

Is It Time for the United States to Pivot Back to Europe?

Ambassador Kurt Volker: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. Let me be the first to apologize for the traffic in getting here and for the Metro blockages as well. We didn't know when we were scheduling this that we have the National Christmas Tree to compete with. I'm glad that you made it here. I think we have a terrific evening planned for you.

My name is Kurt Volker. I have the honor of being the Executive Director of the McCain Institute for International Leadership, which was formed to honor the legacy of service to our country of Senator and Mrs. McCain and the McCain family, going back generations.

It's part of Arizona State University but based here in Washington and in DC. It is dedicated to advancing character-driven leadership and to being a do tank more than a think tank, a do tank where we try to take on projects in the areas of humanitarian work, human rights, rule of law, governance, and security.

One of the things that we do is we organize this debate series, in order to tee up and consider some of the key challenges facing our country and, in fact, facing the world. I can't even count how many of these we've done now, but we've asked questions such as, "Should the United States intervene in Syria?" As early as January 13, we held that debate. We have talked about whether we should get out of Afghanistan, how to deal with Iran, is it time for containment with Russia.

This evening's debate is on a topic very dear to my heart, which is, "Is it time for the United States to pivot back to Europe?" There's obviously a lot going on in Europe, and we have a great moderator who's going to tee that up, and some great debaters here.

Let me introduce all of them. Normally, we let our moderator do this, but since they're all old friends of mine, I thought I would say a few words about each.

Starting immediately to my left here is Ian Brzezinski. Ian is a former deputy assistant secretary of defense. He's a senior advisor at the Atlantic Council. I knew him when he served on the foreign relations committee staff, and we worked together in the administration when I was at the State and he was at the Pentagon.

We have Constanze Stelzenmüller, who is a visiting scholar here. She's had many hats in her life, including with the German Marshall Fund in Berlin, and is now with the Brookings Institution here in Washington. One of her recent triumphs is being inducted to the Swedish Academy. We're very pleased to have her here. Swedish Academy of Sciences, as a foreign affairs or national security fellow.

Constanze Stelzenmüller: War sciences.

Ambassador Volker: Very good. Thank you. We have Patrick Cronin, who is with the Center for New American Security, and leads the Asia-Pacific Security Program. Also,

with a great background at USAID, in the US Senate, also at National Defense University, if I'm not mistaken.

Finally, Nile Gardiner, who is at the Heritage Institution and runs the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom. Nile has been a fixture in Washington for about a decade now, as an advocate for US-UK relations and also a gadfly on anything dealing with US-EU relations.

We are very pleased tonight that this debate has been supported by the EU delegation to the United States and European Union. We're grateful for that and we hope we have some members here from there. We do encourage you to take this as an active participating role for yourselves.

Put your cell phones on silent, but don't turn them off. Feel free -- tweet and comment during the course of the debate, #MIDebate. We also encourage you to ask questions. There will be an opportunity for the audience to do that.

As far as the structure of this, it is a timed, structured debate. We try to keep it fair for both sides, but we also want it to be lively. The question, again, is, "Should the US pivot back to Europe?" We have Ian and Constanze arguing that we should, and Patrick and Nile arguing a dose of skepticism on all of that.

In order to run this debate, we are very honored and delighted to have with us Teri Schultz. If you get up in the morning, listen to the radio, and you get all the bad news from Brussels about the Eurozone, about NATO, or about the terrorist shut down of Brussels, the voice you hear is that of Teri Schultz, who's the NPR correspondent reporting out of Brussels.

Without any further ado, let me turn it over to Teri to get us going in our debate. Thank you very much for being here.

[applause]

Teri Schultz: Thanks, Kurt. I am very privileged to be here, even though when he gave me the dates, I said, "Kurt! I can't miss the second day of the NATO foreign ministerial." I was very upset about that, but I think he probably saved me.

[laughter]

Ambassador Volker: What do you think is going to happen?

Teri: Montenegro! God.

[laughter]

Teri: Huge headlines.

The last time Kurt and I were on a panel, it was in Estonia three years, two years ago. The title of that panel was "The Pivot to Asia," was it really happening, should it happen, and

should the Europeans be worried, insulted, or, as Kurt suggested from his days in the administration, relieved?

