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WEBINAR

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INTRODUCTION:

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PANEL DISCUSSION:

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FECHNER: All right. Thank you so much for being here and welcome to Dallas Baptist University. We are thrilled to be hosting this event with some great partners as we discuss Western policy towards Ukraine, Russia and NATO. If this is your first time on this campus, welcome. And for people watching livestream, thank you for joining us tonight for this special event. You know, our whole mission is to produce servant leaders who will impact the world for the glory of God. We have cross-disciplinary programs ranging from Christian studies to business to pre-nursing to education sciences and so much more. And we are really proud of our students, and we love providing these opportunities for some of our students to engage in this opportunity to hear from some of the best experts in the field as we discuss these hard global topics on where should we go and how should we move forward.

The Institute for Global Engagement, which is a part of Dallas Baptist University, is a nonpartisan think tank. We are committed to engaging the public policy through a biblical worldview. We are Christian university. We believe all truth is God's truth, and in that we can unapologetically engage the world for his glory. You may notice on the screen during the slides is The Daily Briefing. The Daily Briefing is a tri-weekly newsletter that analyzes the news of the day. And so, it goes out every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It's about six stories, some of the top highlights. And I would highly encourage you, particularly if you're a believer, to subscribe to this, it has a really unique perspective that takes a middle ground and really tries to evaluate the news. And so, it's a great resource for you to take advantage of and I encourage you to do so.

As you may have walked in, you might have noticed some American flags in our courtyards and in our grounds. That was done by our Student Government Association. And there are 2977 American flags represented honoring the 2977 lives that we lost on September 11th, 2001. I think that's fitting some 23 years later that we're talking about democracy and freedom globally today. And so, thank you, especially given what we've just honored and remembered for being here tonight and the significance of this event.

Without further ado, I am so excited to introduce Liz Brailsford, the CEO of World Affairs Council of Dallas-Fort Worth. She is such a great partner. You know, every year we get to host a couple events with Liz and our team, and they are always such great partners in putting on these events. So, we are

so thankful for her. She does a tremendous job. I would highly encourage you to check out World Affairs Council of DFW and some of their outstanding events such as this. If you're not already member with that, turn it over to Liz.

BRAILSFORD: Well, thank you, Jonathan. Welcome, everyone. It's so wonderful to see you. Thank you very much for coming. And it is a special evening tonight because, first of all, we love our DFW partners and we love to be on this beautiful campus in this beautiful room. And we also want to say thank you to Brookings, the Brookings Institution, and also Dallas Morning News. Thank you for your partnership. We have David Kramer here. I'm going to say all the names in a second but thank you so much for being here. I also want to say thank you to the Billingsley Company. They are sponsoring the overall event as well. So, we appreciate them.

And it's going to be a great program. We're talking about NATO. It's the 75th anniversary this year, so it is a critical year for the alliance. We're almost 75 years, so we're starting to set our sights on the horizon and we're going to talk about our involvement from the United States and also the future of the alliance and what could potentially happen. So, I also want to thank our institutional partners who help all of our work be possible. So, thank you to Aecom, AT&T, Dallas Baptist University. Again, thank you. Dallas College, Frost Bank, Harwood International, Haynes and Boone, Hillwood, Jackson Shaw, Cosmos, Lockheed Martin and E C Corporation of America, PWC, PNC, Sidley Austin and Vistra Energy. Thank you very much to our partners.

I also want to say that we've got some students in the audience today and we're really excited for them to be able to plug into our work and learn about international affairs. We're really happy each time you come. I also want to say thank you to Linda and Richard Schaefer, who make the work possible. And I also want to give two other plugs quickly, and then I want to tell you about our other NATO series programs. First is we have our 2024 Marlin Award dinner coming up, and I think we have one of our dinner chairs that Smith in the audience. So, thank you very much for being here, Thad, we're happy to see you. And then also, it is North Texas giving day soon, and that is on September 19th. Early giving. Giving has started. And when you donate to the council, it helps support our four pillars of our mission, which is public programs like this, our student youth education.

Also, we support the State Department on their programs, welcoming emerging and mid-level leaders. And we also work with the city of Dallas on their protocol and international services. So, we really appreciate if you give to us and if you do and give tonight, we will put your name and a hat, the proverbial hat, and you will get a free program pass. If we pull your name, we'll let you know tomorrow morning. And that is if you give tonight or give today and you can give on our website at DFWworld.org.

Okay. I want to tell you about very briefly the other two programs that we have in our NATO series. This is part of the NATO series. We may have a forthcoming that's not confirmed, but we may so keep tuned in our on our website and in our newsletters. But on Tuesday, October 1st, we're going to be welcoming Daniel Coaches of the Hudson Institute. He's going to be talking more from an Indo-Pacific perspective. And so please do come to that. You can buy that on our website. That's October 1st. And then on October 4th, it's a Friday. We're going to be in Fort Worth and we're going to be welcoming Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison. She's the former ambassador to NATO. She will be on stage with Congressman Jake Ellzey and also will be moderated by a former general, General Michael Moseley. And so, we're really excited to talk about that. And they're going to be talking more from a United States perspective. So go to our website to register and to give to North Texas Giving Day at DFWworld.org. Okay, so I'm going to move on to introducing our stellar panel. And before I do, if you can make sure that your devices are silenced, your cell phones, if you'll double check that, please.

So, for our speakers tonight, we have Fiona Hill. She is a senior fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe within the Foreign Policy program at Brookings Institution. Fiona served as deputy assistant to the president and senior director for European and Russian affairs on the US National Security Council from 2017 to 2019, as well as national intelligence officer for Russia and Eurasia at the US National Intelligence Council from 2006 to 2009. David J. Kramer serves as the executive director of the George W. Bush Institute. Kramer also served eight years in the US Department of State during the George W. Bush administration, including as assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor and deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs. He was also executive director of the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy in Washington. Constanze Stelzenmüller is the director of the Center on the United States and

Europe and the inaugural holder of the Fritz Stern chair on Germany and transatlantic relations at Brookings. She held the Kissinger chair on foreign policy and international relations at the Library of Congress from 2019 to 2020 and served as the inaugural Robert Bosch senior fellow at Brookings from 2014 to 2019.

And then moderating the conversation, we have Rudy Bush of the Dallas Morning News. Rudy, thank you very much. And Rudy serves as the editorial page editor, editor and vice president at the Dallas Morning News. He previously served as deputy editorial page editor, Dallas City, Dallas City Hall and investigative reporter and city desk news editor. Bush covered crime and the federal courts at the Chicago Tribune and later became a national correspondent in the newspaper's Washington bureau. We have a very accomplished panel. I thought the titles would go on forever. You know you have to prove yourselves. Thanks very much again for coming. And please help me in welcoming the panel.

