THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

REVITALIZING AMERICA'S ALLIANCES

Washington, D.C.

Friday, March 19, 2021

Key Discussion:

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The Brookings Institution

THE HON. ANDY KIM (D-N.J.)
U.S. House of Representatives

Panel Discussions:

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Senior Fellow and Director, The India Project
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GOLDGEIER: Welcome, everyone. I'm Jim Goldgeier, Robert Bosch senior visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a senior advisor to the Bridging the Gap Initiative, which is housed at American University.

Today's event is a collaboration between the Brookings Bosch Trans-Atlantic Initiative which aims to expand trans-Atlantic networks in cooperation to address global challenges and the Bridging the Gap New Voices and National Security Initiative which seeks to expand the national security debate with research from emerging scholars, particular those from outside Washington, D.C.

I'm delighted that one of Bridging the Gaps new voices scholars, Dr. Sara Bjerg Moller, is on the experts panel that will follow our keynote conversation. We're grateful to the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Raymond Frankel Foundation for their generous support of our important initiatives.

We're privileged at Brookings to receive funding from a diverse group of foundations, individuals, NGOs, corporations, governments, and others who share our commitment to independent research that leads to innovative ideas for addressing global challenges, and we're grateful for their respect for the value we place on our independence.

Today's event reflects only the views of the speakers themselves. I'm joined for the first part of this webinar by Congressman Andy Kim, who represents the 3rd Congressional District of New Jersey, and who serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the House Armed Services Committee, and the House Committee on Small Business.

Prior to serving in the House, Congressman Kim worked as a career public servant under both Democrats and Republicans serving at USAID, the Pentagon, State Department, White House National Security Council, and in Afghanistan as an advisor to Generals Petraeus and Allen.

And at a time when there has been increased violence against Asians and Asian-Americans, including the horrific killings committed earlier this week, Congressman Kim has been an important voice in the U.S. Congress. You can send us your questions for Congressman Kim via email to events@brookings.edu or on Twitter using the #USAlliances.

Congressman Kim, thank you so much for joining us. I know it's been a very difficult week for you.

MR. KIM: Yeah, thanks. Thanks, Jim, for the kind introduction. Thank you for raising the tragedy in Atlanta. It's been really tough, the last two days, for me and my family, as well as the Asia-American community all over the country. And we're trying to find our best way to mourn, appreciate President Biden's visit down there today; and then, hopefully, those are the engagements to the steps to be able to heal.

MR. GOLDGEIER: Well, thank you for all that you are doing. So I want to start by noting that after the end of the Cold War, expertise in foreign policy in Congress oversight of the executive branch on foreign policy by the Congress declined dramatically in the subsequent decades.

In 2019, you and a number of other national security professionals were elected to the House and have now been reelected. How do you and your colleagues see the challenges of building back a stronger congressional role in foreign policy and national security?

MR. KIM: Well, first of all, it's a real honor to be able to serve alongside. You know, some of the members that you are referencing and just the incredible expertise that they bring to the table.

And also it's really great because we have become such close friends too, and we have had these experiences. I have gone on codels to Afghanistan with Jason Crowe, Abigail Spanberger, and others.

And, you know, we're really talking to each other with a lot of openness and honesty about some of the things that we want to see done. We don't always see eye-to-eye, and we have some disagreements, but it's a really good amount of energy.

So that's one aspect to it, just the energy that we're bringing to the table. And also I'd say the other major factor here is our experience, being able to draw on that experience, being able to help shape the thinking of some of our colleagues, or shape the direction in which we're trying to go. I think that that's been one of the most interesting components of it.

And in terms of the kind of impact we're trying to make, you know, you and I kind of talked about this just a little bit ago, I think each of us is -- we're still kind of settling in and understanding where we can make the most impact and what kind of voice we want to have and what kind of issues we want to focus in on.

For instance, for me, I served on the Armed Services Committee last term. Now I serve

on both the Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees and that was a very intentional decision. Because I really felt like in my first two years some of these issues that we face right now, like, what happens next on Afghanistan or, you know, what do we do vis-à-vis China over the coming years and decades?

I didn't feel like I could get quite at those questions in the way I wanted to just on the Armed Services Committee and I'm trying to bring about sort of ability to have a more comprehensive 360 view on the work that I want to see done.

And, you know, how do we look at this not just in a siloed way -- and I know we experience that kind of issue on the executive branch side of just, you know, sometimes being kind of siloed into our departments' views, or bureaus' views, whether regionally or functionally?

And we struggle for some of those same challenges on the Hill. And, you know, I have tried to figure out how we can structure over that is something that I am very engaged in that I think a lot of us with that experience have tried to figure out those same questions.

MR. GOLDGEIER: All right, thank you. And so our theme for this morning's session is revitalizing U.S. alliances. We know that our allies want to believe the United States is committed to its alliances but they're a little weary regarding future U.S. reliability.

What role do you think the Congress can play in the effort to reassure other countries that the president who gets elected in 2024 or 2028, or whenever down the road, who might take a different view than the current president alliances can't easily threaten our alliances unilaterally?

And to be more specific, what role is there that Congress can play in providing reassurance that the United States won't simply leave an alliance or reduce its effectiveness just because we might have a president down the road who thinks alliances aren't advantageous for the United States?

MR. KIM: So how I kind of boil down this issue, it goes out to just this fundamental question which is, what is the value of the American handshake right now, you know, what does that actually mean to other people not just in terms of what does it mean to us?

So much of how often talk about allies and partners or thinking about it in terms of how does it benefit us? What is it that we're trying to get out of this? How can we use this and maximize this for our global advantage?

And that's an important aspect of it. But what I have been spending a lot of time on over the last couple of months is really trying to understand from the perspective of some of our counterparts around the world, what does the American handshake mean to them right now, and what are they trying to get out of our relationship and our strategic partnerships that are out there?

And I think that that's something that we very often overlook, especially when it comes to, for instance, our efforts right now to think about a coalition or allies and partners vis-à-vis our relationship that China -- I think, you know, it's very important that we have a better understanding of what some of our allies and partners or potential partners are actually looking for out of working with us.

And as I talked to them, and this is one aspect of where, you know, Congress can play a role is, you know, I do a lot of direct discussions from legislature to legislature and try to build up those relationships in a lateral way. And I think, you know, that is something that Congress is very well-placed to do and it helps compliment and it helps build upon executive branch interactions.

And I think, just think, the more densely we are able to have these connections the stronger partnerships are. Because in the same way that Congress plays a role in determining our allies, and our treaties, and our obligations, and our responsibilities, and we have that type of voice, the same thing is happening in other countries as they are thinking about whether or not we are the right partner for them, well, how to be able to partner with us.

So our ability in Congress to really inform and connect with and build relations with legislature, voices, and in parliaments, and legislatures around the world, that is important, helps build a 360 and three-dimensional view of what it is we're trying to do in the U.S.

But when we look at that that there is that question there of American commitment and follow-through. And, honestly, what I have seen and what I have heard is people are still waiting and seeing.

I think that there are a lot of leaders around the world that just, that they don't know if they can really understand and predict what's going to happen with the pendulant swing of American politics.

And that's why it gets back to this issue so much as well, about how so much of foreign policy starts here at home and that the better that we can try to manage the situation here the stronger we

can get through this pandemic, the stronger we can help our recovery. That really does have enormous impact in terms of the capabilities that we will have internationally.

So I have really, someone who has been in foreign policy my whole career previous to my time in Congress, I have really have seen in my own eyes sort of this erasure of the firewall between foreign policy and domestic policy.

