in horrible ways in the last 36 hours.

MR. MARCUSE: We have time for just one more quick question and then we'll wrap up.

MS. YOUNG: I'm Erin Young with the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. Thank you so much for your remarks tonight. The passion is definitely palpable in the room and it continues to inspire young leaders like myself. You mentioned that you have a lot of faith in diversity and young people. I'm wondering if you can share with us some young people that you might look up to whether those are individuals or groups and what those people might have in common and define young as you wish.

MR. ALLEN: Well, in many respects I'm surrounded by them tonight. But I'm surrounded by them in the folks at the institution at Brookings. I have a very young chief of staff, I have a very young vice president for communications. But what inspires me about them is that they live with a set of principles that are admirable. They live with a set of principles that are exemplary and are, by the way, worthy of emulation. I have said before, some of you in here have spent some time in combat zones, I would guess. I've said before, I grew up in the shadow of the greatest generation but I believe I led in combat the next greatest generation and it's your generation.

It's people who, young individuals who believe they should be part of something bigger than themselves for whom principle matters, for whom the rights of those around

them and the worth of those around them is important to them. I think that if we start from that as a going in proposition, we're going to be okay. I think we're going to be okay. But we've got to solve some of the social issues in the country to create this, once again, unified diversity for us to move forward. But I'm actually pretty optimistic.

MR. MARCUSE: Well, you just said that when you were serving as a general in the Marines, you led the next greatest generation. And I would argue, sir, you still very much are. Thank you for your comments tonight. It is really a privilege for us to hear from you and appreciate all you've done for this country and for all of us. Thank you very much.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, wonderful to have you here.

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