BUSH: Yeah, we wanted to come at it from all angles there. Well, look, thank you all so much for, for being here this evening. I think this might be one of the most conversate and most important conversations we can have right now about world affairs, and that is about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the ongoing war to defend Ukrainian independence, the role of the West in supporting our Ukrainian allies and confronting Russian aggression, not only in the former Soviet bloc, but really, really around the world. And just a quick refresher for those who don't recall. In in early 2014, Russia invaded the Crimean Peninsula in the southeast of Ukraine.

After the Ukrainian people had pushed out a pro-Russian government. And then in 2022, we saw Russia again use military force to invade Ukraine, this time attempting by failing to take the capital of Kyiv. Ukrainian forces have since staged a bold, defensive, bold counteroffensive, retaking much of their lost territory. But now this war has settled into a sort of conflict of attrition. We don't know how long the fighting is going to last. Obviously, we don't know what the endgame might be for all sides. And it's also unclear what the international consequences might be as a result. So, with that, I want to begin by asking some of the foremost experts in this part of the world, people who've been on the ground, who have done the work for many years, a question that seems simple, but that actually has

become much more complicated given our current political environment. And I'll begin with Fiona.

Why, in your view, must the West be engaged in the war in Ukraine?

HILL: Well, thanks very much, Rudy. It's a real pleasure to be here with everyone as well. I mean, very sadly, what we're seeing unfolding in Ukraine on a daily basis has taken us back decades to the kind of decades that we thought we would never be in again. This is the longest war in Europe since World War Two. And this was talking about the anniversary of NATO's well, NATO was set up precisely to prevent and deter, you know, recurrence of the great wars that had rolled the European continent for the best part of the 20th century. So just by putting it in simple terms as that, you know, we've, we've basically taken ourselves back in time.

Now Vladimir Putin would like to take us back even further in time because what Putin is actually saying is that the borders that have existed in Europe for centuries, you know, depending he picks all kinds of different times, depending on the audience is speaking to. And some of you might have seen his interview with Tucker Carlson, you know, for example, where Tucker Carlson was a little taken aback that Putin kept taking him back to the ninth century and took a course and kept saying, with all due respect, Mr. President, is this really relevant?

And Vladimir Putin was saying, yes, it is, because he's basically saying that Russia has a right to the Ukrainian territory going back to the ninth or the 10th century. And the kind of whether we've seen many of the European dictators and was basically starting off in the past making claims that go back centuries, not, in fact, looking forward. And I've got George Washington actually staring at me over here and actually all of us here on the platform. And in some respects, this is kind of like a replay of the United States on wheels for independence. If we might recall, after the United States secured his independence. And the people I was originally from with this British accent, as I'm speaking in here, there was an effort by Great Britain to take the United States back again.

And if it hadn't been for the assistance of France and, you know, kind of basically Americans reemerging to fight for their independence and the wars of 1812, 1815, the United States might have found itself, you know, back under the tyranny at that point as the British kings. And in a way, Putin is basically trying to reverse Ukraine's independence. Ukraine's been independent for 30 years as a

country. And if Putin gets away with us, then you know the consequences not just for Europe but for other countries are really quite profound.

BUSH: What's next? Constance, so what's your view on why the West and went by the West? I mean. Countries aligned with democracy need to need to confront this aggression.

STELZENMÜLLER: First of all, again, thank you for inviting us here. This is wonderful. You have a lovely university. It has a great view of Dallas. And it's nice to be outside of the Beltway. Right. It's really wonderful. So, thank you for your hospitality. And it's also not the first time both Fiona and I have been have spoken for the World Affairs Council before. To answer your question, Rudy. You know, it's a reasonable question and it's a particularly reasonable question if you happen to be a citizen of the global South. Right. And if you are. Thank you. And if you are sitting there saying, well, why are we sort of less concerned about the awful war in Sudan? Why are we less concerned about the Chagos Islands? Why are we less concerned about the depredations by militias on people who live in the Philippines or in Central America?

Those are absolutely reasonable questions, right? But the truth is, and I'm an international lawyer by training and I've covered and I was a journalist for a long time before I joined the think tank world. And I've covered a lot of wars, civil wars and genocide. And it's very rare in international affairs that the question of right and wrong is as clear as it is in this case. Putin attacked a country that had done absolutely nothing to provoke him. He invaded it not once, but twice. First by annexing Crimea illegally in 2014 and then with a full-scale invasion on February 24th, 22. He has been. Slaughtering Ukrainian soldiers. Waging a brutal war of attrition against Ukrainian cities across the country. And in the territories that Russia occupies of Ukraine, which they are supposedly occupying, because, as they say, they are ethnically Russian people are being tortured and killed, and the children are being sent off for forced adoption in Russia.

That's not just immoral, it's also genuinely and very clearly illegal under international law. And it is also and I say this with some feeling as a as a former journalist who's been around places like that. It is also the first war in modern history where legal evidence has been collected in forensic quality and real time. Right. The International Criminal Court and its international supporters have been collecting

forensic quality evidence of the war crimes that have been happening here. And. At some point, I think Vladimir Putin and his henchmen will be standing in front of a tribunal and hopefully the one in The Hague. But that in other words, to me, this is a question of upholding international law, right?

Yes, I think we can be accused of double standards and hypocrisy in the West and those Western democracies. But if in a case that is as clear as this. Well, you don't support the right of self-defense of Ukraine. I think you end up undermining any pretense out of holding an international legal order. Right. And so, that's one point. That's the moral and legal point, I would say. But my last point, if I may, is that we is that this is also about the security of Europe and the security of Europe. And I say that as a European and I say it with feeling is, I think, also an American first order strategic interest. It has been clear from the beginning that Putin has not just Ukraine in its site, but the stability, the safety, the security of Europe writ large. He has made it very clear that he wants Europe to be a sphere of influence to Russia and that he wants American forces to withdraw from Europe. And I don't think that is in America's interest. I can make an extended argument on that, but I think we can leave that for later.

BUSH: All right, David, you've written extensively on this. And I know again and I know you'll get a nice note from David when we write a Ukraine editorial that says we've got to send weapons or whatever, whatever we can do on our little editorial board to sort of keep the pressure on, to have American interests focus on this important area. And just from your point of view, what's at stake here?