And I really do think we need to be thinking better and stronger about how it is we can leverage and draw upon our domestic gains for foreign policy benefits. And I think that's one of the most important things that can help our efforts with our allies in just showing stability, you know, showing that steady hand at the wheel.

That is really the number one issue that I keep hearing from partners around the world in terms of their questions of whether or not we are the kind of partner they want to connect with.

MR. GOLDGEIER: Well, that's interesting because, you know, presidents typically jealously guard their prerogatives. We have seen President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken indicate they recognize Congress needs to play a stronger role in foreign policy, they have made statements. Of course, you know, President Biden had a long career in the United States Senate.

He actually wrote a Georgetown co-authored law journal, a Georgetown Law Journal article, back in 1988, writing against sort of monarchist view of the U.S. president when it comes to use of force and argued for joint decision-making and a more affirmative congressional role.

And he has now called for a revision of the authorization to use military force that's been on the books for two decades and needs revision, and there has been talk of revision. What do you think that that support that's been given so far by the president and secretary of state for a stronger congressional role will mean for relations between the White House and Congress?

MR. KIM: Well, I'm encouraged by it so far. And I was able to see Secretary Blinken before he went off on his latest trip to Asia and we talked about this a little bit. I think there is room for us to take some first initiatives here, like, the repealing or reforming of the AUMFs.

I think that's one of the first things that will kind of test this thinking. I think that, you know, many of us felt that this is a place where we can try to work together and think through what do our armed services need and armed forces need in terms of understanding their authorizations and how wide

it should be.

There is still some significant discrepancies here in terms of it. In Congress, we're trying to work our way through that. But I think that's a positive development. And I think it's an important development because, you know, I think there was some initial tension when it came to the Syria strikes and sort of congressional notification and other aspects like that. And I think that's sort of an element that we need to work on.

But here, Jim, let me kind of lay out how I look at this in terms of ways in which we can frame how this kind of cooperation and where this cooperation work. I often kind of see the work that Congress can do when it comes to foreign policy in three major categories: one is structural; one is systemic and strategic; and one is immediate.

So with the structural, there is an element where we can connect with each other and work together through the National Defense Authorization Acts, a potential, you know, kind of resurgence of an authorization type of effort on the State Department and foreign affairs type area and other efforts that we can do that talk about just the actual structural components of State Department, and the Pentagon, and our defense budget and other efforts like that, that is an element of it.

You see that with the discussions about diversity within our foreign, you know, our diplomatic corps and on other aspects of our civil service as well. You know, those are some elements that we'll be seeing more engagement on. And I think that that's a very natural place for engagement.

I'll switch to the immediate bucket which is what you see a lot of right now, in terms of the discussions about what happens next with Afghanistan and what happens with the Syria strikes and was that the right thing to do. We see that right now leading up to what happens next on Iran.

And then there is that middle bucket which is what I kind of call strategic, which I think about sort of as a more longer term vision of just what do you want our relationship with China to be? What do we have a vision of for, a positive vision for the Middle East?

Those are three different, fundamentally different ways in which Congress can operate. And I think too much of what I have seen actually falls into that category of the immediate. I think too often I think Congress is putting too much of their emphasis just on the news of the day and the headlines of today.

And I don't think that's actually where Congress can have the biggest impact when it comes to the Biden administration and trying to reassert its authorizations. If you look at the Constitution, a lot of what is laid out for, okay, the Article 1, is actually in that strategic box.

But the challenge is is that our politics have gone so near-sighted, you know, we are often operating just one day at a time, one tweet at a time, and our ability to think through what does it mean to be able to shape the strategic nature of our foreign policy really has dwindled on the Hill.

And a number of us are trying to see if we can bring that back, but especially when it comes to, for instance, investments in artificial intelligence and Next Generation technologies, future-proofing our military, or steps about, you know, energy of the future and how do we keep the United States to be the innovator and the global leader in the energy of the future.

Those are strategic efforts that require, you know, five years, ten years, down the road type of thinking, and I really do hope that Congress is able to engage in that; that will be part of the AUMF discussion; that will part of these other efforts, but making sure we don't just look at them in terms of what's happening right now, but try to think forward about how we can shape it.

And I think that is hopefully where we can have the best impact. I think that that would be something that the Biden administration would be open to engaging in, as well. And, you know, so we'll kind of see from there how we pull that together.

MR. GOLDGEIER: Well, let's bring your constituents into the picture here. I'm very curious to know what kind of foreign policy issues are on their mind. What have they have raised with you? When you're speaking back in the district?, what foreign policy issues do you raise with them? How important is it to your constituents that you are now on both the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Armed Services Committee?

MR. KIM: This is something that I think about a lot. You know, there is always this kind of saying, I feel like, especially at the Beltway where, you know, elections are not won or lost on foreign policy and that, you know, for the most part, the American people unless we're at war aren't really thinking about it.

And I challenge that assumption, I do. A couple of things really stood out to me. As I mentioned, you know, I traveled to Afghanistan in late 2019, before the pandemic set in. And when I

came back from Afghanistan I wasn't allowed to publicly notify that I was in Afghanistan until I touched back down in CONUS.

And I remember, as soon as I did, I sent out a notice to my constituents saying that in five days from now we're going to do an in-person townhall on Afghanistan, brief out what I saw, and talk about next steps.

We had nearly 400 people show up with only a five days' notice. And I was really blown away by their engagement, with their questions. Now granted, you know, I do represent a district with the Joint Military Base. McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Fort Dix, for many who have passed through.

But that being said, a lot of the people that showed up were not affiliated with the base, were not service members, or veterans, or otherwise public servants. And, anyways, there was a real hunger to know what's going on.

And I see that with a lot of the other work that I do. I find that oftentimes my constituents are sometimes unsure how to ask the first question, or unsure how to kind of get into the topics.

But once we start on it, there are a lot of opinions, a lot of thoughts on this. And it kind of reminded me of something, an experience I had when I worked at the White House before. I was at the NSC when we started the Counter ISIS War in 2014.

And when I look back on that one of the things I wish we had done was more direct engagement with the American people explaining the mission, explaining why we were doing this, explaining our strategy because I did feel like we lost control of that narrative for a while.

I think Congress is well-placed to do that. I certainly would like the executive branch to do of the more engagements on foreign policy with our communities as well. But I really do think that we owe it to the American people to do more, not just like press briefings at the White House, or in the State Department, but actually going out to the communities, actually trying to talk and learn how to talk human about these issues.

The more I try to do that, the more I find that there is an incredible appetite in my district to have a voice on Afghanistan, to have a voice on what happens next, and have a voice on what's going to happen after this pandemic.

I think a lot of people recognize that this is a paradigm shift moment. A lot of people feel

like this is one of those moments like 9/11 or the fall of the Berlin Wall, and they're very concerned about what happens next.

But they don't, you know, they don't really know what's going to come next and what this new global order is going to look like. They have a ton of questions about what should we be doing with China, and how do we engage with China?

And the less we talk directly to them, the more that some of these more toxic threats that hit at some of the xenophobia that we're worried about when it comes to how we talk about China and other allies, the more that that fills that space. You know, that kind of thinking can take root and that would be incredibly damaging not just to the Asian-American community here in the United States, but in terms of giving us operating space and decision space when it comes to our engagements with China.

So, you know, those are some of the angles I think about a lot when it comes to what Congress can do, but also about how the American people are feeling about this situation right now. I represent a district that Trump won twice. I'm one of only seven Democrats left in the country that represents a district that Trump won.

So I engage on a daily basis with a lot of people that still think he won the election, still think that, you know, that his approaches of America First are the right approaches.

