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REMEMBERING HELMUT SONNENFELDT, A MAJOR FIGURE IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: As we're bringing in more chairs, I'll just let you know by way of welcoming you, I'm Mike O'Hanlon here in the Foreign Policy program. I overlapped with Hal for about 15, 17 years during his tenure here. But we normally have this algorithm that whoever RSVPs to Brookings, we take 50 percent of that number as our assumption of who's coming. I think clearly when you have something in honor of Hal Sonnenfeldt you should multiply it by 110 percent, not by 50 percent. So thank you all for being here.

We'll just wait one more minute as we make space. And anybody who's coming in there are also a couple of seats over on this side of the room, if you'd like, maybe about two or three left over there.

Well, welcome, everyone, and thank you for coming to this special day we can honor Helmut Sonnenfeldt, our dear friend and amazing American, amazing public servant, fantastic Brookings scholar, wonderful to be doing a project with Margie Sonnenfeldt and so many of you. Again, I'm Mike O'Hanlon in the Foreign Policy Program. And we're here today to commemorate his life, to celebrate the completion of the Festschrift volume, which lives online electronically at Brookings. And if you would like a copy, you can email me and let me know at mohanlon@brookings.edu. I'll say that one more time now and one more time later, but it's mohanlon@brookings.edu. So we've got a number of copies printed out.

And also, we'd like to take this moment to invite anyone who would like to join us after the auditorium event next door for a reception that, again, we're pleased to be able to host in conjunction with Marjorie. She's got a word of thanks in just a minute, but first I'm going to complete my introduction about Hal, and then we're going to go down the panel, and a wonderful group. I'll introduce them in just a second.

Three of the -- now 4 of the 20 authors or so who wrote for this volume, and I will allow each of them, and I know you'll all want to hear from them, to speak their recollections, their memories. And then we'll invite those of you in the audience who knew Hal to either offer your own remembrance of ask a question or make a comment, have a policy debate that you know he would have enjoyed and maybe was part of. So that's sort of how we're going to proceed today and we'll just play that out naturally until we feel like going next door and continuing the celebration over there.

So let me just, if I could, by way of introduction sort of explain the nature of this project and what we tried to accomplish, read a paragraph or so from each of four of the essays that just frame today's conversation; four of the people who are not here, but who wrote for us.

Winston Lord some of you may have heard of, and he wrote the following in the beginning of his essay, "He was born in Germany of a Jewish family. He came to America where he gained his education. He served in the Army. His mentor was Fritz Kraemer. He was an expert on the Soviet Union, Europe, and arms control. He was brilliant on substance and formidable in bureaucratic battles. He melded a European sense of tragedy with an American immigrant's spirit of hope. I speak not of Henry Kissinger, but of Helmut Sonnenfeldt."

And many of you will know, of course, how much their paths and lives intersected.

And speaking of Secretary Kissinger, he's got a wonderful essay, which is an adapted version of the eulogy that he gave seven years ago when Hal had passed away, but I'll just read one paragraph of that to give you a little flavor for what's in his longer contribution, as well. And he says the following. This is a nice humorous passage.

"Of course, I have read many of the stories of the flawed relationship that sometimes existed, or is alleged to have existed, between Hal and me, but I want to point out that he difference concerned really only one subject, which was Hal's interpretation of his mission. Hal interpreted it as being all-embracing, that there as no subject in the world that was not included in his responsibilities, which meant a certain duplication of the work that I was supposed to be doing." (Laughter)

I really got a kick out of that. And then, finally, just two more, one from our President Emeritus Strobe Talbott, who's not here today. He's over in India, working on the U.S.-India collaboration and center there. But Strobe, as usual, coined a beautiful phrase in saying the following, "Hal's title, all 32 of those years at Brookings," mostly the '80s, '90s, and 2000s, "his title was Guest Scholar. It was, shall we say, an understatement. Hal was, in fact, as permanent a member of the Brookings community as one can be and as good a citizen of that community as my colleagues and I have ever known. A better title for him would have been the one that he had when he worked for Henry: counselor. He was that to many of us and, of course, a friend."

And then finally, last but not least, this being November 2019 in Washington, let me read

from Fiona Hill's contribution. Fiona's got one or two things that are making her stay away from the public spotlight these days, so she chose not to be here today, although her heart and spirit certainly are. So I'm going to read just two paragraphs of what she wrote and then pass the microphone to Margie, and then we'll hear from our panelists and from all of you.

So Fiona's writing about the book she wrote with Cliff Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, one of my favorite books in the 25 years I've been at Brookings. And she says, "We completed the book in the last year of Hal's life. I would like to think that our attempt to fathom the deepest motives and outlooks of the Russian president was in keeping with the tradition of American thought and policy that individuals with great historical sophistication and appreciation for Russia, like George Kennan and Hal Sonnenfeldt inspired. Like William Faulkner, Hal was of the view that the past was not dead or forgotten or even really past. For a Russia scholar there is no better pearl of wisdom to begin one's work."