KRAMER: Well, Rudi, thanks very much for doing this. And Liz, to you and your great team at the World Affairs Council excuse me, in the Dallas Baptist University. It's great to be here. My first time here at the university. And it's great to be reunited with two longtime friends, including this one with whom I went to graduate school. She was three at the time and I was already 80 years old. But the stakes here, I would say, are enormous. And they're enormous for us because this is a huge battle playing out between authoritarianism and freedom. It is about depriving a country of its independence, forcibly changing borders, which we have not seen since World War Two on the European continent. And for all the reasons both Fiona and Constanza have cited, the additional reasons are if Putin is not

stopped in Ukraine, even though the Russian military has suffered a terrible toll as a result of his disastrous decision to go into Ukraine, he will not stop there.

Most likely Moldova would be next, possibly Georgia, although the Georgian government, unfortunately, is already doing a pretty good job of falling under the Russian influence. But then possibly the Baltic states, which are members of NATO, and since we are a member of NATO, we would then be put in the position of deciding whether to come to the defense of Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia. Should Putin and Russia attack? And if we don't, that will be the end of NATO because NATO members are live under Article 5, which considers an attack on one is an attack on all. And so, the stakes are enormous, and it is thanks to the bravery and heroism and determination of the Ukrainian people that Putin has run into a tremendous buzzsaw. But the Ukrainians have paid a terrible price.

The other reason I'll just mention very quickly is the world is watching how we react if we want to help prevent Beijing from attacking Taipei. The way to do it is to help the Ukrainians because it will get the Communist Party leadership thinking twice before it might take a move against the against Taiwan. It'll send a signal to the Iranians, to the North Koreans, to all the bad actors out there. They are watching how we, the United States, our European allies, our fellow democracies respond to this grave crisis. And so, there is an opportunity to help prevent further wars on the Asia Pacific coast, and that is through Ukraine and its things to the Ukrainian people.

BUSH: And I appreciate that. And Fiona, you mentioned the Tucker Carlson interview with Putin. And I think those of us who watched it found it truly bizarre. It's really hard to understand the sort of motivations or endgame of someone like Vladimir Putin. You've studied Putin a lot for a long time. You've written books on Putin. You understand the history that that he is referencing. What, as far as you can understand, are his motivations. What might his endgame be? What is he hoping to get out of this confrontation with not just Ukraine, but really the entire Western world?

HILL: Yeah. Putin is really quite unique character in many respects. I have been, you know, for my sins, watching him and observing him quite closely for a story long time. I mean, weirdly enough,

when I first joined Brookings in 2000, it was just as Vladimir Putin launched on the scene and, you know, giving us a great opportunity to study him closely. I mean, we forget he's been in power now for 25 years. And that's actually part of the problem that we have because we've being a democracy, we've changed presidents in some cases in Europe. You know, for my old home country in the U.K., the prime minister is every five minutes and a couple of weeks. You know, so Putin has outlived an enormous number of world leaders. And with those secretaries of defense, ministers of foreign affairs, national security advisers, people like us.

And so, in many respects, Putin's got the kind of advantage of longevity. And we've lost his plot, too, and he's kept his plot and being plotting this for some considerable period of time. And I wouldn't say that it was inevitable where we ended up. And maybe he himself couldn't have even envisaged where he would end up. But just by the fact that he's been in power for so long and has figured out how to maneuver people has really got us to this particular point in time because he started to think about his legacy. And David is making a joke about being in his 80s in graduate school. Putin could very easily be in his 80s in the presidency of Russia because he technically can stay in the presidency sitting on his throne there essentially till 2036.

So, I think all the time he can no longer basically separate himself out from Russia. And, you know, again, I'll go back to George Washington. George Washington is a really remarkable individual because he knew when it was time to go and he had the famous farewell address. He was determined not to become a king and to kind of basically replicate the tyranny that he just thrown off. He retreated off to his country estate and actually tried to stay out of politics. President Bush has done the same thing. I mean, he quite recently, when he's asked about his thoughts on presidential politics, said he's been out of presidential politics for a long time. Vladimir Putin has no intention of leaving. Presidential politics is number one goal is regime preservation, which means his own preservation. And Ukraine is now become wrapped up in that because just as he was telling Tucker Carlson, Ukraine has defined Russia, he said, since basically the ninth of the 10th century. And this is all actually pseudo history, by the way. I mean, I'm sure that the history courses here, this venerable institution, are actually teaching actual real history and, you know, kind of fact-based history. But Putin has made up his own version of history, and he's put himself in the center of it because his name,

Vladimir, is also the name of the grand prince of Kiev. Also, Vladimir is a variant of that. And you happen to have Vladimir Zelensky named after the same grand prince of Kiev who he says is the progenitor of Russia.

And he is determined very subtly to make that a reality, to make Ukraine part of Russia again and to give himself all of the graces on the favors and the attributes of a modern Russian czar. That's basically what he was telling Tucker Carlson. So, we're kind of, in a way, living out somebody else's fever dream during Covid, in the splendid isolation that he had himself, the kind of bubble that most of us don't have. I mean, many of us, you know, took up a different kind of hobby when we were kind of stuck during Covid. Vladimir Putin came up with the idea of invading Ukraine, and he had no one really to tell him that this was a really very bad idea. So sadly, that's where we are. We're basically living out somebody else's fever dream of someone's idea of themselves and their legacy, and we're all suffering as a result of it, the Ukrainians more than anyone else.

BUSH: It's shocking. And then when you see the wealth that he's accrued, it's shocking. Constanza, let me turn to you for, I think, an important perspective that a lot of Americans don't necessarily hear a lot about, which is the European response to the war, the European political consequences of the war. And I think the support of the European nations, in particular, German support, which has been both critical and misunderstood. Can you give an overview of how important that's been?

STELZENMÜLLER: Well, that's a very generous way of putting it. I've written about my own country, Germany's response, and it is in many ways the same for the rest of Europe, although with different important differences in as a sort of defense version of Schroeder, Schrödinger's cat, famously Schrödinger's cat, which, you know, in electro physics, is both and is not there. Right. And so, what you are seeing is a European defense that both is and isn't. And let me explain what I mean. I realize this is a confusing way to start it, but I think it is fair to say, not least because I think we've all been close to these debates, that the and in fact, the Munich Security Conference, which is like the sort of elephant watering hole of the international community security community, and it meets in February in 2022, met exactly four days before the Russian invasion.

And I have been going for longer than I care to admit because I, too, am 80 years old. And I remember thinking very despondently just about how sort of weak willed we seemed and how unwilling we seemed to acknowledge what was happening in the world. And in fact, since this is a Baptist university, I'm going to tell you a story about a Catholic cardinal. There is, I'm a I'm a Protestant myself, but not a Baptist sort of German version of Presbyterian. It's complicated. Anyway, it doesn't matter. I'm sorry. I'm digress. But there is a the senior the senior cardinal of Germany, Cardinal, the beautifully named Cardinal Marx, who is only in that way a Marxist were it comes is the archbishop of Munich of Munich and therefore comes to the Munich security conference and really takes an interest by the way, he comes to America every year and visits Silicon Valley and talks to tech and biotech companies.