We cannot just ignore that. We cannot just push that aside and think that kind of a Biden foreign policy and effort of professionalism on that effort is going to be able to erase that. And if we don't tackle it head on, I think it could be extremely disruptive in the years to come.

MR. GOLDGEIER: Well, your remarks lead right into a question that we got actually from one of our audience members, Professor Joyce Barr from Virginia Tech, who asked: Given the recent past, will America be more of a partner than a leader in the future?

Sort of gets to the question about, what does American leadership look like going forward, and how much does it mean being a partner with others, as opposed to just telling everyone else what to do, which is the way we approached in the 1990s?

MR. KIM: Yeah. I think that's a really important question. And I think, you know, I see that most pronounced and we see that in some of the engagements that happened with Secretary Blinken, and others, and Secretary Austin out in Asia, for instance, when they visited South Korea and

Japan.

And with General Austin, I think, down in India now, this idea, I do feel like the word "partner" is coming up a lot more, this idea that we recognize that there needs to be that respect shown.

Jim, this kind of gets back to you, I think one of your first questions which is, just like, are our allies and partners receptive to us now? And I do think that the use of the word "partner" and the framing of it in that way is meant to show that respect that a lot of these institutions and a lot of these partners feel like they did not get over the last four years.

When you see our former president and what he said about the NATO Alliance, or how he treated the U.N., or the Paris Climate Agreement, and other aspects of that, it was not actually just the policies that were damaging, it was this issue about respect and are we respecting international institutions? Are we respecting our global coalitions and our partnerships?

I know South Korea felt enormously, enormously disrespected in terms of how some of the military spending, partnership discussions, who were calling with the Trump administration over how much share should each be going at this about.

So, you know, those are some of the major things that we need to be addressing. That doesn't mean that we're not a leader. That doesn't mean that there aren't places for us to really press on the gas, but it requires us to have a real strategic vision of what we're trying to get towards.

So, as I said, like I really think we should be a leader and pressing as hard as we can when it comes to next generation technologies, investments in AI, and other aspects of this, you know, hypersonic technology, and directed energy, things like that, that I think are going to reshape not only the warfighter, but so much of how our global order is structured.

Also about energy and our ability to be that kind of leader, I think those are places where we should really show our strength, put our resources behind it, and I do think that that's a place where we can really pave the way. But it will be sort of a balance there that we'll need to be able to find.

MR. GOLDGEIER: I want to come back to the constituents issue because scholars have tried to understand the link between trust in government and the ability of government to carry out its policies and curious how much trust in government comes up in your conversations with your constituents> You know, how important do you see trust from the American people in enabling the U.S.

government to pursue its objectives overseas?

MR. KIM: Well, it's enormously important, and I certainly see this as one of the biggest challenges we have. I'll be very honest, people in my district are very wary of what's happening in government.

And that's all across the political spectrum. That's why I have been so vocal and forceful in terms of some of the reforms that we are trying to do with H.R. 1, and campaign finance, and gerrymandering, and things like that. You know, I think there is this very pervasive sense that our democracy and our system of governance is broken. I think that there is this there.

So there is that element of it where there is definitely a lot of sort of lack of trust there and that makes things come through this lenses of deep skepticism constantly from a lot of people that I talk to that they are always, oh, everything that the government does they try to figure out, you know, where is the truth in here? What's the underside here that's going to screw me over, or screw my family over, and that kind of approach. I hear that a lot.

And the other aspect of this that I think is problematic is, our democracy has become so obsessed with elections and campaigning, as sort of synonym to democracy. I mean it's certainly no doubt a huge part of our democracy. But having worked in a number of other countries on democracy issues I find that, you know, the United States remains the single-most election obsessed nation in the world. And as a result, I think a lot of American people, when they think of democracy, they think of elections and they don't think as much about governance.

And I think, you know, look, I have to say the same for some of us on Capitol Hill, as well, that we need to put more emphasis on the governance side of what we do and not just frame our democracy as an election because that inherently makes our democracy founded on partisanship and on competition, and inherently one that I think accentuates the hyper partisanship that we're experiencing right now.

So I really do think that there is such an importance not just to reform the structure of democracy, but to really try to revitalize and redefine how we talk about it and where we place our emphasis. And if we live in a society of just a non-stop campaign mode, which is essentially where we are right now, then we will bring about all of the downsides of living in that kind of experience.

And I think that that's what exhausts the American people; that's what gives them so much feeling that it is just never going to end and always going to be in this partisanship framework and they just tune out. A lot of them just tune out because they just don't want to participate in that. They know they're sick and tired of it.

MR. GOLDGEIER: Well, we have about 30 seconds left. And I just wanted to give you an opportunity to close by saying something if you want with respect to something the Biden administration has made a centerpiece of its foreign policy which is this notion of a foreign policy for the middle class.

I mean what does that mean to you? In just 30 seconds or less, what does that mean to you?

MR. KIM: Well, look, it's about speaking human about what we're trying to do, about anchoring this question of, are the things that the government is working on focused on trying to improve the lives of the American people? That's really it.

Whether it's domestic policy or foreign policy, are your lives, the lives of you and your family improving because of these actions? And it's on us to think about how to shape foreign policy to answer that fundamental question of why it is that we're doing it and why it's going to improve people's lives?

MR. GOLDGEIER: Well, Congressman Kim, thank you so much for joining us this morning. We're really grateful that you were able to take the time. And, again, you know, we're grateful for all you're doing for the country, in general, and particularly in this period of tremendous insecurity and fear among the Asian-American community. I know it's been a difficult time, and thank you for everything you[re doing. Our hearts go out to all of the members of our Asian-American community here.

MR. KIM: Thanks, that means a lot, Jim, thank you.

MR. GOLDGEIER: I now turn the event over to my Brookings colleague, Dr. Tanvi Madan, who will introduce and moderate our panel. Dr. Madan, is a senior fellow and director of the India Project at Brookings. Her book "Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped U.S.-India Relations During the Cold War" was published last year, and she is a close observer of the Quad and other interest-based coalitions that are currently forming.

Tanvi, over to you.

MS. MADAN: Thank you, Jim, and good morning to all of you. We often joke in Washington that every week is infrastructure week. But it struck me that the last month or so has been allies and partners month. We have seen the Quadrilateral or Quad Summit, a week ago, with President Biden hosting the leaders of Australia, Japan, and India.

We have seen Secretary of State Blinken and Secretary of Defense Austin visit Japan and South Korea in back-to-back visits, so two-plus-two meetings, and bilaterals as well. We have seen National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan speak with a number of his European counterparts including from Britain, Germany, and France, as well as the NATO secretary general, and not to mention Secretary Blinken.

And this is all happening ahead of Secretary Blinken and National Security Advisor Sullivan's meeting with their Chinese counterparts that is still ongoing. And to add to that, we have Secretary Austin, having just spoken a few hours ago to his Australian counterpart, Marise Payne, and as we speak, meeting with Prime Minister Modi in India, where he will spend the weekend, so we have seen a lot of activity.

Jim, Agneska Bloch, and I, didn't plan it this way, but there could not have been a better week to discuss revitalizing alliances because of everything that's going on.

And I'm thrilled to be joined by a stellar panel to discuss that with: Victor Cha, who is senior vice president and Korea chair of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, as well as vice dean of faculty and graduate affairs and a professor of government at Georgetown University; Zack Cooper, in the days that we were actually in our offices, our neighbor, at the American Enterprise Institute, a research fellow there and co-director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy; Alexandra de Hoop-Scheffer, a director of research and trans-Atlantic Security and director of the Paris Office at The German Marshall Fund of the United States; and Sara B. Moller, who is an assistant professor at the School of Diplomacy and International Race Relations at Seton Hall at University.