[laughter]

Teri: Since then, the relationship has indeed been strained by many things -- the NSA's so-called spying scandal, although I will say that some Europeans, including the president of the European Parliament at the time, expressed his delight that the NSA was apparently spying on them. It meant that the US actually thought the European Parliament was interesting. I'm not kidding.

[laughter]

Teri: That is not a joke. I'm not kidding, direct quote in an interview. He was really tickled.

The strains were there, the lack of trust issue, the ongoing, permanent reluctance of NATO allies to pay their share of mutual defense. Ian will talk about that to some extent. There are now more divisions about how Europe should handle its refugee and migration crisis, what the US should do to help, if the US should do more to help.

There are differences over responses to terrorism, which threaten Europe and now increasing threaten the US. Again, being taken out by Kurt of the apparent Jihadi hotbed of Brussels, I should be grateful that I'm a few days out of lockdown.

As I was coming here, people were asking if I'd read the Anne Applebaum article titled, "Does Europe Even Matter?" Question mark. The next line is, "Dysfunction has sucked Brussels dry of any foreign policy power or relevance." Period. It wasn't really a question for her in that article. I'm sure many of you have read it.

Even some committed European Union supporters fear that the block is currently so strained that it's falling apart. Many Europeans want to pivot away from Europe themselves -- Nile.

[laughter]

Teri: Not only the Brits, the Hungarians, to some extent the Slovenians. Many Europeans are very disillusioned with their union.

On the other hand, who is Washington really going to call when it needs help, if not Europe? Even if you do need a dozen numbers now and nobody knows anyone's name.

We are going to start off now with four minutes for each side, four minutes from pro-pivot, four minutes from the anti-pivot. Then they will have rebuttals to their opening arguments, and then we will move to questions.

Because I appreciate everyone being here, especially some of my friends who came, I'm going to open it to the audience earlier than they sometimes do in this debate to get your questions. If I don't get my questions answered, that way I'll go ahead and throw them

back to the audience.

I'm very happy to be here. Really, thanks, Kurt for having me. Let us start with Ian and Constanze.

Ian Brzezinski: Thank you very much. When I think of Europe, I think of it primarily in security terms, so I'm a little less worried about what the EU is doing. I'm more worried what national government is doing or what NATO is doing.

When I look back at the history of the transatlantic relationship, I think of the Cold War. I remember at times when the United States had 300,000 troops deployed permanently, stationed in Europe. Of course, the Cold War ended, and about a decade later, at the turn of the century we had about 100,000 troops.

Then, over the last decade, that number has dropped down to about 60,000. That drop from 100,000 to 60,000, that's the pivot that I've seen in US policy, a pivot away from Europe. It was a pivot that was undertaken by two administrations, a Republican administration and the current Democratic administration.

It was a bipartisan mistake. We should pivot back. Why?

Because we have a world today that is more dangerous and more complex. It features [inaudible 9:09] regimes, ideological extremism, failed states, and the United States needs allies and partners that have a combination of economic resources, military capability, and political legitimacy.

Europe offers the best combination, a better combination than, I would say, anywhere else in the world. EU is an \$18 trillion economy. Europe offers, through NATO, unmatched military capability on global terms. NATO is the world's most integrated, effective, and combat-tested multinational force. We should never forget European contributions and sacrifices to US-led operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Then, of course, the transatlantic community constitutes a unique collection of like-minded democracies that have a proven record of collective action. On top of those assets, we have a reality that Europe is now, once again, a stage for confrontation between the West and Russian.

That confrontation features very dangerous, escalatory dynamics. We should be concerned. We should be proactive. We should be engaged. I'd say some of the vulnerabilities that we have in that confrontation are rooted in the United States' pivot away from Europe.

Europe has its faults. It's got its free-riders. Some countries have very low defense spending. That is true. But it provides no better set of allies with which to deal, with which to collectively promote freedom and security.

To leverage this potential, the United States has to invest in this relationship. It can't lead from behind. It has to lead from the helm of the transatlantic community. That's why I

think we ought to pivot back.