He's an extraordinary man. And I sort of struck up a sort of a friendship with him because I sat next to him one day and said, what interests you here? And so, I found myself in the year just before the invasion, standing behind him in the car in the coffee line in Munich and said, you know, it seems to me the landscape is becoming grimmer and grimmer, isn't it your Eminence? I remember the title just In Time. And he looked at me and he's a very tall guy. He's built like a farmer, a six foot something bright blue eyes. And he turned around and looked at me in this coffee queue and said, Frau Stelzenmüller, the devil is in the world again. I have to say, I was very struck by this. And it's it is seeming increasingly like an apt description of what is going on. Right. I have this is stuck in my memory.

And I say this because I remember in 2022, four years before the invasion, people in Munich, particularly those who had clearly been shown intelligence and I knew people who had been shown intelligence in November and had believed since late November. And I can put it down to November 30th, when I talked with somebody in the German security system who had clearly been told stuff. I went out of there and said, the Russians are going to attack. We need to prepare. And I had the feeling that people's backs were up, that their spines was stiffened, and that they felt that they were looking at an inevitable machinery of death and destruction rolling towards Ukraine and by implication, too, towards Europe, and that people were stealing themselves. Right. So, for those in the know and

who had had intelligence shared with them, this was not a complete surprise. And to that extent, people in Europe, I think, reacted. Snapped into action, reacted very quickly.

And the German chancellor. Three days after the invasion, gave a speech which he called the title of the speech, which was the German word for historic tone, and said, these are the things we need to do. We're going to be spending a ton of money. I'm going to fast forward because I've been talking too long, essentially in the 32 countries of NATO's now. I think two thirds spent 2% on defense as they promised themselves and each other in 2014. The polls, and I think 1 or 2 other countries are going beyond that in the direction of 3% or more. That is a remarkable shift in the European security landscape. It is real. And I can tell you that it is irreversible. And here is why It is irreversible, because right now the Russians are waging hybrid war in Europe. By which I mean not kinetic war with missiles the way that they're doing in Ukraine, but they are waging there.

They are committing acts of sabotage. Against physical and digital infrastructure. They are waging a propaganda war and they're waging a disinformation war. And there was even an attack, an attempted attack on the life of the head of the or the CEO of one of Germany's major defense companies, Ein Muto. That was averted with the help of friendly intelligence services, warning them, this is extraordinary. We haven't had anything like this since the Cold War. And even in the Cold War, you know, there were periods when it was a hell of a lot calmer than this. Forgive them. The invocation of, but, you know, the condo made me think of that. On the other hand, and I'll make this very short on the other hand. I would be lying to you if I didn't admit that our politics currently looks very divided and chaotic. Right.

There are populists across Europe challenging the democratic opinion space and not just challenging and undermining democratic governance. And some of them are doing so with the help of Moscow and with the help of Russian funding. Right. But not all of them. Some of them are exploiting domestic disagreements, unhappiness, resentments of inequality, of governments, failing to solve problems, etc., etc. It's complicated.

BUSH: Well, you know, I want to get back into this because you and I, we've talked a little bit about what you call the hybrid war. And I want to get back into that in a minute. Let me let me ask David a question, though, about Ukrainian the Ukrainian counteroffensive, which has been something I don't think any of us expected in the way that it has unfolded. Ukraine is now in the Kursk region of Russia. This is the first invasion of Russia by a foreign military since the Second World War. You now have reports of Ukrainian drones attacking in the suburbs of Moscow. So just help us get some grounding strategically in militarily, what the Ukrainian response has been and why it's been such a surprise.

KRAMER: The initial assessments of a lot of analysts, including the U.S. intelligence community, as well as those in the Kremlin, was that this war was going to be over in a matter of days or weeks, that the Ukrainians would be forced to capitulate, that the Zelensky government would be removed and that Russia would take over the country. They would then follow an insurgency among Ukrainians, but that the Russians would win this war rather quickly. Here we are, two and a half years since the full-scale invasion on February 24th of 2022. The Ukrainians have regained more than 50% of their territory that Russia initially seized. They've essentially destroyed the Black Sea fleet, which has been essential to Russia's naval security. They have reestablished the export route through Odessa. That is very important for Ukraine and frankly, the rest of the world, because Ukraine is a major agricultural and food exporter.

They have developed an amazing drone technology capability where drones are now able to reach places like Moscow, even Murmansk. It's quite extraordinary what they've been able to achieve while under relentless bombardment for the past two and a half years. And we have seen tremendous skill and capability among all Ukrainians, not just soldiers on the front lines. Have there been some setbacks over the course of the war? Absolutely. There's no denying it. The so-called counteroffensive that was launched last year didn't live up to expectations, but the Ukrainians decided to move into the Kursk region in Russia.

That borders Ukraine for a number of reasons. President Zelensky has described it as a buffer zone to try to reduce the more direct short-term attacks coming from that region, possibly as a way for exchanging prisoners of war where Russia would be forced to release a number of Ukrainians that have been seized in this war in exchange for Russia's not the Putin really cares about that, frankly.

And they what is also striking about this is Ukrainians didn't tell the United States beforehand because they anticipated that if they had, we would have told them not to do it. And so, it came as a bit of a surprise, not just to Moscow. It came as a bit of a surprise to Washington as well. And that reflects a level of frustration, to be clear, accompanied by enormous gratitude among Ukrainians for the support from the West, but also some frustration with the decision-making process that we have seen coming from the United States and European allies in terms of providing assistance, the military assistance.

Ukraine is very dependent on we have seen requests for various weapons systems over the past two and a half years, frankly, even before the full-scale invasion. And our initial answer is no. The Ukrainians ask again. We see maybe they ask a third time, and we finally say yes. But in that intervening period, hundreds if not thousands of Ukrainians are getting killed and wounded. And so, our credit to the Biden administration, credit to European allies for staying united. I think there's been more unity in light of this. NATO has found its purpose again since this invasion. But we need to step up our game and help the Ukrainians, not just hang in there, not just as long as it takes, but until the Ukrainians win and defeat the Russian forces. And that forces a change in mindset where if you just provide them enough assistance to hang in there, that's not good enough. And so, we have to provide the assistance to give the Ukrainians the opportunity to actually win.