And then, very fitting, since we have Marjorie here, and she's really been a delight to do this project with and such a great friend of Brookings in her own right over the years and continues to be to this day, Fiona has some nice words for Margie, as well. And what she writes is, "In the more recent past, Hal's legacy was personally, as well as professionally, consequential for me. In 2017, I was asked to serve on the National Security Council staff as a Europe and Russia expert under the Trump administration. Immediately in the wake of a singularly contentious election with the national and international spotlight on Russian efforts to influence and interfere in the campaign, there were not many other Brookings scholars being approached by the incoming team." That's an understatement. "And beyond my scholarly and professional credentials, I was not necessarily the most obvious fit for the new administration.

"Margie Sonnenfeldt, Hal's wonderful wife and our dear friend at Brookings and a wise woman in her own right, channeled her late husband and drew on observations from his government service in a similarly turbulent period in the nation's history. She did not shy away from the inevitable risks, the brutally long hours, and the personal toll this would take on me, but she stressed the importance of stepping up to public service in politically disruptive and controversial times, and of making a contribution. Her call to service made a huge difference to my decision and periodic personal emails from

Margie kept me going at more than one tough moment after I joined the administration."

So if I could ask you to all join me in thanking, for all she's done for Brookings and for all of us, Margie Sonnenfeldt. (Applause)

MS. SONNENFELDT: Thank you, Michael. I read Fiona's essay three or four weeks ago, and I must say I was totally stunned by her remarks about me. And I shared that with Michael and he said that he had encouraged Fiona to go in that direction, so that was really quite amazing.

I asked to take the mic for just a few minutes to thank everyone for coming and to thank the Brookings staff, a number of people who worked on this to make this program possible. I don't know all their names. It's been a little over nine years since we closed Hal's office, so I don't think many of them even knew Hal, although Michael certainly did know Hal very well.

And most of all I want to thank Mike O'Hanlon for conceiving and organizing this program, but I'll get back to that in a minute. And I want to thank all of the friends and colleagues who contributed to the Festschrift. There are five of them up here on this platform, but there are more out there. And there's Angie standing. Angela, would all those other contributors please stand up? Barclay? Where's Barclay? There. Barclay Ward and there's Leon Fuerth and there are other local people who couldn't be here today. There's Jeremy Greenstock in London and Joe Joffe in Munich and Strobe in India. We thank them all.

The articles are short and interesting. They're online, as Mike said. And each one is valuable. Hal never kept a diary. He said he didn't want to do a kiss-and-tell book, so he deliberately didn't keep a diary. And he never wrote a book. So I learned more from reading these contributions.

Hal always said -- well, I should pause and say today, November 18th, is the 7th anniversary of Hal's death and it's the 67th anniversary of the day that we met in Washington. We met briefly in Baltimore a year earlier, but we met for the first time in Washington, in Lafayette Square, when we literally bumped into each other. And three months later, we were engaged, and there we go.

But from that time, Hal always said he was just about to enter the State Department when we met in Lafayette Square. He was still waiting for his security clearance. I was already a State Department employee, having joined in September of 1952 straight out of college. But Hal had always said that he would leave the government when he was 50 so he could do other things. And indeed, about

six months after his 50th birthday, he resigned and he spent a year across the street at Johns Hopkins School of International Studies, which he had attended as a graduate student. And he was on the board of Johns Hopkins at that time.

But then he, in 1978, he accepted the invitation of Bruce MacLaury, the president of Brookings, to join the Brookings staff. And I had hoped that Bruce -- I don't see Bruce. Where is Bruce? There's Bruce. Thank you, Bruce. We thank you. Bruce invited Hal to be a guest scholar. And, as Michael observed, 32 years of being a guest, that's quite a long time. So our family wanted to recognize that hospitality and support.

As I say, most of all I want to thank Michael. He and I have had a vigorous email correspondence over the last few months. I'm wondering where the server is located. Is it in Outer Mongolia or Inner Mongolia? (Laughter) I am now giving Mike a virtual hug. But then I'm going to give him the real thing and go on with the program. (Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Margie and all of the Sonnenfeldt family that's here today, and my colleagues Anna Newby and Val Broadie and Adam Twardowski and others who helped with this project. And now let's just begin.

I think you know, we're all friends here, this is going to be informal and fun. I think you all know Roberta Cohen, Cesare Merlini, Marvin Kalb, Diana Negroponte, who met and worked with Hal at different points in their careers and lives. We're going to start with Roberta because I think she may have the claim to having known him the longest even though she may be close to the youngest on this panel. Because she met him when she was a very young student and he was Johns Hopkins.

So, Roberta, over to you. The floor is yours and thank you for being here.

MS. COHEN: Thank you. And chapeau to Mrs. Sonnenfeldt.