Constanze: To those of you who don't know me, I am something of a liberal hawk which puts me in a somewhat smaller group in my own country, although you would probably be surprised by how many there are of us. I'm roughly of the same age as the policy makers now running my own country, and perhaps you might want to remember that we were young people, students, during the Cold War, and we have well trained Cold War reflexes, and it hasn't been very difficult to remember those in the current circumstances.

I think that it is sometimes forgotten in this town, at least by the people who aren't in the machine room currently working with people in Berlin and other European capitals. That is also why I think there haven't really been that much of a pivot away as is often said, particularly by conservative critics of this administration.

From what I can see, and I have been here for a year now in a three-year gig at Brookings, and I've been back 14 times. I go to Berlin and other European capitals regularly from Athena to Riga, Tallinn, and Stockholm, and Paris, and so on. My sense is that cooperation between the White House, the State Department, DoD, and their counterparts in European capitals has been intense, has been constructive, has been cooperative. There have been disagreements of course, and there have been failures.

But the disagreements I think have been legitimate disagreement about very often technical issues, or timing, timing of sanctions rather than about ideological questions. I think we are in broad agreement about the dangers presented by Vladimir Putin's Russia, by the chaos in the Middle East and what that means for European stability, and in very broad agreement about the need to work together as Americans and Europeans.

The problems of vulnerabilities that we have I think are not so much because of a supposed US pivot away, but because globalization which has enriched us and made our continent more peaceful has also made us more vulnerable and weakened our nation states. For many Europeans and including many Germans, and including me, Europe, and the European Union is a way to leverage the power that we have to work together, to decrease our vulnerabilities and increase our strengths.

Particularly at a time when we have in our defense budgets, which are relatively low but are being increased including in my country have reached the point where technology costs are such, and the technology and the complexity of technology are such that defense budget increases alone are not going to resolve the problem.

Let me leave you with one final thought. I welcome American engagement in Europe. What I don't want to see again is the infantilizing codependency marked by resentment on both sides that we had at some times during the Cold War, if we're honest with each other. What I want is a Europe that is more responsible, that steps up to the plate, that takes on more of its burden, and that works with America when it needs to, and relieves it of the burden when America has pressing preoccupations elsewhere. Thank you.

Teri: All right, Patrick and Nile.

Patrick Cronin: Kurt, thank you very much, and I apologize audience for my hoarse throat. My argument is somewhat nuanced because I'm sympathetic to the proposition, but my position is that the rebalanced Asia in no way, and should not, detract from the longstanding transatlantic alliance and relations. The United States in fact should be in lock step with our European allies, the kind of revisionist great powers whether their aggressive and declining like Russia, or simply coercive and rising like China.

We should also fully tap the transatlantic alliance to develop a strategy to deal with transnational terrorism and institutions or entities like the so-called Islamic state. Fortunately, we have highly developed, integrated, and as Ian pointed out, very capable institutions like NATO. They already exist, and we can and should be using them fully. The United State remains, after all, a global power.

Even the rebalanced Asia was never meant to say that we didn't have interests on the Eurasia rim land from Europe to the Middle East, to the Indo-Pacific, just the opposite.

The rebalanced Asia as announced by the Obama Administration in 2011 was really a conflation of two things. On the one hand, the long-term trends that many administrations had seen happening over decades, that is the shift in global power, especially economic power from West to East, but also the short-term desire of the administration politically to draw away from two hot wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I think you can argue that they did it too fast, and too much, but that's not the pivot to Asia. That was the separate policy decision on the part of the administration, so don't confuse it with the strategy of a long-term reorientation towards the gradual economic integration with a rising Indo-Pacific region, with a closer political integration, and with dealing with the military challenges and opportunities posed by the region. Strengthening allies applies in Asia just as it does in Europe.

The idea of this argument, this proposition, misrepresents the US balance policy to Asia, and I think this rebalance adjust our comprehensive engagement to correspond with the shift in the diffusion of power makes a lot of sense, this is half the world's population, a third of the global GDP and rising, some of the most capable and most modernizing militaries are in the Asia-Pacific.

This is the center of gravity now, and it's even becoming more so as you head out to the middle of the century. So let's do more with European allies, but let's not besmirch arguably the most strategic element of the administration's foreign policy by blaming all of Europe's current ills on it. Thank you.