BUSH: Yeah, absolutely. Well, since you brought up unity, let's talk about the upcoming presidential election. And so, so, so. Former Pres. Trump has said, look, this war would be over even before I went into office. Vice President Harris is clearly interested in maintaining the sort of approach that the current administration has taken. Putin, meanwhile, has come out with some kind of an endorsement of Harris, which is strange in its own realm. So, who wants to go first and help explain what are the implications here? Because there is a lot at stake for what could happen, how this how the game could break based on what happens in November.

HILL: Yeah, I'll take a stab at this one. Yeah, I think that these two these two are going to feel a little bit uncomfortable about this for various reasons. But look, I think, you know, part of the problem is that we, you know, writ large, both here in the United States and, you know, perhaps more broadly, haven't really fully fathomed what's at stake here. And, you know, I want to, you know, actually just

get us to think a little bit about the nature of this war in Ukraine. So, it's not just all the things that we've already said as well. What is going on there as well? We were kind of thinking here in our debates, not just around the presidential election, but just more broadly in Congress and elsewhere, that, you know, obviously and, you know, I can't underplay this, that China is the real threat, but it's the kinds of pace setting threats.

And the Europeans will. No. But China is also a factor in this war in Ukraine because China is actually supporting Russia. Now, why is that the case? It's not about Ukraine. It's about what China thinks. You know, the United States role is and this as well. And only is China supporting Russia in this war, but so is North Korea and Iran. Again, not because of anything to do with Ukraine, but because they're starting to see this wall of thought about this in this way for a very long time as a proxy war against the United States. Now, a year or so ago, a colleague of ours bookings in fact, a colleague of all of ours here, Angela Stent, and another colleague, Daniel Hamilton, started to do a series of exchanges with various think tanks and counterparts around the world, including Brazil and South Africa and Turkey. And many of us were part of the discussions. And at one jaw dropping moment, our Brazilian counterparts told us that they saw the war in Ukraine as the first proxy war between the United States and China.

Not Russia and the Russians have been telling everyone, Putin's been telling everyone that this is a proxy war with them by the United States and the West. But between the United States and China, we were pretty taken aback. They said that because of China's role in the war and that they were more interested in knowing what China thought about the world and what Russia thought about the war. They saw Russia as a declining power and in many respects as a kind of stalking horse, a kind of shadow for China. And so, this gets back to what David said and concerns us, also alluded to this, you know, sort of eroding that.

There's a lot at stake in this particular conflict. And what Putin is hoping in all of this, I don't know whether he's fully fathomed and process that. Actually, Russia is acting in a way as a kind of proxy for Tottenham in all of this, is that he's hoping that this conflict will bring down the United States come summer. Already set this getting the set to pull out of Europe because Putin actually has tried to persuade a lot of Europeans that the United States is still occupying Russia and Europe, rather. And

Russia is saying that, you know, the United States is an occupying force, that the Europeans are all vassal states. And this is also something that he's been telling the Chinese. And so, it was we start to fight among ourselves in the United States about the future prospects of the United States. We're kind of missing a beat here as to what's going on in how this is being perceived in the rest of the world. A lot of other countries are actually seeing this will about weakening the United States.

I mean, even the Brazilians who were, you know, kind of I think our neighbors now sort of, you know, partners basically see this as kind of a decisive moment where the United States might not have its kind of its grip in the Americas, the South Africans, you know, kind of seeing this as kind of an opportunity, you know, for region for regionally sorting things out in Africa and elsewhere. And so, the way that this is playing out in our presidential politics is being watched extraordinarily closely. This is actually a test as to whether the United States has still got what it takes to be not just a global leader, but a kind of a basically a major trendsetting country.

And if, again, Putin gets his way and this is, again, why he's trying to influence the election here, trying to influence elections in Germany or the United Kingdom or anywhere else, he will show that the United States is actually an incredibly weak country. And that was really kind of playing out the debate, sadly. And, you know, I think that we haven't fully fathomed here that, you know, our future as a major power is at stake here, as well as, you know, the future of our domestic stability, because there's a hope that this will weaken like the other forever wars, Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere, the United States. And that's really what's at stake. And we just haven't seen that that's at stake in the election as well.

STELZENMÜLLER: Yeah. Can I come in here? This is the moment to address the theory that's currently very fashionable in Washington, which is that the Europeans should take care of themselves and that China should not just be the pacing challenge for the United States, but also its sole preoccupation. In other words, that there ought to be a regional division of labor. And I understand why that theory has a lot of appeal. Right. I. As a European and as a German. I think that there has been an unhealthy codependency between Americans and Europeans and NATO, and it's been unhealthy for both sides. Right. You've allowed us to buy social peace, especially in the decades after

the war when it mattered. And the Marshall Plan was a key element of that, for which, by the way, Brookings did the number crunching. This is sort of historical claim to fame, which is one of the reasons why I'm proud to be there.

But it was an act of enormous generosity. From this country and a truly historic and we wouldn't exist as a peaceful continent without it. Let me just say that. So, thank you. But at this point, you know, I'm the first person to say that we ought to be carrying more of the burden of our own defense. All right. I don't think we can stand at 2% of GDP spending of our defenses during the Cold War, even divided Germany with West Germany spent between 3 and 4% under a social democratic center. Left Chancellor Willy Brandt. But. Why is that? I think what we really need to look squarely in the face is this contention that America shouldn't engage in Europe at all, that it is a waste of American energy because America no longer has the resources to engage to two fronts or to engage on two fronts at the same time.

I understand deeply the appeal of that argument, but here is why I think it's wrong. So, one it. Some of you who are in business here are probably aware of just how deeply integrated the transatlantic economic space is these days. I know that globalization isn't a popular term these days, but economic interdependence is real. And I have actually brought some numbers because I can never remember this. And now I'm very bad at remembering numbers. So, I thought I would read them to you. The U.S. invests four times more in Europe than it does in Asia. Europeans invest ten times more in the United States than in China and India combined. You have 30 allies in Europe compared to six in the Indo-Pacific, right? We are your largest overseas trade partner. And the collective GDP of European NATO allies is 20 trillion and that of Allied Asia is 9 trillion. Right.

Our annual defense spending. Was 383,000,000,023 that of U.S. allies was 140 billion. Right. We have two of the five permanent seats in the in the U.N. Security Council because two of us are nuclear powers. And why does that matter? Not just because of this enormous economic heft that we have together, but because we are Democratic allies. We're deeply economically interwoven. You have bases all across Europe that give you the possibility of power projection into Africa, into the Middle East. Right. And against Russia when it matters. And finally, let me say this to you on the

China point. If you lose Europe to Russia, the Chinese will take notice, and they will think they have the measure of America.