You know, when I sit here I just can picture Hal walking in here. And if you were seated, he used to come here a lot, and if you were seated on the platform he was going to challenge with tough questions. And I got a whiff of that when I was 20, 21, and I was at Johns Hopkins SAIS, and I wanted to take his course of Soviet foreign policy. He used to teach that at night and during the day he was a top Soviet expert for the State Department.

But I didn't fit the criteria for the course because I hadn't taken his first class, the earlier

class on domestic policy in the Soviet Union. But I wanted to get into the second class, so I thought I better go and see him.

And so I went to his office and I told him that I had taken a comparable course in college at Barnard to the domestic policy. And he shook his head and he said, no, no, you can't be in the class. And I said I'll study very hard, I'm a good student. And no, no. He just nodded, you know.

And so then I said but I'm going to be taking Soviet foreign economic policy and you're teaching Soviet foreign policy. They will complement each other. That was a better argument. And I said it's absolutely essential for me to be in the class.

And he just sort of looked at me and he said essential? Hmm. Well, he said, if you have to be in the class, then there's a condition. And he said you give the first lecture and it'll be on the organization of Soviet foreign policy.

So I tried very hard not to gasp and was sort of cornered, and said, okay, I'll give the lecture. And he said see you in class. And he looked like the cat that had swallowed the canary.

In the class he kept us all on our toes. And he used to call on students, so he would say something like, and I felt he called on me more than others because of the circumstance, and he would say, Cohen, the Soviets have just issued a new statement on national liberation struggles. Is it really new? What's the implication for policy?

And you were supposed to answer very fast and very articulately in two minutes. And so it was -- I would come to class well prepared and it was always, Cohen, what is this? I was very pleased to get through that class. And he actually gave me a high grade.

I didn't see him again until the 1990s at Brookings. He was at Brookings and I was at Brookings and now we were colleagues. And I reminded him of how hard it was to get into his class and he remembered. And he smiled and very quickly he became again a kind of mentor and critic.

I was working on refugees and internally displaced persons, IDPs. And this resonated with him because he was born in Nazi Germany and his parents got him out of there when he was 12 years old just before the Kristallnacht in 1938. So the whole issue of persecution, displacement, family separation; his parents got him out and he didn't reunite with them until he was 18 years old. So all of that resonated with him.

And he would ask me questions about human rights, humanitarian atrocities, and humanitarian interventions, sovereignty issues, and so we would have discussions. And he always kind of kept me on my toes and kept me thinking and all about the politics around them.

He always emphasized never allow your emotions, bias, theories to interfere with your analysis. And he also said something like, what was it, don't become predictable because then you'll become irrelevant.

He soon began to introduce me very proudly as his former student and I would introduce him as my former professor. So we kind of morphed into, after that initial tough exchange in '61, into really a fun and very friendly and also critical -- he was always asking questions -- and very stimulating relationship. So I will always remember his tremendous knowledge, his wit, he was sometimes acerbic, his tremendous analytical abilities. And I must say that if he were here right now, he might well challenge just about half the things I said. (Laughter)

MR. O'HANLON: Well, Marvin, I think we'll go to you next if we could, please, my friend.

MR. KALB: Okay. Thanks, Mike, very much. Marjorie, kids, friends, I want to start with a bulletin, a news bulletin. In 1961, I saved Hal Sonnenfeldt's life.

Now, I have a feeling Margie may not know this story, but what happened was I was the CBS correspondent in Moscow and Hal, obviously, was a listener to the CBS World News Roundup in the morning and he probably heard any number of my broadcasts. And so he wanted to visit the Soviet Union. He was a student of the Soviet Union and he wanted to take a measure of the reality of the Soviet Union.

So in 1961, he came. He let me know in advance that he was coming and we set up a meeting and I was very flattered, honored that a serious student of the Soviet Union working in the U.S. Government would come to see a reporter working in Moscow.

So Hal arrived. We had just been given a new apartment on Kutuzovsky Prospekt, number 50, *pyat'desyat*, I remember that very well. And we were on either the third or fourth floor. We had a one-bedroom apartment, but it had what could charitably be called a living room, sort of a large closet, and the side of which was a window. Next to it was a window door. And through that door you could leave the room and step onto a balcony. The Russians were extremely proud of their balconies.

And you could look around and you could see plants on the balconies.

Hal wanting to test reality against theory decided that he was going to walk out onto the balcony. As he was going to do this, I grabbed him from the rear and pulled him back because what he didn't know was that somebody living a floor down had stepped onto the balcony, the balcony had crashed, and the poor man had died. But Hal wanting to test reality was interested in that kind of thing.

But I've spent I don't know how many decades as the reporter and Hal the source. I have a feeling that we had a very unusual source-reporter relationship because so far as I remember I never asked Hal for information about a hard news story. And the reason was very simple: I knew Hal as a friend and, as a friend, took overall importance over just about anything else, including my job and getting a reporter -- a story. So I wouldn't deal with that.