Teri: OK, shake it up, Nile. It's way too much solidarity in the court here.

Nile Gardiner: Well, firstly, thanks very much for the invitation. It's a great honor to be here to speak to the McCain Institute, and John McCain is a tremendous patriot and a true war hero, and we owe him an immense debt of gratitude. I know that the EU is helping to fund this debate, they might want a refund after listening to my comments here.

[laughter]

Teri: One quarter of it.

Nile: I would say that we should be suspicious of the term pivot, really. Administrations use the word pivot in order to disguise really a lack of strategy, and a lack of policy, and a lack of attention paid to certain areas of the world. You can expect the White House to shortly announce a pivot to Syria for example to cover for the fact that they don't actually have a Syria strategy. So, when I heard the term pivot to Europe, I immediately had a very negative reaction to that.

We don't need the United States to pivot back to Europe, we need American to rebuild, key partnerships with important allies across the Atlantic. That includes Great Britain, Poland, key nations in Eastern and Central Europe, for example, who have been treated in some cases with disdain by the current administration. We need the United States to be far more assertive in standing up to the Russian bear in Europe.

We also need America to reverse the very dangerous series of base closings across Europe, sending completely the wrong signal at this time.

We need to move beyond the idea that Europe is some sort of unified, united entity. I believe firmly that we should not be elevating the European Union which is an organization or an entity that is fundamentally undemocratic in my view, and there is a major push across Europe against the EU.

There's a drive toward self-determination, we're seeing that in Great Britain with the forthcoming EU referendum. The latest opinion poll show the majority of British people would vote to leave the EU if that vote was held today. Europe, as a collection of nation states, Europe is not the United States of America, and we should not treat it as such.

Angela Merkel actually recently declared that we should invest in the Schengen Agreement, at the heart of the European project. I'm sure the many people thought the Titanic was an extremely good investment back in 1911, but that's how we should be viewing the European Union today, it is like the Titanic. Fortunately a few lifeboats are going to be thrown off the boat. Many countries I think will begin to leave the EU if Britain decides to leave the European Union, but to conclude, the European project is a disaster.

Margaret Thatcher, my former boss, described the EU, or the idea of the European project as the "greatest folly of the modern era," she said, how right she is. Let's advance real US leadership on the world stage, not gimmicks like having a pivot to Europe, for example. Let's work with our allies, let's strengthen American leadership, let's lead from the front rather than from behind, but let's end this obsession in the State Department with advancing this idea of some sort of European super state.

The EU, it has to be said, is a basket case. Let's not try and rescue a complete and utter basket case, and let's move forward, actually. That's support self-determination, freedom,

and sovereignty in Europe.

Teri: Thank you. We've gone over time on everybody's speeches so far, I've got to get stricter. Each side will now have two minutes to give a rebuttal to the opening remarks. You can split it one and one, or one person can speak for two minutes, but there's the clock up there, you guys can see it too.

Nile: Make a couple of points.

Constanze: Well, I don't know, I have a photograph on my iPhone, which sadly I don't have with me of Margaret Thatcher in a very fetching jumper with all the EU flags on it campaigning for the in vote in 1973. Perhaps she changed her mind after that, but it's an adorable picture and I can tweet it right after this again, I've tweeted it before.

Look, I think that the EU certainly has a lot of problems, populism, the refugee crisis, the Eurozone crisis. It's all very real, and it's anybody's guess how well we're going to deal with those. It is entirely possible that Great Britain will leave the EU, but I think that would be lamentable, it would be disaster not only for Europe, but it would be disaster for Great Britain.

Because I believe firmly, as firmly Nile does his belief that the EU, that the UK has very successfully leveraged itself through the European Union and have very successfully influenced the EU and when it is outside of the EU will no longer be able to do that, and we'll find that that reduces its scope considerably. I don't think that schmoozing with China behind the bleachers is a very seductive alternative, frankly.

I also think, and then I think Nile you know this, that it's not just this administration telling the Brits to please, please, not go this route, but many Republicans as well. I would also say that again, to somebody who is a committed opponent of the project I don't expect to convince you, but I think that the EU richly deserved its Nobel Peace Prize for the peace that it brought to Europe, for the prosperity that it brought to Europe, and for the way that it helped the post-communist new members transform into functioning democracies after 1989. That is a remarkable achievement.