And finally, I think that this debate that says it's only China that matters on a common confrontation over Taiwan completely leaves out a huge part of what's happening right now, which is that we are already in a deeper, deep and very aggressive economic strategic competition with the Chinese. And with the Chinese interfering both in the European space and in the American space. One of our hosts was telling us earlier how the Chinese have been buying real estate in America. Right. So, the European Union and the European continent as a peaceful, prosperous and safe continent with the enormous economic power that we can bring to bear and the regulatory power that we can bring to bear, really are enormous sources of leverage in a conflict with China that is waged with economic means every single day. Today, yesterday and tomorrow. That is why it matters. And that is often left out of this argument. Sorry for making this in such detail, but I thought it would be helpful.

BUSH: I appreciate that. David?

KRAMER: Just very quickly, there are, except for a few volunteers, there are no American soldiers on the ground in Ukraine. The Ukrainians have never asked us to send our brave men and women to fight this fight for them. But they do need our military assistance. It is with less than 5% of the Pentagon's budget that we have helped these brave Ukrainians do enormous damage to the Russian military. The estimates are that over 600,000 Russian soldiers have been killed or wounded in this battle. Tremendous damage to Russian tanks, to Russian fighter jets and other military equipment and assets. This is, in a way, again, thanks to the Ukrainians, enormous return on investment for us that we are dealing with a major threat to global security.

The last thing I'll say is and forgive me if I'm too blunt and direct about this, but I have no patience for people in the United States or frankly, in other parts of Europe who say enough of this war. I have Ukraine fatigue. We're not the ones doing the fighting and dying every single day. It's the Ukrainians. There is nobody who wants this war to end sooner than Ukrainians since they are suffering every single day. But they also don't want to live under Russian oppression. People talk about making territorial concessions. It's time for negotiations. We're not just talking about land. We're talking about

people, millions of Ukrainians, and consigning them to living under Russians influence and Russian control. I don't want to be responsible for that. I would hope our next American president would not fall for that trap either.

BUSH: Yeah, I appreciate that. And I want to get back to what Constanza was talking about earlier. I don't think people have a full understanding of this concept of hybrid war that you're describing. In Europe, we the sort of Cold War level of intrigue and interference that is happening within European nations. We know that there was an effort to interfere in our presidential election, but this is this is an ongoing problem in Europe. So maybe just pick up on that concept of what is happening in Europe and how is it affecting the political landscape.

STELZENMÜLLER: All right. So let me just pick out a couple of examples. The I was just in the Norwegian Arctic with the Norwegian Coast Guard. And the Russians are flying drones around Norwegian oil drilling stations every pretty much every day. Right. Russian submarines are checking out transatlantic Internet cables and Internet cables in the North Sea. They're also checking out seabed gas pipelines and oil pipelines. Right. It's pretty clear why in Germany. The we've had attacks on the electrical lines that feed the trains that have laid low the train networks and all of northern Germany for a day. Right. Because cables were cut.

And I think it's perturbing to time. And since that was actually a hostile act and not just sort of random terrorism or crime, I've already mentioned the attempt to take the life of the CEO of Ramstein, the propaganda and the disinformation via Russian funded news sources right now is off the charts. Right. And we have shut down most of the direct Russian news sources like Russia today. Right. But they are still working through legitimate or quasi legitimate news sources. There's been recent reports about this. And I will say this. This is somebody who I once had to testify in 2017, in front of the Senate Select Committee on Russian Interference in European elections. And at the time, I thought I did a fairly thorough job and a fairly hardnosed assessment of what the Russians were trying to do on the basis of open-source intelligence, because I don't really have contacts to the intelligence services or not enough to do this kind of thing.

And if I compare what I thought in 2017 and what I'm seeing now, right, this is a difference like night and day, the intense the quantitative and qualitative intensity of Russian attacks on physical installations, on people, the attempts to buy people, the attempts on the information space, really on messing with people's heads and minds is really extraordinary. And what's strikingly different today than years ago. Fiona and I have talked about this a lot in the past. European and especially the German intelligence services used to be very upset when they got nudged by the Americans or by the Brits to acknowledge what was happening or to attribute it to a hostile actor, especially the Russians. We were very, very, very squeamish about this. That has changed. German services these days acknowledge and attribute with remarkable rapidity. And it's because they have no other choice. It is the only way to make civil society understand what is happening.

BUSH: Fiona, talk a little bit about other parts of the world. And David, jump in as you see a place. We know that Russian mercenaries are working throughout Africa. For example, we know that Russian military and mercenaries have been active in Syria and in simply sowing chaos and struggle in many different places. And maybe you can just put some context around all that.

HILL: Yeah, I mean, that's exactly the case. And, you know, one of the problems that we've had is, you know, I mentioned before, Putin's been in power for such a long time. He's got a singular focus and he genuinely does, I think, you know, get up every day trying to think about what he's going to do next. You know, where we have, you know, lost the plot many times because we've got other things to think about. And, you know, most of us are actually also thinking about our daily lives and we are feeding our people and feeding our people and actually, you know, kind of trying to run the country. And that's what that part of our debate is about as well. And, you know, David talked about the incredible casualty rate in Russia.

I mean, it's not just people killed but also maimed. It's having an impact right now, by the way, because the Russian government has been trying to increase the contract for these two soldiers to go into battle. And one point they were losing, you know, 1600 people a day. I mean, again, not everyone killed, but seriously maimed and taken off the battlefield. Now, they've increased the contract fees to three times and they're not now getting the number of people who are going to be willing to be cannon fodder. So, this is actually having an impact. But you know what Putin is willing to do across the world,

across the globe, in terms of sacrificing his own people, you know, should also be giving us pause. And we have not been paying attention to all of this.

As concerns aside, you know, in the case of Germany and other countries, it's taken a long while for these patterns to become evident. But, you know, we're really at danger now. You've mentioned the following. A group, you know, who have been active in Africa and really came to mostly to people's attention. When you have guinea pigs in the head of the volcano outfit actually decided to march on Moscow and have his own insurgency because he didn't like the way the war was going in Ukraine, because the volcanic forces had been sent as cannon fodder and actually was complaining about it. This is, in fact, one incredibly gruesome video on Telegram, where Prigozhin stood in front of a highly stacked pile of bodies of his own forces, complaining about the very fact that despite the amount of money that they were paid, the guys were dying in an unseemly fashion on the front. And that was one of the triggers to get him to march against Moscow, even though at the same time he was making an enormous amount of money, as is mostly false as well.