And before I turn to the panel, for those of you who have questions, please continue to submit them through emailing us at events@brookings.edu, or on Twitter with #USAlliances.

So one of the things we have seen over the last kind of few weeks, and the last couple of

months, indeed, is two things from the Biden administration's foreign policy approach. One has been this talk that, particularly Jake Sullivan has talked about, is approaching the world from a position of strength which has involved both kind of domestic recovery and reinvention and revitalizing alliances and partners.

Victor, the other element we have seen is the Biden administration signaling the Indo-Pacific or Asia, if you prefer, will be a priority and shoring up alliances and partnerships there, and we have seen that in this range of engagements.

What is your assessment of the Biden administration's approach to allies in the region? How are countries in the region viewing the administration in its approach to start?

MR. CHA: Thanks, Tanvi. And, first, thank you for inviting me to be part of this terrific panel and with such great colleagues. I really appreciate the opportunity. So, you know, I think they're off to a great start. You know, I don't know another way to put it.

You know, President Biden signaled this during the campaign and his foreign policy advisors, you know, in their various articles, have signaled that this would be the idea. I think for many of the allies and partners around the world this is a welcome relief.

I feel like they probably did not recognize the United States over the past four years. They didn't understand the language that the united States was using with regard to its alliances and the devaluing of alliance partnerships around the world.

There is a lot of continuity, at least with regard to Asia, in terms of both the personnel and the strategy. If it was the pivot to Asia or the rebalance under the Obama administration, this is phase two of that.

But there was some lost ground that had to be recovered, you know, undeniably, after the last four years. And the way we have seen this emerge, I have referred to it as the great one-two punch. The way we have seen this emerge, as you have said, Tanvi is, you know, the two-plus-two, the Quad, then the two-plus-two, and then you go to Anchorage and talk to the Chinese.

As many people on this call, as many viewers know, short of a summit, the highest level that you could use to sort of signal commitments to allies is a two-plus-two, which are notoriously difficult. I would argue, as a former NSC staffer, even harder to arrange than a presidential summit because you're trying to coordinate four principals schedules.

I think it took us over two years to arrange a two-plus-two with Australia. (Laughter) Right? It's just really difficult. So it's a very important signal, there is substance there too. The Quad, I mean we could talk about the Quad. I thought it was a fantastic idea, the way they carried it out, and then the op-ed, of course, really just a fantastic idea. So I think they're off to a great start.

MS. MADAN: Alexandra, I want to turn to you, where there has been kind of less continuity, perhaps, on the European side. But I'm going to ask you a similar question about Europe. There have been, as I said, a number of goals exchanged bilaterally, but also with the E3, Britain, France, and German, which I believe Boris Johnson tried to label the trans-Atlantic Quad -- let's see if that catches -- but also a visit by Climate Envoy John Kerry, as well.

We had Congressman Kim just earlier talk about what does the American handshake mean to allies and partners these days. And so I'm going to ask you that about European allies and partners. How has the Biden administration's foreign policy and approach towards to Europe being seen in the region and talk to, you know, what does that, what is the value of that American handshake for Europeans today?

MS. DE HOOP SCHEFFER: Well, thank you, Tanvi, and it's really nice to be with you today. I'm sitting in Paris, so I will bring a European perspective to the discussion. I think that, you know, when President Biden says America is bank, I think here, in Europe, we understand it as, American consultations with allies is back.

And you have mentioned the E3 is different in formal formats of cooperation and dialogue between the United States and France, Germany, and the U.K. I mean that was a very clear signal sent to Europe immediately after Biden's inauguration. There has been almost a weekly E3 plus United States meeting on many strategic issues where we obviously share common interests and common concerns.

Number one being Iran, but also climate, but also Burma. So this has been, I must say, an immediate and healthy process. And in terms of how it has been perceived and received here, it has been received extremely positively.

And I'll take one concrete example that took place this week which is, Jake Sullivan calling his German, French, British counterparts, but also having a conversation with the NATO secretary general to give a preview of the meetings that were going to take place between Anthony Blinken,

himself, Jake Sullivan, but also Austin, and others, with Asian partners, and more precisely with Chinese officials.

And what was interesting is that he made these conversations public in terms of showing how these consultations before an important U.S.-Chinese meeting was extremely important. So that, to me, has been a real change.

Then I would say the test for trans-Atlantic cooperation is, how do you translate this revitalized consultations into a more co-leadership, more co-decision- making processes, especially in the decisive final phases of a negotiation?

And I'm specifically talking about, you know, Afghanistan, which is also a trans-Atlantic issue, but much more broadly an international issue that we are dealing with as we are heading towards the May 1st deadline.

But there is, again, an example of the EU Brussels not being invited and being sidelined in terms of organizing, you know, this April interim ministerial meeting under the aegis of the United Nations, despite the important role that the EU plays and especially in terms of civilian aid to Afghanistan.

So that would be, I would say, one of my initial recommendations.

MS. DE HOOP SCHEFFER: Thanks, Alexandra. You know, and you mentioned kind of NATO and I want to, Sara, turn to you on that. I actually want to talk about the alliance in Europe and NATO, and then I'm going to turn to Zack to ask about the non-alliance in Asia, the Indo-Pacific, the Quad.

But, Sara, first to you, you have actually called for discontinuity, at least in some ways in Europe, there has obviously been with NATO a strange period during the Trump administration; though Secretary General Stoltenberg did navigate that quite delicately and carefully, the Biden administration has been mentioned as kind of quickly reached out to the NATO secretary general; we also saw Secretary Austin, as part of his participation in the defense ministerial.

But, as I said, you mentioned that NATO cannot go back to business as usual. So it's not that you can hit rewind. Why do you say that? And if you want to kind of address the point about Afghanistan, as well, because, of course, NATO has had a role there, any thoughts you might have on how the country should proceed?

MS. MOLLER: Thank you, Tanvi, and my thanks to the Brookings Institution and the Robert Bosch Foundation, Bridging the Gap Initiative for inviting me today to this distinguished panel.

First, I want to echo some of the points that Alexandra just made. I'm a college professor, so I would probably give the Biden administration an incomplete on trans-Atlantic relations so far. It's still early days, of course. We're going to reach the 60-day milestone or marker this weekend.

So far, they have been striking all of the right tones, the phone calls reiterating America's commitment to Article 5. Along with what Alexandra just mentioned, I thought it was a very good sign, especially in light of the fracas in Alaska yesterday that Jake Sullivan briefed Stoltenberg, the secretary general of NATO, and the E3 in advance of the U.S.-China Summit.

But I think the big developments on NATO will come at the first summit, the leader summit later this year, and we have to wait and see. It's widely rumored and expected following on the work of the NATO 23 Initiatives that Secretary Stoltenberg convened last year that NATO will call for a new strategic concept, it's first since 2010.

I think this is very good. The previous strategic concept did not include the words "China" or "the Arctic." Obviously, the strategic environment has progressed, moved since then. But in many respects, coming to the recognition that it's time for a new strategic concept is the easy part.

For years, NATO members recognized there was a need for a strategic concept update but avoided doing so because they were afraid of opening the can of worms. And so the hard work will begin once we start this strategic concept review. And it's expected that it will conclude prior to secretary general's departure from his position in September of 2022.

MS. MADAN: And I'm sure we will have a Brookings Event, our CUSE, Center for U.S. and Europe will host something then about that.