However, because Margie and Hal and the kids were so hospitable and we saw them so often at dinners or receptions that you had at home, there were times when Hal wanted to talk about the Soviet Union and he wanted very much to get the perspective of a reporter who spent and lived there for a long time. And so we could share large thoughts, but I never went after him on the small stuff.

I do remember Hal loved being called "Kissinger's Kissinger." It appealed to his ego, but it also I think was a sense in Hal's mind that it was right. (Laughter)

And in the tail-end of 1975, Hal briefed in London a group of ambassadors gathered there. Kissinger was there, but he was not speaking to them. Hal was given that responsibility. And Hal talked there about the evolution of the East European satellites. What would happen to them over a period of time? Would they ever become free of Soviet control?

Two or three months later, as a result of what is called "a leak," the story broke, I think it was an AP story, but I'm not sure -- it was what?

SPEAKER: Evans and Novak.

MR. KALB: Evans and Novak broke the story and it was described as "the Sonnenfeldt doctrine." Now, anyone who knew the administration at that time, and that was the Ford administration, would know that any major doctrine was going to have Kissinger's name on it, not Sonnenfeldt. So the whole idea of the story struck me originally as being a little flat, but it did take off. And Hal always had to explain what the truth was about that. He was simply pointing out something that he and Kissinger had

thought about as the evolution of Eastern Europe nations away from Soviet control.

And I think he joked at one time, didn't he, Margie, that graduate students are going to have fun trying to cover that story because, what the heck, it wasn't true. But it was, nevertheless, the Sonnenfeldt doctrine and it kind of was a source of pride, but also created some difficulty among those people in Washington who felt that Sonnenfeldt should not have that kind of distinction.

A final story had to do with a trip that Hal made with Kissinger to Moscow in 1972. And while they were involved in negotiations on arms control, they took time out to go to Brezhnev's country dacha in order to go hunting and shooting boar, B-O-A-R. (Laughter) And Hal said at that time that they fixed on the rifle they gave him a telescopic sight so large that you'd have to essentially be blind not to be able to kill any number of the boar.

But it turned out that Brezhnev did not kill any of the boar and was in a rather foul mood. And he was looking around for things to cheer him up and he looked at this dacha that he had built and he asked Kissinger how much to you think this dacha would be worth in the United States? And Kissinger, who knew nothing about real estate, instantly proclaimed $300,000.

But that's not what Brezhnev wanted to hear. (Laughter) Brezhnev wanted to hear something in the millions. And Hal sensing that Brezhnev was unhappy, and god knows what could have happened to East-West relations and the fate of the world if Brezhnev got too unhappy, Hal jumped in immediately and said it's worth $2 million. Brezhnev smiled. He liked the idea of the million. The sound of that appealed to him enormously.

Mike, my final comment is simply that in all of the years that I knew Hal and when I would look at him when he was in the midst of some official act, it just struck me that what a wonderful story that a young man born in Berlin can come here in 1944 and serve in the U.S. Army, go back to Germany, come back here, go to school, and work his way up so that he was in a position of considerable authority and importance at the White House at a critical moment in East-West relations. And he contributed significantly to trying to make the world a slightly better place in which to live. And I was honored to have a friend like that. (Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Diana, if I could ask you to speak next because we're sort of going with the theme of when people met Hal. And I know you wanted to talk about the Cuban Missile Crisis, which

is not a time that a lot of people associate with his career. But you've got a way to make the connection for us, I believe. And then we'll go to Cesare for the -- batting clean up, the Juan Soto role, before we go to the crowd for broader discussion.

So please, over to you, Diana.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you very much. I've got a serious assessment of Hal, but I promise you it will end with a dirty story. (Laughter)

So the serious picks up where Roberta started off, which was the Moscow speech in October 1960, where Khrushchev talked about support for national revolutionary movements. And Kennedy, still in the campaign mode, said everybody must read this speech. This is very important. And, of course, I, 40 years later, am thinking Cuba, Cuba, Cuba.

So this is where the challenger, the mental academic challenger comes into play. What was Khrushchev going to do? Was he the cautious man in the style of Stalin or was he the adventurer, the risk-taker? And Hal Sonnenfeldt said the latter. He had watched Soviet actions in Syria, in Egypt, and Congo, and he said this man takes risks.

So I leap forward now to the summer of 1962, July. And the Americans know that there are medium-range missiles on the island of Cuba. But we can deal with medium-range, says the Department of Defense.

Then, as we all know from our reading of the 13 days, there approaches long-range missiles, crossing the Atlantic on their way to Cuba. And this is where the head of the Soviet and East European desk at the Intelligence and Research Department of State says this man is not sending those missiles in order to balance U.S. and Western actions in Berlin. This man is showing that despite the fact that the Soviets have less missiles in quantity and less qualitative effectiveness, he is going to show off the little he has 90 miles off the coast of the United States.