And these expeditionary efforts in in Africa. But basically, what Putin is trying to do is look for all of the vulnerabilities and weaknesses it could be in our electoral systems, it could be in vulnerable infrastructure like undersea cables, for example. It can be in our partisan politics and on the Internet, where Americans are always, you know, tearing each other apart or Spaniards or Brazilians, you know, for example. But it could also be in countries that are already vulnerable but have also led themselves to the open for Russians to be present. Mexico is somewhere that we should actually be very concerned about at the moment. You know, we're always, you know, kind of thinking about Mexico and immigration and the southern border while Russia thinks about us as well, in fact. And one of our vulnerabilities, which again, gets back to the myopic way that we talk about things in politics, is the fact that Putin has operatives running all over Mexico because Mexico is one of the countries that still does not demand visas of Russian, as we've seen Russian operatives get pushed out of Europe. They're landing up in Mexico. Russia today is actually also building up the r t, not just its English language or German or other, but Spanish. The news outlet, which is a propaganda outlet, the Spanish language outlet, is actually the most well-resourced and well-staffed of all of the outlets. And in fact, we've seen many times the effects of Russia today operating out of Mexico or elsewhere

in Latin America, having impacts here in the United States and also in Europe. So, for example, just as one additional example.

When Spain was having the peak of its secessionist political trouble with Catalonia. The Spanish government got an incredible amount of evidence, in part thanks to Microsoft and other Internet companies. Most of the activity encouraging Catalonia's Catalan secession was coming from Russian language television art in Latin America, in places like Venezuela and Mexico and elsewhere, because the Russians are making use of the fact that we're not really kind of thinking about we don't have our own kind of policies. All we've got rifts in our relationship. Some of the Mexican governments often quite annoyed with us and the United States and the kind of then sometimes, you know, willing to turn a bit of a blind eye to what the Russians are doing.

We need to work better, you know, best on our networks of relationships and be much more attentive to, you know, the vulnerable places that Russia has moved into. And some of the things that it's actually doing. The Catalonia episode is really quite a startling one for anybody who wants to read more about that. The Spanish government actually put out a report they were shocked themselves that they had failed to pay attention to Spanish language TV and radio and print in Latin America that was being used against them just for the pure goal of destabilizing Spain.

BUSH: The reach has become shocking. We just have a few minutes left here. So, speed, speed round on this one. And I know no one on this stage has a crystal ball and you all read very deeply. But we can't predict necessarily what's next. So just very quickly, from each of you, though, what how might this play out? And then as an addendum to that, what are you hoping for? And I guess I'll start Constanze at the end and then come on down to David.

STELZENMÜLLER: This is so hard because we talk and think about this every day, right? We can play. We've played this through in our minds every day, from morning to evening. We wake up with it; we go to bed with it. We discuss it with colleagues within our own institutions, with other institutions. We keep checking in, counter checking what we think. And honestly, there are so many variables at play that I can only say I think the likelihood of a swift and complete success by Ukraine is the least

probable case here. Right? I think we will probably do a lot to prevent a Russian outright swift victory. But the most probable scenario that I can see is a continued, long-lasting war of attrition in which we do not muster the energy to give Ukraine what it needs because we don't have the political capital for it. But Russia also doesn't quite have the political energy or the social capital. To mount a full-fledged attack that destroys Ukrainian independence. I do think that if we let that happen, if we allow things to slide, if we allow path dependencies to happen, that that will do a great deal of damage to the fabric of European and Western democracies. So, I hope that we won't.

HILL: Yeah. And I think on that note and just based on what I just said as well, we have, you know, really to about given our own diplomacy and our own relationships with our neighbors and allies and partners. You know, we are going to have to think about the way that Russia exploits rifts in our relationships, for example, and also in the way that Russia is using this war in Ukraine for all kinds of other impacts and goals. And, you know, unfortunately, we're also seeing in the Middle East, which we didn't mention, Russia stirring the pot. Right.

Because we have Iran as a factor in the war in Ukraine. And Russia is very interested in having a much broader, you know, regional war in the Middle East because Vladimir Putin is in the chaos business. When the cardinal mentioned, you know, the devil is back in the world again. Putin is actually apparently being cold behind his back in Russia. Now, the moth. That might sound a little bit weird, but in, you know, kind of Russian folklore and mythology, the moth is the harbinger of destruction and death.

And so, you know, there's a backlash towards what Putin is doing at home, but it's going to take a long time before, you know, the Russian people who have been so repressed and cowed into submission at this particular point, take any kind of action that might change the calculation. So, what we have to do to get the kind of desirable end game, which is an end to this war in this conflict that sees Vladimir Putin not succeeding in getting the recognition that is a seizure of Ukrainian territory. We're going to have to change the global calculation. We're going to have to somehow persuade China that it's not in China's interest, you know, basically for this war to go on. It's going to be very hard, I think, for Iran and North Korea. But, I mean, we are taking some action against Iran that has

been sending missiles to Russia for use against Ukraine. We're going to have to get countries like Mexico and South Africa and Brazil and others to also want to put pressure on Russia, not just letting Russians, you know, run around all over the place, you know, carrying out all kinds of nefarious actions.

Europeans have woken up to this. Japan and South Korea see this problem, to be frank. And we have, you know, a lot of efforts on the part of Japan and South Korea right now to help Ukraine and to work with the United States and to work with our allies. And we also have to somehow get through this election here in the United States in one piece, because right now people are waiting around to see what will you decide. They want to know where we're headed in the United States and whether we're still going to be playing an international leadership role. And so, you know, for better or for worse, an awful lot is riding on, you know, where we head in November and whether we are still committed, you know, to playing, you know, a larger a larger role. And so, again, with George Washington, we're looking in this kind of direction. The hope of the founding fathers that America would be a force for good and for light in the world is also at stake here. And the more that the United States looks in disarray, the more that people like Putin think that they can solve chaos globally.

BUSH: Thank you.

KRAMER: I remain cautiously optimistic that the Ukrainians can achieve victory. I agree. Not swiftly. It will take time. Victory I would define as driving every Russian soldier off of Ukrainian territory, holding Russia accountable for the gross human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Putin, remember, has been indicted by the ICC and making Russia pay, taking the \$300 billion that Russia stupidly left in Western financial institutions and not just freezing it, but seizing it. The reason for my cautious optimism is the reason that you both cited, and that's us. I have much more confidence and optimism, frankly, in the Ukrainians than I do in the rest of us. I. Putin is counting on us failing Ukraine, and it seems incumbent upon all of us to prove him wrong on this. The stakes, as we've discussed here all night, are enormous. If we provide the Ukrainians with the means they need, never underestimate the Ukrainians.