Zack, I want to turn to you and the Indo-Pacific, particularly with the Quad, an interspace, like-minded coalition of allies and partners of the kind you have written about. We saw this kind of historic leader summit on Friday. It's the first time a leader summit was held, and while there were complaints earlier that the Quad never had joint statements not only did we get a joint statement, we got a fact sheet, we got briefings, and we got an op-ed.

What was your assessment of that leader summit? And, you know, you have written

about these coalitions. And, you know, what, in your mind, are looking at the advantages and disadvantages did you see these kinds of coalitions, especially compared to alliances?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, thanks, Tanvi. It's, I think, just fantastic that you are hosting this discussion and you are the queen of the Quad. So I will weight in here, but I look forward to your views on this as well.

I thought the Quad meeting was really successful. There are a couple of attacks that people have made on the Quad over the news. Right? One is that it's just an anti-China coalition. Well, actually, if you look at the Quad's statement it doesn't mention China once. Right?

Another is that the Quad can't deliver, it's just a talk shop and it doesn't do anything. Well, it did, right? They have come up with a plan for roughly a billion doses of vaccine.

And then the third attack, and I think this is the toughest one, perhaps, is that if you invest more in the Quad it's going to distract from other institutions in Asia, in particular, from ASEAN. And I think it was particularly smart that the vaccine initiative is focused on Southeast Asia and delivering positive value to Southeast Asia. Right?

So what they did last Friday was pushback against each of these areas that have tackled the Quad. And, oh, by the way, do it in the first leaders. So, you know, many of us in think tanks, we stay busy by critiquing administrations, but on this one I think they got it right.

And I think it's important that they did it before going to Anchorage and having what seemed to be a pretty intense series of discussions to send the message that the U.S. is focused on getting the region right and the China relationship is going to have to fit in to the rest of the region.

I think the one tricky thing for the Biden team now is, you know, Secretary Austin I think just landed in India. So, obviously, he is going to do his discussions there. We have had the two-plus-two's with Japan and Korea, and we're in the middle of the Anchorage meeting.

The one place where we haven't had deep engagement yet is in Southeast Asia, And, yes, there have been phone calls between various American leaders and counterparts, but I think that's how this Asian piece is missing a little bit. And, look, this is hard, right?

I mean the idea that anyone was going to try and hold a Quad meeting in the first two months of the new administration and hold it at the leader level with a major deliverable, I don't think that

most of us would have thought it would be possible and to do that the same week that you're doing two-plus-two's, the first major bilat with the Chinese and a trip to India, you know, this is tough stuff.

But they're still going to have to show Southeast Asia that the U.S. is really engaged and that the Quad isn't supplanting ASEANs that travel. I think that increasingly is going to be a debate in Asia which is going to be a pretty tricky issue to try and manage.

MS. MADAN: Before I turn to Alexandra and Sara on this, I want to bring Victor in. Because, Victor, you have written entire books about, you know, Hubb and Spokes model in Asia and why that developed. And we have seen, including just today, a Defense Department official talk about in the Indo-Pacific kind of moving to a kind of a more networked or web of alliances and partnerships and coalitions model.

What do you think of this kind of shift? And, particularly, I'd like your thoughts on a country, like, the Republic of Korea. South Korea said we heard some journalists ask at the State Department briefing, “Why isn't South Korea a member of the Quad?”

Would it want to be? There doesn't seem to be an expansion plan. But what is way to bring South Korea into these conversations and other countries like South Korea who are not part of the Quad?

MR. CHA: All right, thanks. So the first thing is that, so I was actually involved in the original Quad in 2004-2005, when the Indian Ocean tsunami hit. It was actually my first week at the NSC. I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. But, you know, at that time, the so-called Quad was pulled together.

And I think I agree with everything that Zack said, possibly with the exception of the second citation of the criticism of the Quad. Because that certainly is a criticism levied against some of the Southeast Asian Asia-based regionalism.

But, you know, the Quad, from its inception at least with the Indian Ocean tsunami did deliver, right, it delivered right away. It largely delivered because the U.N. was not in a position to deliver. Nobody else was in a position to deliver at that particular time.

And it continued in some format later on, also informal. But, as Zack said, the press always talked about it as some sort of anti-China conspiracy. But the Quad substantively was never, it

was never about China. I was in all of the conversations with the Quad from 2004 to 2007, and we never talked about China.

I mean we talked about many other things, our early warning tsunami systems, Iraq and Afghanistan at the time, counterterrorism, but it wasn't about China. And the theory though was that the dialogue, the habits of cooperation that were created for all of these other areas of cooperation would serve the United States and its partners in Asia well, now or in the future vis-a-vis China.

So that's on the Quad. On networks, yeah, I mean I think we all know that one of the reason that regionalism grew so slowly in Asia was because of the very strong imprint of the U.S. Hubb and Spokes Alliance system, every country in the region got what they needed from the United States, and the strength of that system actually decreased the incentives for countries to work across and with each other.

And but now, of course, there is much more networking taking place. It's something encouraged by the United States by the Hubb and that's all of a positive thing. And when it comes to Korea, you know, I mean I am of the view that Korea should join the Quad. I don't think there is any question about it.

Everything that the Quad talked about, as Zack laid out, are things that South Korea, as the fifth prominent democracy in Asia, believes in. And if their concern is a reaction from China, my own view is that China is much more likely to treat these countries with more caution and with greater respect if they're part of a group than if they are on their own, right, and that's the case for Korea; that's the case for any one of these countries.

If there is anything we learned from the past four years is that no country can deal with China on its own and that's why this coalition of diplomacy, the networking, the Quad, this is really the right strategy going forward.

MS. MADAN: I'm actually going to come back to kind of fracas in Anchorage a little bit, in a little bit. But I do want to kind of bring in Alexandra and Sara here and we got questions on this as well.

I mean part of this network has not just been involved kind of the Indo-Pacific, but we have seen Asians and European countries either involving the U.S. or just on their own -- you know, to me, I think of something like an Australia-India-France trilateral potentially, you know, a maritime security

cooperation which they are emphasizing in a lot of work they're achieving in exercise. And so that you are seeing kind of this network develop.

But we had a couple of questions on this question from Sabine Russ-Sattar, a professor at Catholic University says: what do you think from a kind of European perspective of this kind of alliance of democracies that people have been talking about -- a coalition, if you don't want to use the alliances -- and as it's framed to counter an authoritarian challenge? And, you know, what format of cooperation would you both recommend?

And then a related question is this prioritization of regions. Biresh Banerjee, senior editor and anchor of Deutsche Welle asks: you have seen the Biden administration have a flurry of activity with Asia. Do you see it as deciding that the Indo-Pacific alliances are going to be more important than European ones, particularly, given the less than enthusiastic response from the Europeans thus far, particularly in the question of China?

So about this you could talk about kind of the coalition versus alliances or the way it fits in and this prioritization of regions and how you see that?

MS. DE HOOP SCHEFFER: Sure. I mean I think we have entered an area of what we could call flexible multilateralism, you know, what Donald Rumsfeld used to call the "the mission makes the coalition." Right?

I think we're very much in that kind of trend which is -- and you have, you know, mentioned a few of these informal coalitions that get together, countries that get together in ad hoc coalitions, or contact groups, or Quads, or trilateral formats, or slightly bigger to deal with a specific issue.

Sometimes it's based on geography. You have that in Europe with the Nordesco group, which is a group of Scandinavian-Nordic countries that share the same geography and therefore share a proximity in terms of the core strategic interests.

And this is not, I would say, a concern. It's not a concern for the more formal, bigger institutions, like, the United Nations and others. It's complimentary. So I see that's happening a lot within the EU between the United States and Europe, between Europe and Asian partners, as you just mentioned, but also within the Asian region.