And his colleagues said nonsense, nonsense. That's not what's happening. The challenger, the man who was able to look over the other side of the hill, said yes, Khrushchev is looking at China. Khrushchev is concerned with the competition from China and the necessity to puff up the Soviet position and not have the Chinese think that he has been set back because the deputy secretary of defense said that the U.S. had a one-upmanship.

And so Hal predicted Khrushchev will move these long-range missiles with a distance of 2,200 miles onto the island, and, of course, that really created deep nervousness within the EXCOMM of the National Security Council. Hal was not a member, but he followed the debates very closely.

So Hal was invited to attend the October 21 drafting of the famous October 22, 1962, speech in which Kennedy told the American public of what was happening in Cuba. And Hal's recollection of Ted Sorensen's poetry, how is the cadence of the speech? Of Ted -- so remind me the historian. Who is the historian, the wonderful historian of Kennedy? I'll remember.

SPEAKER: Arthur Schlesinger.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you. Thank you, Arthur Schlesinger. Thank you very much.

There were the big phrases, the cadence of the speech, the lawyers were there ensuring that the commitments could be stood up and were conformed to international law, and Helmut Sonnenfeldt was there to ensure accuracy. But he was there in the Oval Office as that speech was written.

Then came the point, quarantine or blockade? Now, a blockade is an act of war. And Sonnenfeldt joined those lawyers and others who said, uh-uh, don't use that word. Quarantine is better. And as we all know, the Soviet ships turned around, went back.

And then they turned to Sonnenfeldt and said what's Khrushchev going to do next? And here is the unpredictability. He said Khrushchev will tone down, will withdraw, will seek to make friends with the United States. And indeed, one year later, we moved to the Limited Test Ban Treaty. And, of course, by '64, Khrushchev was on his way out.

But I have promised Walter, Stewart, Eric, Babette, and Margie to finish with a dirty story. And it's in this very building.

So Sonnenfeldt is sitting in the front row of the Falk Auditorium and there is a stage like this with the equivalent number of speakers, one of whom, a dear colleague and lady, had a very short skirt. And Hal is on the first row looking upwards. We reached the end of the speech and he grumbles to me, I've been distracted the whole way through that speech. I didn't have to ask why; I clearly knew why. And all he said was tell her to wear pants. (Laughter and applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Cesare, over to you. Good luck after that, but I'm sure you can hold forth and hold your own very well. Please.

MR. MERLINI: Well, I think I am the one who comes from more distance here because I -- it's on. I come from Rome and I come for this very event. As I told Margie, I couldn't resist the invitation and I'm glad to have come and to be here with her, with the family, and what I consider also another family for me, which is The Brookings Institution, to be with you.

I met Hal slightly later. That was spring 1975. There was a meeting in Ditchley Park. I think I was the youngest participant there. Paul Nitze was there. Joe Nye also was young as I was; Michael Howard and so on and so forth.

But the time I was closest to Hal was later. It was from 1978 until the fall of the Berlin Wall, and which we participated in several meetings. I was proud to invite him several times to Italy, trying to see, to understand what was going on in the Soviet Union and the Soviet system.

What happened to the system, the Soviet Union took everybody by surprise, including Hal, including myself, including everybody. But that was the most interesting period for me to have his analysis because he helped us to understand the number of actors and forces that were there.

I have here with me the Adelphi paper he produced early '79, together with Bill Hyland on that. And you were reading; I cited you in the chapter. I see several hints, several factors that helped us to understand what was going on.

But being from Rome, I suggested to Mike and to Margie that I could also deal with the subject which was typical for Italy or for Europe, which is Eurocommunism. In a way, Eurocommunism is seen ex post. It was part of the process of collapse of the Soviet and Communist system. But as we didn't predict such collapse, we didn't understand that.

My point is that, and was at that time, and, as I say in the paper in my chapter, we had a difference with Hal about it. I thought that Eurocommunism was an important factor in the transition of the European system and it was useful to open the communication with the Eurocommunists. My object, my intent was to westernize Eurocommunists, to social democratize young Eurocommunists. I remember indicating the president of the German (inaudible).

In Washington, there was the sense that, you know, the point was that Communists were

not allowed to the United States, including intellectuals that belonged to the Communist Party. I thought it was time for the State Department to change this policy, and this was a point of discussion between me and the first Hal, the one described before discussing the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Soviet Union. He's the scholar. He was the first Hal, the one who was the counsel of the State Department.

In Washington, there was a convention that granting these anti-Communists was bound to be read as a green light for their party to join national governments, which related inside to the alliance mechanism. You know, specifically for Italy, this process of joining the government took the name of historic compromise because it was a compromise between the Catholics and the Communists traditionally.

In Washington, one formula I used to hear was that these were potential Trojan horses to come into the Atlantic system. And I take this formula, their Trojan horses, for my final point. And that brings me to the current times, the times that Fiona mentions having Hal's advice while she was preparing her book on Putin.