Boy, if they prove in a lot of people wrong, it doesn't look like this optimistic scenario is possible right now. But I wouldn't bet against the Ukrainians. And your point is so right. Many people think Russia has countless numbers of people it can send into this war. It actually doesn't. And it also doesn't have endless supplies of military equipment. And the last thing is the fear of escalation. I know there's been back and forth in the intelligence community about how real this was, particularly in 2022. But Putin's rhetoric and Dimitri Medvedev, the idiot who kept his seat warm for four years over a decade ago there talk of. Using nuclear weapons is so that we back off, so that we tie our hands in the hands of the Ukrainians behind their backs.

And so, we shouldn't cave in. Let's remember, we're the United States of America, and we have warned the Russians, should they use a tactical nuclear weapon, we will respond militarily, not necessarily with a nuclear weapon of our own. They will lose Chinese support. They'll lose Indian support. I never put it at zero, but I really would caution against overstating the possibility of nuclear escalation. That's what Putin wants us to think. Let's not fall for it.

BUSH: I appreciate that, David. Those were terrific responses. Now I have four questions in front of me that are all smarter than the questions that I asked. I'm not even fully sure I understand them, but maybe each one of you can field one that you find fits your area of expertise. And so, I'll go with the first one here. How might the U.S. adapt its foreign policy toward Ukraine and Russia in response to the evolving geopolitical dynamics in Eastern Europe, especially in light of potential shifts in NATO's strategic objectives beyond 2024? I told you a smart who wants to go with NATO and strategic objectives?

KRAMER: NATO has adjusted. I mean, Constanze talked about how roughly now two thirds either are or will be at the 2% of GDP spending on defense by the end of this year. NATO has found its purpose. And so, I do think we have done a good job, but we need to speed up our game. It's delivery of promises that we have made to the Ukrainians. It takes too damn long for us to get the weapons that the Ukrainians need in order to have a chance. And so that's where I think NATO needs to adapt more effectively. Thanks for listening.

BUSH: And I think we have time for just one more. And I think this goes mostly to you, Constanza, but others may have a thought. Thank you for speaking in Dallas. The writer says Central Europe used to be the buffer for Western Europe. Now it is Ukraine. They are the hinge on the door to Europe. What do you think it will be? What do you think will be some contributing factors to how Europe will foster more solidarity with Ukraine? How can the average citizen in Europe help grow this mindset?

STELZENMÜLLER: Well, here's the thing. I tend to think that one shouldn't always ask of ordinary people to be heroic. Right? That's a lot to ask when so much is happening everywhere in the world. I think people can be heroic for short bursts in existential crises when they're personally under threat. But the whole point of representative democracy and democratic institutions is to allow people not to have to be heroic all the time. So, we have to pay attention to the health. Effectiveness and legitimacy of representative democracies. That will allow people to deploy their energies right towards existential crises when that's necessary.

And I say that because I think all of us in our own political spaces know where the machinery is creaking and where the wheels are coming off. Right. And where we think that our communities are no longer holding together. I think if there's anything we've understood in the past few years, it is that, no, not even the sole remaining superpower on this earth. Can act in an effective and credible and legitimate manner when its citizens are at each other's throats or disagree with each other profoundly about what the truth is. Right. Because that constrains the ability of governments to act abroad. So really, it does come back to us as citizens, right, to make sure that in our politics and in our representative democracies, things work. And very often we can play a real personal role in that at the very local level. Right. You can run for office in Washington. Sure. You can run for Congress. But very often you can be many councilmen and others. Right.

BUSH: God help you if you run for Congress.

HILL: I actually just want to give you one very compelling, I think, example of an answer to this. And it's actually a whole country, Finland. Because the Finns are really quite remarkable. I mean, I don't

want to oversell orphans too much. There's also not a lot of them, but maybe some of you here are descendants of Finns who moved to the United States. But the Finns really made it quite remarkable the decision to join Netto after the invasion of Ukraine. And for all of the whole period after World War Two, the French are pretty convinced they didn't need to do this because they thought that they could basically take care of everything themselves.

Because the Finns, after being invaded by the Soviet Union, the winter warfare like Ukraine, getting their independence at the collapse of the Russian empire, then Stalin wanted to take them back again almost 30 years on from them getting their independence. I mean, again, a kind of a replay of this history. They fought back. Now they lost territory. They actually did something very similar to what the Ukrainians have done and Coast Guard and actually their own incursion into Russian Soviet territory. They lost that as well. But again, that freedom and what the Finns focused on for all of the intervening period before joining Netto was on building unity, building a really coherent, prosperous country where, you know, the Finns are notoriously polite.

Those are the happiest country in the world, not just in Europe, according to all of the different polling, but they also were always prepared to fight. So, the Ukrainians are doing this now with the Finns actually told them early on, you're going to have to fight like we did. The Finns can actually field the largest reserve force in Europe. It's not just the Turks or the Brits. It's actually the Finns. They could get as many as 250,000 people into arms, all the way from the president to their ambassadors. All had a role to play in the event if the Russians invaded.

Now, what the Finns are doing now and joining Noto is they're trying to get Netto to think like Finns, to think about resilience. And it also goes societal resilience, not just military resilience. And the former Finnish president, a solid minister who was one of the longest serving postwar presidents, is working with the head of the European Union, Ursula von der Leyen, on a resilience program for Europe to get them to think about all of the Europeans and think about all of the issues that concerns us alone out. It wouldn't be a bad way for us to also think about being Finns, to think about societal resilience, and also just being kind of willing to fight for what we believe in.

And again, the Finns are unfitting. Be polite. When we were over, when I was there with the government, at one point they warned us there might be a small Finnish protest against the Americans visiting and it was just a couple of placards held up and the Finns were just and otherwise waving American flags with a few placards in Finnish that we couldn't actually read that were apparently in a signs of protest. But the Finns, you know, really mean business. And I think they're actually a really good example of a country that's grasped what's going on in the world, wants to play their role, but is also prepared to defend themselves, to, you know, try to push things forward and help everybody else out as well.

BUSH: I love it. Be like a like a polite but ready, but fearless. Well, this has been absolutely terrific. What a great evening. And what an important topic. A round of applause for these. Terrific.

BRAILSFORD: Well, I just want to thank you for your analysis and giving us a really holistic view of how critical this topic is. It's obviously important. It's why we're doing a series. This is part one of the series Come to the next two that start on October 1st. Go to our website to check that out at DFW world.org. I just want to say thank you to Dallas Baptist University for having us in this special space. Beautiful space. Thank you to the Brookings Institution. Thank you to the Bush Institute. Thank you to the Dallas Morning News. And thanks to all of you. We are selling Fiona Hill's latest book right over here after the program. So please do pick up a copy. There is nothing for you here Finding opportunity in the 21st century. We'd love for you to pick up a copy. And thanks again. We'll see you soon.