You have mentioned, you know, the so-called D10, these 10 democracies, or the G7,

plus India, South Korea, and Australia that Britain, you know, has invited to the next G7 Summit. Why not? Why not?

Then, you know, the concept of having a summit of democracies has encountered a slight pushback here in France specifically. And in Europe the problem is, who do you invite? And, therefore, who do you not invite? What kind of message are you sending? And, therefore, the Summit for Democracy seems to be a slightly more, I would say, understandable idea where you could gather maybe a larger group of countries, or maybe having a trans-Atlantic conversation on our own domestic political issues.

Then, on the China issue, the relationship, you know, there has been a lot of debate here in France but also in Germany. How do we find a balance between our relationship with the United States and our relationship with China? And this, in fact, has spurred a lot of debate in Washington.

Your know, French President Macron has, you know, used the term, "présence d'équilibre" for sort of Europe as being a power not taking a stand or being in balance between the United States and China, which has not always been well-received either on the other side of the Atlantic. But, basically, all of this leads to, you know, what we call strategic autonomy and this is very much linked to the discussion we're having today about alliance.

Because, you know, getting into an alliance or working with allies certainly leads to a certain amount of alignment on the policy priorities of the other members of the alliance, right. And the French motto has always been, we can be allies, friends, but always aligned with the United States and that doesn't mean that we don't have a great cooperation.

But I think in terms of the trans-Atlantic partnership -- and I'll end up here -- is that there is no appetite today on both sides of the Atlantic to return to the old pattern where, you know, the U.S. decides, leads, and Europeans follow and I think that the Biden team has fully understood that.

That's part of the strategy autonomy debate. Merkel, at the Munich Security Conference, had that sentence as saying that our interests will not always converge be it on China, be it on, you know, the Nord Stream 2 joint guest pipeline with Russia.

So there will continue to be points of tensions and disagreements. But the bottom line, especially in this competition with the U.S. and China, is that U.S. allies -- and I see exactly the same

trend in Asia -- don't want to be forced to choose a side in this competition since alienating either power could adversely affect its security or, and or, its economy. And I think that's very much what the nature of debate we're having here in Europe within the broader framework of the U.S.-China relationship.

MS. MADAN: Sara?

MS. MOLLER: Thank you. Yes, I just want to make a couple of points. In addition to the informal dialogues that have been mentioned between America's Atlantic and Pacific partners, I think it's also worth mentioning and recognizing there is a formal mechanism within NATO, the NATO partners across the globe, which are individual partnership cooperation programs.

Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand already are members and the secretary general has expressed an inclination for deepening and broadening these relations, as did the 2030 Report from last year. Stoltenberg even recently mentioned India, bringing India into the NATO Partners Across the Globe program, and it will be interesting to see what the reception in Delhi is to that.

On China and the prioritization, that doesn't come as a surprise to anyone in Europe. And I think Alexandra is right that despite being aware that this was going to be a priority out of the gate for the Biden administration, there is a reluctance and a weariness about having to choose.

And I think the onus is also on the European right now, who has spoken a lot about strategic autonomy and have tried to clarify what they mean by that, but to come to the table at the NATO Leaders Summit later this year with concrete proposals.

What will it look like in action? And, particularly, on that latter point, what about a NATO even division of duties, right. What is this vision going to look like? So I was a little disappointed at Chancellor Merkel's and French President Macron's recent comments at the Munich Security Council Special Edition last month was hoping for more discussion on concrete proposals. But, hopefully, that will come later this year at the summit, as I said.

MS. MADAN: It would be interesting to see what New Delhi might say to kind of being part of that dialogue. It was quite interesting last year, Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchinson actually in Brussels hosted the Australia, Japanese, and Indian ambassadors for kind of a Quad meeting in Brussels.

And these ambassadorial meetings have been taking place in various capitals, but it's

particularly interesting to see that. I'm also struck by Alexandra's comment about autonomy, and alignment, and alliances.

And I feel like India, the other country that spoke a lot about strategic autonomy other than France has a somewhat adjusted view where they don't want alliances but do want alignment and will align on particular issues or interest.

Victor and Zack, before we turn to the China question, I just want to ask -- speaking of kind of this coalition and partners, we're talking about a lot of this kind of engagement. Victor, you have served in government, is there a danger that there is kind of this proliferation of kind of alliances, coalitions, partnerships, and does a bandwidth and capacity exist for this?

MR. CHA: I think it does. I guess I would say, it requires some rejiggering or reformat. Rejiggering is not a good think tanky academic term, but it's a reformatting of how we do diplomacy.

And, you know, it's clearly started at the top with the statements by the leaders; that I refer to it as not alliance diplomacy or anti-China alliances, it's coalitional, right, it's coalitional diplomacy and it could be issue-based.

It's undeniable that, you know, in the current environment we're seeing countries both in Europe and Asia facing these. I'm actually writing a book on this, facing these binary choices, binary choices where there isn't the sort of headspace that they used to have before.

And so and these are challenging in every country would prefer to be able to choose based on the issue. But I think for the United States the question becomes, how can you frame the conversation in a way such that allies see these choices that they're making is not necessarily being anti-China choices but being choices that are, you know, supporting the rules-based order.

In Asia, we're talking about a resilient Asia. You know, I see (inaudible) writing reports about how these choices are not about anti-China but they're about building a resilient Asia in terms of supply chains, and clean networks, and a rules-based order. So, in that sense, it's both in terms of the language that we use, but also in terms of how we do diplomacy.

And the Quad was a very good example of that, you know, that was all about a resilient Asia whether it's COVID, or supply chains, or other things, it wasn't spoken about as an anti-China alliance. And I think it's a smart strategy overall, I mean, understanding all of the sensitivities across the

board in the Pacific and in the Atlantic with regard to being coerced by the United States to do things.

But I think for everyone who doesn't want to be coerced by China, right, this is the best asset that we have whether it's alliances or alignments. Because it's the target of what China and Russia are after, right. They're targeting and they were targeted in these last four years our alliances and partnerships around the world. So this is, you know, most certainly an asset we can use in trying to accomplish that goal.

MS. MADAN: One of my favorite things whenever there is any Quad activity is the response that comes from Chinese officials or analysts. And my favorite this time was a Chinese professor from Fudan University, who labeled it the “coalition of grumblers.”

And, Zack, not just on the “coalition of grumblers” but what are kind of the biggest challenges whether it's kind of on alignment of interests or kind of bandwidth, etc., of four coalitions?

We have also got a specific question from Ashton Gelat on a budgeting question. How do you respond to recent reports that the DOD's Security Cooperation Fund should be transferred to the State Department for management?

MR. COOPER: Let me take the first question. I want to build on what Victor said because I think part of the task for the Biden team is to shift the way the U.S. talks about alliances and partnerships. And, in fact, to shift the way we talk about our great power strategy which I have always thought was not a particularly effective term to use abroad.

So if we are saying to our friends in Europe that the U.S. is in a great power competition with Russia, and we're saying to our friends in Asia that the U.S. made a great power competition with China, it doesn't give them a lot of reason to want to, you know, sign onboard with a U.S. approach, right.

We have to explain that actually this isn't about U.S.-China, or U.S.-Russia, this is about the basic rules and norms that undergird the existing system. And that's not about what America wants, it's about what those like-minded coalition of countries want. And that's where our focus should be.

And so I think when we frame this as great power competition that actually it damages our cause abroad. What we should be focusing on is what our objective is, right. And I think, therefore, we have several different objectives and we're going to have different coalitions in these different areas.