The recently produced a series of reports, three reports, under the common title "The Kremlin's Trojan Horses." Which is Troy again, the European nations, and the reports of the Atlantic Council were felt to be interference of the Kremlin into these countries. But in this case, the warriors inside the belly of the wooden horse are not the Communists, are not the left, are the right wing, xenophobic, nationalistic parties and movements. You see the paradox of Moscow, who was slightly more a generation ago. A point of reference for the left in Europe.

Now is the point of reference of the right in Europe, but there are differences. At that time it was an ideological, mostly ideological, point of reference. Is there an ideology affinity between Putin and the right wing parties in Europe? To a certain extent, yes, and these goals on the expression that Putin used in his interviews with the *Financial Times*, when he said that the liberal system is obsolete.

But I think that this is secondary because much more important is Putin's intent at helping nationalists, sovereignists to get the upper hand and destroy the process of European integration.

Remembering what I call the third Hall, the post Cold War Hal, and a discussion we had about the importance of a Soviet-European framework to handle the pieces of the former Soviet Bloc. I would venture to say that he might share the view that the European Union is the main target of Putin's

tentacles. And the word "tentacles" brings me to suggest to Michael O'Hanlon, who will in his paper produce us five models of Russia, I suggest a sixth model: the Russia octopus. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Cesare. So now we've got a half-hour, 40 minutes for your thoughts. And again, I think as Margie and I discussed previously, we can do this in any form you like. People may have a brief story they want to share, they may want to just tell the rest of us what Hal meant to them, they may want to ask a question. Anything is fair game. And we'll go until a little bit after 5:00, 5:15, something like that before we repair next door for a little celebration to continue there.

So I'll just walk a microphone to anybody who would like to start. Oh, Adam's got one, too. So please, don't be shy.

Start with Jan Lodal here in the back, please. Please identify yourself, of course. And if you'd like, tell us how you knew Hal.

SPEAKER: Hi. Is it on now? Yeah, all right. The number 32 has an important connection here to me. I was 32 years old when I first met Hal and showed up as a technical guy on arms control on the NSC staff for Kissinger. And I didn't know much and Hal and his colleague, Bill Hyland, of course, were the people in charge of the arms control negotiations and others at the State Department. But we ended up spending about 100 hours, I think, I calculated at one point, face-to-face in meetings with Leonid Brezhnev in those days and trying to negotiate a new arms control treaty in both the Nixon and the Ford administrations.

And what I took away from my relationship with Hal and what I remember most strongly about him was his commitment to, number one, the truth; number two, trying to bring about a better world; and number three, the role of diplomacy in doing this. And as we see the difficulties we're having today in these areas, I continually remember how this was what I learned from him and what we all need to remember. Because he was really the consummate diplomat and he was completely committed to trying to make a better world out of this.

And I think for someone who came here as a refugee and, you know, could have turned out differently had he not left when he left and come here and made this wonderful contribution to us, it's a great honor to be here today and to remember him. Thank you.

MR. ROSENBERG: Chris Rosenberg. Just a question. Would someone in the audience

or the panel care to comment on Uncle Hal's skill in bureaucratic politics and how useful that was? Because you alluded to it.

MR. O'HANLON (off mic): If none of us want to, I think Leon Fuerth also might have a thought if he's still here, or probably others do, as well, (inaudible). But anyway, does anybody want to start on the panel and then we'll got to Leon if he's here? Anybody else who may want to answer that great question? Anybody see him in action in the U.S. Government on this panel? I guess we all knew him in somewhat other walks of life. Jan saw him in government, as we just heard. Anybody else?

Jim Dobbins, you want to add a comment, my friend, on Hal's bureaucratic skills?

MR. DOBBINS: Well, one of my favorite stories about Hal was he was at a meeting, some celebration with President Nixon and Kissinger and their colleagues from a number of other countries. And Nixon was waxing eloquent about the new world that he was busy creating. And he said, and we -- perhaps it was Brezhnev who was there, we are the builders of this new world. And then he signaled to Kissinger and Kissinger's Soviet colleague and said, and these are our architects. And Hal said *sotto voce* to several of the Soviet apparatchiks that were there, and we are the plumbers. (Laughter) Which for those of a certain age would resonate.

MR. O'HANLON: By the way, as we look for our next speaker, I want to just give a quick shout-out to all the vice presidents and presidents of Brookings who overlapped with or helped bring Hal to Brookings or worked with him collegially: John Steinbruner certainly as the head of the Foreign Policy Program through the 1980s; Richard Haass, also here with Hal; Jim Steinberg; Carlos Pascual; Martin Indyk; Ted Piccone briefly, I guess that was about the end. And Martin was colleagues with him, but maybe not his boss such as that was at the time. So we had those various people who had the privilege of running the program that Hal was an important part of. And of course, Bruce MacLaury as our president, Mike Armacost, Strobe Talbott. So a lot of people.

And then I should, of course, mention in this list Ray Garthoff, who was such a great Sovietologist and Russia expert here at Brookings. And Ed Hewett, who, of course, was lost too soon, but was a Russia expert at Brookings for much of the 1980s. And then Fiona and Cliff, many others.

I just wanted to make those shout-outs with apologies to anybody I'm forgetting. But why don't we see who else would like to add a thought or a question or just a reflection and a remembrance?

SPEAKER: Is this on?

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, Barclay, thank you.

MR. WARD: I'm Barclay Ward. I was a student of Hal's. In fact, Roberta and I were at SAIS at the same time.

Unlike Roberta, my problem was not getting into Hal's course. My challenge was getting through the course in one piece. (Laughter) I think it's pretty clear from what everybody has said so far, his standards were uncompromising. I never felt I could meet his standards, although I struggled really hard.

He had a requirement, I mentioned this in my little essay, he loved to give writing assignments which would be comfortably handled in 8 to 10 pages, but he would accept only 2. And I remember after my first one telling a friend back home on a telephone call I've just had my first psychosomatic headache trying to do that. It was a real struggle.

Luckily for me I had an old, much-used Smith Corona portable typewriter that had peculiarly small type. And I was able to -- even with decent margins I still could get a lot of words on one page. But it was very difficult.

But his standards were with me always. I don't think I ever met them, but they were always there.

Just one last remembrance is not of mine, but of a colleague of mine in the Foreign Service, a close friend, who had an assignment to Hal when he was counselor of the department. And when Norm's assignment was finished he simply resigned from the Foreign Service because he said he would never have an assignment better than that one. And I think he was right.

MS. COHEN: I could do this at the reception, but I wanted to say hello to Barclay. It's been many years. And it reminded me, I mean, I remember when Hal and I had that little negotiation about my coming into the class. I realized that you don't outsmart Hal Sonnenfeldt, number one, and that he was tough as nails, but that he wasn't inflexible. So I always thought he'd be very good negotiating. Even though I was very young, that's what struck me.

And there was one other thing that became clear to me is that he held women to the same standards as men. And that wasn't so usual for the time and I appreciated that in the class.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, we'll go over here and then back over there.

MR. MacLAURY: Thank you. Thank you, Mike. Yes, I'm the one who invited Hal to come to Brookings as a Guest Scholar from Johns Hopkins. We were always a bit in contention with those folks across the street and if we could get one of their best to come across the street, we were doing very well.

Scholars come in all shapes and sizes and titles at The Brookings Institution then in the past and today. Guest Scholar is one of the most distinctive. And among those Guest Scholars over the years, and I can speak from decades, Hal Sonnenfeldt was among the most influential, no question about it. For the staff as advisor, but particularly I remember on successive Fridays there was an institution within the institution called the "Friday Lunch" or the "Joe Pechman Lunch," which brought together around the big table people, scholars, from Economic Studies, Governmental Studies, and Foreign Policy Studies. And it was always a bright day when Hal was in town and was able to sit at the table and bring a point of view that was not always represented in full here otherwise to those conversations.

It was a great privilege to have had him here and to have known him. And he gave an element of life to the institution that lasts to this day.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Bruce. Someone over here.

SPEAKER: Sort of a couple of questions. First of all, Marvin, based on what you said about your professional relationship with him, is it correct to presume that he left the media massaging to Kissinger and didn't get involved in that part of the job?

And the other question I had is we're at the 30th anniversary of '89. What was his response to that? And I assume that he was pretty involved in the Helsinki Accords, which was one thread that unraveled all this. And so that's why I was wondering what he thought of how things did unfold in 1989.

MR. KALB: One point is that Hal respected the press and he was not above using the press to advance the interests of the policy. A good journalist understands that. That's sort of routine.

He did not in the Kissinger years, to the best of my knowledge -- he might have sought every now and then to be the guy up front, but he was always the guy behind Kissinger. And he understood his role and he understood that Henry was the front man.

What they did together, the two of them, when there were no cameras around or no reporters, I don't know. I imagine they had many battles. I imagine there was a great deal of candid conversation between the two. But Hal did not present a rebellious front when Kissinger was around. Henry was the number one guy. Henry got the plaudits.

It was interesting, I'm remembering now that where there were a set of microphones and Henry was standing directly behind the mics, you did not have to look terribly hard to find Hal just to the back of Kissinger. In other words, he liked the idea of being recognized as being important and one of the big shots, but he did not in public seek to outdistance or outmaneuver Kissinger in any way. That's my sense.

And there's a larger point here, too, having to do with the way in which senior officials deal with the press. You can have a deep contempt for the press, and I fear that a lot of senior officials do have a contempt for the press. I don't believe Hal ever did. I think he understood the role that the press played. And like Kissinger, understood that the press is a valuable asset not only in educating the American people to what it is that the policy was all about, but talking to the government in that way.