So, you know, I have suggested that there is probably going to be a security coalition;

there is going to be a economic coalition; there is going to be a tech coalition, and probably a governments coalition. We're not going to merge those, this is not the Cold War.

We don't have a unified group of countries like we did in Europe that have similar political and economic systems. There is variation, especially in Asia, right, where some of the partners that we're going to work with are non-democratic and we're going to have to be okay with that.

And so part of the challenge for us is to build these separate coalitions. And in many ways, this is much harder than the challenges that we faced during the Cold War, right. It's going to be much more complex and the coalitions are going to change and shift over time.

I think we're just at the beginning of trying to figure out how to do this. I think the Quad is a bit of an experiment in this regard. But some of what Victor was talking about is so critical here which is, we have got to bring along countries where they're most willing to play a part.

And so asking our European allies to play a big military role in Asia, you know, Sara has written a really important piece about this. I think there is going to be skepticism, right.

One place where the Europeans absolutely are a critical voice and where we need them to do much, much more is on the economic side, right, and asking about what are the economic rules of the road. What are the rules of the road on governments, right?

And so on these kinds of issues, I think we have to be comfortable with differing kinds of coalitions and with our allies and partners taking leadership positions in different areas at different times and that's just a really, really tough issue.

MS. MADAN: Sara, I was going to ask you this on our turnaround. But since we're here, you wrote a piece in the Washington Post calling for NATO to kind of, you know, because you have written about it lacking purpose and relevancy or being in danger of that.

But, you know, the China challenge or kind of the Indo-Pacific is where I need you to look, Zack has actually expressed. Why don't you tell us what your argument for why that's what NATO should be doing.

MS. MOLLER: Yeah, I just want to clarify, since Zack mentioned the piece as well, that my recent piece in the Washington Post quite clearly singled out and said I am not talking about a NATO military presence in the Indo-Pacific or Asia.

I think the problem is that as soon as you mention NATO and China in the same sentence, people stop listening and their eyes glaze over and they immediately conjure up visions of NATO flagged vessels in the South China seas.

But the reality is there is a lot that we can talk about including NATO and China that's happening in the North Atlantic region, as the piece noted, whether that's the Arctic, whether that's in terms of resiliency, right.

So I just want to reiterate again, and the Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has gone on record, right, that having a discussion about China's growing influence in the North Atlantic is not equivalent to talking about a NATO military presence in Indo-Pacific or Asia.

Though I should note that NATO has operated in the Indo-Pacific before and in terms of a counter-piracy mission, but I want to be clear that that's not what I'm calling for here. And there is a lot that we can discuss about NATO's role in addressing the rise of China in the North Atlantic.

Also on the Europeans reluctance to choose sides, I would say, well, they have already chosen by virtue of the fact that they're in an alliance of democracies, right. So I think the small European countries are there and recognize the challenges and threats that china poses to the North Atlantic.

I'm worried about Germany, with the exception of the Defense Minister there, is not probably likely for -- that long for that job given the upcoming German election. I worry about U.S.-German relations in the coming months, particularly, also in light of Secretary Blinken's strongly worded statement on Nord Stream 2 yesterday.

MS. MADAN: And I want to come back to that. I would also say, you know, that tone matters as well. And, you know, one of the things I have noticed kind of, Zack, to your point about, you know, whether it's whatever you want to call it, great power competition and how you want to frame it, but it's -- you know, Jake Sullivan was asked about, last week about Indian -- new rules in India that would potentially exclude Huawei.

And, you know, he didn't do the full court press about, yes, that's what India should choose, but just said that was a sovereign Indian decision. And it is something that the U.S. does have concerns about Huawei and, you know, thinks is following the discussion closely.

I have to say the Trump administration did come around to that view towards the end.

But initially kind of you must choose a certain thing on Huawei didn't go down well in a number of countries, in fact, and jumping from counterproductive because then countries feel they don't want to do something under U.S. pressure.

Victor, I do want to kind of come to what I suspect we'll be talking about for ages. And I want to kind of frame this as our China-Russia section for a bit. We were competitors maybe not great power competition, but competitors potentially adversaries.

Yesterday, the meeting in Anchorage some who say that, look, the fracas that we saw it's things that people think or have said privately or, and it's just that we got to, all of us got to see it live.

And so, you know, it's a kind of revolution playing out on tv. In this case, it's competition playing out on tv. What's your assessment, at least your preliminary assessment since the meeting is still ongoing, of kind of the meeting itself?

MR. CHA: Well, you're right. I mean, Tanvi, you know, we still don't know. And, you know, they are not going to do a joint press conference -- (laughter) -- or a joint communique for certain. And I don't think that was ever the intention.

And I think the administration has been pretty clear that it's not a strategic dialogue. I mean, you know, we had these -- what were they called -- we had the senior dialogue, the senior policy dialogue, the senior -- the economic and security dialogue.

This is not a continuation of this. This is really more of a taking stock meeting, if you will. And it's probably going to be a long list of things that the administration will talk to China about with regard to their activities over the past few years.

But I think it's the way that Zack put it, I think is important, this notion of, you know, we in our bilaterals with China, we may talk about it as a great power competition. I mean we may do that with them.

But the broader message around Asia and Europe should not be that. Because once you do that, what do you trigger in all of these allied countries? You trigger entrapment fears, right, that's the first that -- and, particularly, in Southeast Asia, you trigger these entrapment fears and so and we don't want to that, right.

I mean, and so I really like the formulation of focusing on the objective rather than on the

nature of the competition with China. But I really don't know what else we can say about this Anchorage meeting until we hear more about it, but I'm certain that both sides went in without their gloves on, let's put it that way.

MS. MADAN: Sara, you wanted to come in on this?

MS. MOLLER: Yeah, just quickly, thank you, Tanvi. I don't think anyone was expecting sunshine, lollipops, and rainbows, right. Secretary Blinken was quite clear going in that this was not a strategic dialogue.

Also given the topic we're discussing today, I think it's important to note that in addition to playing to each sides' domestic audience, I think this was really about third parties whether it's U.S. allies, partners, so get in line, right.

The Biden team quite clearly wants to show that it's back on the international scene and China wants to communicate that the world has moved on. And I think it was a good thing, as has already been mentioned, that's how we would brief the E3 and Stoltenberg in advance.

Because I'm sure that in addition to the anxious calls in Asia this morning there were some in Europe as well. It's clear that both sides had a lot of pent up frustrations from the past four years they wanted to get off their chests, but there has to be room for dialogue and diplomacy as well with China, especially on areas like climate change. We have the upcoming Biden Leaders Summit on Climate Change next month.

MS. MADAN: And I want to go to Zack and then Alexandra on this. And I have a Russia question to Alexandra as well. Zack, your thoughts about the, you know, grumble in the jungle, or whatever the version of it that we're going to come out with. But also a question that we have from Alex Lennon through the Washington Quarterly that about the two alliances that we have not discussed (inaudible) in Philippines, you know, how would you see those alliances? How will they differ in the years ahead compared to the alliances with Japan, Korea, and Australia?

And your general sense of how you think this, the kind of just -- even if we don't have the results of this meeting, but just what we saw yesterday, and to Sara's point, will be seen in the region?

MR. COOPER: Got it. I think the interesting thing about the Anchorage meeting is there are two different views emerging. One is, oh, this was a bit of a blowup and, you know, something has

gone wrong.

The other is, this is kind of natural, right. The U.S.-China relationship is going to be full of friction. And in the past, I think sometimes American leaders have been a little unwilling to tolerate some of that friction and, obviously, we don't want it.

But at the end of the day, I agree with the administration. It has to be a results-oriented relationship, and the results can't just come from one side. And so if the Chinese are going to come to the table and act the way they appear to have acted yesterday, I think the administration is exactly right to stand firm, and that's fine.

We have passed some messages along. It's clear where both sides stand. And I think that's not a bad outcome actually. And so, I'm sure the discussions were quite tense in private, as well as in public. But I think the bottom line is they're tense because we have some real disagreements, right, and papering over that is not the right approach.

So that's my view on Anchorage. I think on this question that Alex asked which is an important one, you know, the Philippines and Thailand, not only have we not talked about them yet, interestingly, they're not in the Interim National Security and Strategic Guidance. They're the only alliances not mentioned.

So I'm sure they're feeling a bit nervous at the moment and they should be because this is an administration that has committed to talking a lot about values, right. And we have two allies in Asia that are not living those values and so that’s going to make it much more difficult towards us.

And I think, frankly, we see some really different approaches in Asia to the last few years as American alliance policy, right. So I have a piece coming out early next week with Lindsey Ford, your colleague at Brookings, where we look at Asian responses to the Trump administration.

And I would say they fall into four categories and the Philippines and Thailand are the latter of these. One response is you just double-down on the U.S. alliance. That's basically what Japan has done, I would call that anchoring.

The opposite of that, of course, is accommodating, right. Your sort of realign to the other side. That's what we're seeing today with Thailand, to some degree, right. They are being particularly accommodating to the Chinese. There are strategic reasons for them to do that, but it is going to be a

problem in our alliance.

And then you have two other options, which I think we're seeing a lot around the region. One is to augment the U.S. alliance with other relationships, right. So I think where we have seen this most clearly is from the Australians.

So Scott Morrison said in a private meeting earlier in the week that he thought the Quad leaders meeting was the most important thing to happen to Australian security policy since Kansas. They think this augmenting effort is really critical.

And then, finally, there is a category which I would call autonomizing, which I think is what we're seeing from Korea and some others right now, where they seek more independent capabilities because they are less convinced that the U.S. has shared interests with them.

So, you know, I think there are basically four different approaches anchoring, accommodating, autonomizing, augmenting. We're seeing a bit of all of them from many countries around the region. But I think from the Philippines and from Thailand, certainly we have seen a bit more accommodating from them than the U.S. would like. And I think it's going to take some time for that to change.

My expectations of where the U.S.-Philippine relationship goes are very low until 2022. Until we get a leadership change in the Philippines, it's just going to be very difficult to work with the administration there given the approaches that our government is taking and that their president has taken.

MS. MADAN: It also kind of I think we also see -- and this is to a question Vivek Kelkar from Cosmopolitan Global has asked about, you know, he asked about Asia. But I think it could be true of the other parts of the world as well, which is how countries will exercise their own agency.

And we saw this during the Cold War, we will see it again playing one off against the other, but then also trying not to get squeezed in the middle, and so finding kind of that Goldilocks, you know, just right position and it's always hard. But it will also stress these kind of values, kind of values and interests tradeoff a little bit.

Alexandra, you have comments about kind of the China front, but I also want to ask you about Russia because it is the other kind of country in which there has been some kind of sense of

difference. We saw some tough language from the administration on Russia, the Biden administration.

But we also saw some tough language on the Nord Stream 2 but -- and warnings to Europe -- and actually say this is intended to divide Europe. So how do you see the differences over Russia, particularly since, you know, French President Macron has, in talks between the Germans, has talked about needing to find kind of a modus vivendi with the Russians; something, by the way, even the Indians and Japanese say at times.

So could you each talk just a little about China-Russia differences and how they might feel?

MS. DE HOOP SCHEFFER: Sure. I think that there is a lot of parallels we can do between our relationship with China and Russia. In both of these relationship, Europeans are clearly seeking to have a more balanced relationship with more dialogue and less confrontation.

But the challenge with both Russia and China is that we are in what I would call, compartmentalized relationships. And Blinken has said that very clearly a few days ago, the U.S.-China relationship is based on cooperation, on competition, and confrontation.

You have pretty much the same approach at the EU level, where we see China as a partner, but also has a systemic rival. We also see Russia as a threat because also with the proximity with Russia, but also as an indispensable partner on many key issues including Iran, climate, and nuclear disarmament, but also Afghanistan.

I mean it's amazing to see how U.S. and Russia are continuing to cooperate on Afghanistan despite the tensions that we see right under our eyes. So this compartmentalized relationship are the most difficult to manage because you are constantly shifting from a partner relationship to a compensator relationship, or even an enemy confrontational relationship.

And, to me, the eye opener for Europe, when it comes to the relationship with Russia has really been the COVID-19 crisis because this had made us realizing the quite dramatic and brutal way that our short-term economic, industrial relationship with China could have deeper, durable, political, strategic implications.

And so we're having pretty much the same debate as the Americans on how do we also make our supply chains more resilience in industrial, pharmaceutical area. This leads again to the

so-called strategic autonomy debate. And what's interesting to see is how the German debate has also kind of grown closer to the French debate.

On Russia, more precisely, I would say, you know, Europe's Russia policy is always a result of a compromise, so it's never perfect. From the Washington perspective, it's always considered as being too soft. But it's always a compromise between those countries that want to take a tougher line, the Baltics, Poland, the Nordics, and those who want to take a softer line.

And there you'll find, you know, the U.S. can't just return and have the allies say, “Oh, thank goodness, now we can stop doing some of this hard stuff that we were going to have to do if the U.S. wasn't here.”

We need the allies to step up. We need them to do more and some of them have, but others frankly have not. And so we need allies to help us stay engaged and to help themselves push the issues that are most important.

If we end up in this situation where, you know, the U.S.-China relationship is the critical thing. The altercation in Anchorage, as I'm trying to phrase it, is sort of what everybody is watching with bated breath, that's going to be the mistake.

The center of gravity in Asia is in Asia. It's what allies and the partners do to respond to China and that's what we have to watch the most closely.

MS. MADAN: But these issues of American credibility and ally burden sharing, you almost think of the tag line, help me, help you. Thank you to Jerry McGuire. Alexandra, you get the last world on this.

MS. DE HOOP SCHEFFER: Two words, one is really building on what you just said which is that obviously we need to rebuild trust in the trans-Atlantic relationship, and therefore U.S. commitments need to be -- I mean the main message we need to have is that U.S. commitments within alliances on the international scene are sustainable and will not be reversed I less than four years from now by the next American president.

And so there is a lot of U.S. diplomacy to be made with the world, but a lot of diplomacy to be made at home and especially within the U.S. Congress. So that I think is really the number one expectation from the part of Europeans is to see U.S. international commitments, U.S. recommitments

and reinvestment in multilateral organizations as something that will last beyond President Biden.

Second, on my side, what can Europeans do? I think this leads to what Sara said, Europeans must act with greater coherence. If they want the United States to remain engaged in and with Europe that is still terribly lacking when you see our policies vis-à-vis Russia, China, and many others.

And I think that we should seize the opportunity of both of the so-called EU strategic compass and the NATO strategic concept as an opportunity to see how we can better coordinate both the EU, NATO, and work better together and waste less money and less time.

MS. MADAN: Thank you, Alexandra, and thank you to all of our panelists, to Victor, to Sara, to Zack, to Alexandra, whose so rich a discussion that we went over our time five minutes.

Thank you all to those who of you who have been watching, for those of you who stayed over time. I also want to say a special thank you to Agnieszka Bloch, who has helped Jim and me put this all together. It wouldn't have been possible without her.

So thank you again and hope you all have a great weekend.

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Expires: November 30, 2024