Government is a big place and they're not all connected to the President or the NSC. Somebody has to talk to them to give them leadership. And when you talk to the press, you were doing that indirectly.

Your second question, I'm not good at an answer on that.

MR. O'HANLON: So we'll come back to that. I want to give Diana the floor in a second, too, and maybe Roberta. But let me just back up from Kissinger's eulogy as now updated here -- and, again, if you want a copy, please email me at mohanlon@brookings.edu. We're get it to you, M-O-H-A-N-L-O-N@brookings.edu. But they're also online already.

And this is Kissinger quoting from a telegram he received from Andrew Knight. This is back in 2012, the year that Hal passed away. And Andrew Knight writes the following and it's reprinted in Kissinger's eulogy, "I have just seen a late report in the UK press of Hal's death. I think of you strongly, as well as of him, at this time. To me, Hal was an unusual figure in that he never hesitated to express his own individual analysis of all those great issues in your territory at State. And yet, while making out his own view, he always conveyed at the same time a ferocious loyalty to you," to Kissinger, "and admiration

of you. I always hope you look back with pride and I hope Hal did through all the turmoil."

Diana, please.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Mike, Sonnenfeldt gave an excellent interview of several hours to Charles Stuart Kennedy. And it's that interview which provides so much knowledge of the man, his background, and also his policy towards evolving situations. He knew well the degradation of the Soviet economy. He knew it was unsustainable to continue to build the missile capabilities. And so he anticipated that it would happen, but how and when he did not know.

MS. COHEN: I just wanted to comment on the fact that I think he played a substantial role in the Helsinki Final Act and the draft of it, and that was tremendously important. Now, on the one hand, you have some kind of defining of borders or acceptance of borders and security for the Soviet Bloc. But there was an ambiguous part of it, quite the other, that was the human rights provisions, and he was supportive of that. And that suggested -- and he didn't realize -- because in his oral history, I agree with you, that's really a wonderful thing to read.

Well, he insisted that the human rights part be there. He did not know what it would lead to, but it spoke of knowing and acting on your rights. And suddenly groups in the Czech Republic and Poland and the Soviet Union began to act on this, and that was the beginning of an unraveling. And he noted the ambiguity in the document.

And I thought, when I read the oral history I was really thrilled to see that he played a role in getting those provisions there, which did have tremendous impact.

MR. KALB: And always with the idea, I think of understanding what your enemy needs in order to complete a deal, that it cannot be a humiliation of your enemy. You had to understand what it is that was in Brezhnev's mind, what it is that he needed.

And in the Helsinki agreements, it was an interesting balance, and I remember talking to Hal about this many year later. And the balance was that the Russians didn't want the West to move in on them, but the West insisted on human rights for people. And Brezhnev had to give on that because he did not want deep down to afford human rights to his own people. And Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt both understood that, but you went as far as you can and you laid it out in a way that advanced your interest, but did not humiliate the other side.

MR. LIEBER: I'm Bob Lieber. Marvin Kalb mentioned the Sonnenfeldt doctrine. In the early and mid '70s, I'd written a short piece in *Harper's Magazine* about Kissinger, which was not entirely favorable. And shortly thereafter, I had a piece in *Foreign Policy* which at one point explicitly criticized Hal over the so-called Sonnenfeldt doctrine. He was not pleased.

Years and years later, many years later, we were here together at an event at Brookings on foreign policy. And I had intervened rather vociferously against the speaker, who had been I think outrageously critical of something that the U.S. had done. I sat down, I was next to Hal, and he leaned over to me and said I forgive you. (Laughter)

MS. BOHLEN: I'm Avis Bohlen. I'm a retired Foreign Service officer and I never had the privilege of working with Hal, but was able to admire him from afar.

But what I wanted to say today is we've heard a lot about Hal's toughness and he could be pretty mean to some of his bureaucratic rivals. But he could also be enormously kind. And I saw this in his kindness to my father, who was the late Charles Bohlen, the Sovietologist of an earlier generation with George Kennan, and whom he admired enormously. And, I mean, he often spoke to me of how much he'd admired him.

And in my father's final months, he came often to see him at our house. And when my father was in the hospital in his final illness, he committed what he thought was a great act of kindness. He set up a call from President Nixon to my father. And my father was not a huge admirer of Nixon, so the kindness was perhaps a bit ambiguous. (Laughter) But he was really capable of enormous kindness, and I think that should be remembered, too. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: So we've got time for one or two more before we make our way across the hall if anybody wants to wrap up. And otherwise, we will start to say thank you to Margie yet again and just hope you can all stay. We've got space and food and beverage, hors d'oeuvres and drinks for anybody who would like to stay and catch up a little bit with old friends.

But is there a final word or shall we break it off there?

So anyway, again, email me if you would like a copy of the book. Thank you very much for coming. Let's all join in one more round of applause in memory of Hal. (Applause)

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