Teri: There's been enough sharp intakes of breath on the other side, I think Nile is ready to go.

Nile: Yes, if I could respond to these points, firstly...

Teri: Two minutes, Nile, please.

Nile: Does the EU deserve the Nobel Peace Prize, obviously not. Let's not forget who defeated the Soviet empire. It was the United States, Great Britain, it was the leadership of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. It wasn't the European Union that defeated that monstrosity.

You referenced here Margaret Thatcher and her very colorful jumper, well, I worked for Margaret Thatcher for several years, and I know exactly what she thought about the

European Union, and her views dramatically changed with regard to the EU in the 1980s. It was her view, very firmly, that Britain needed to get out of the European Union, to reassert its sovereignty, to reassert itself as a free national state, and that was Margaret Thatcher's position.

You mentioned an important point there about US administration's backing European integration, and that is a fair point. Many administrations have done that over many decades, but you argued that the Republicans support Britain staying in the European Union, or have adopted the same line as the Obama administration. Let's be clear here, President Obama has been lecturing the British People how to vote in their own referendum, that I think is an appalling intervention in British internal affairs, it's none of his business actually.

When Republican presidential candidates have been asked about this issue of the British referendum, they have very clearly pointed out this is a matter for the British people to decide. But as Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio pointed out, they would quite happily sign on to a US-UK free trade agreement if the British people decide to reassert their sovereignty and leave the European Union and leave those shackles behind. Let's hope they do, but let's set the record straight I think on the Republican side.

Teri: Thank you. OK, I'm going to move on to the pivot to Syria. As if there were one. It's a developing story now and as a news person I'm trying to keep track of this, as the shooters in San Bernardino likely had, I think was the last wording I saw, likely had a terrorist link.

We're talking to handlers, I think unknown, but people who were on watch lists of various governments including the United States, and even after Paris there is still no appetite in the Obama administration or in any other administration, in any European government for ground troops unless everybody agrees on this, unless they're somebody else's ground troops.

The president has just doubled the number of Special Forces he's deploying I think from 50 to 100, so major contribution there.

When Paris looked at what its options were to ask for help, and I'm going to send this to you first, it decided not to go with Article V of NATO, though there were calls for it to do so, there were calls for it to ask its European allies to militarily support in a stronger way than it eventually, the decision eventually it took to use the EU treaty in this 42.7 previously unused clause which simply obligates other EU members to do whatever they can to help France with either homeland defense or its external affairs.

Do you think that the threat from ISIS should rise to the level of an Article V in NATO, do you think that would then draw in the United States, would make European governments really start thinking hard about whether there is a military response other than more air strikes to defeating ISIS.

Ian: As horrible as the strikes in France were, I'm not sure they quite rose to the level of

an Article V.

Teri: But you saw those calls, there were plenty of people suggesting.

Ian: There should have been calls in support of Turkey, when Turkey had 100 blown up in one day. That would justify an Article V.

When you call for Article V, you have to have clear sense of purpose of what you're going to do, and I don't think we have a clear sense of purpose or alliance of what to do. So before you draw NATO in you, better have a very clear set of objectives and a strong consensus behind that.

Now, as to what should be done is a different question -- should we have safe zones, should we have ground forces, should we have no fly zones and that sort of thing. It's a whole different set of variables, and they're complex.

I think you can do a lot to be effective against ISIS without NATO. I think you can do a lot with a robust coalition of willing. It's not so much a test of NATO it's a test of transatlantic will, and that's what it comes down to.

Do the Europeans have the stomach to do what's necessary to address a very complex, long-term challenge, south of an ally's border?

I don't think we're ever going to get the answer that we want unless the United States demonstrates its willingness to take on the challenges, and the responsibilities, and the burdens that come with this task.

Teri: In what way? They call air strikes taking them on.

Ian: I just don't think it's going to be sufficient. If you're going to really address the problem south of Turkey, you're going to have to have more robust ground presence than 50 special operatives.

Teri: It's 100 now.

Ian: Hundred operators. You're going to have to have much more aggressive air strikes, you're going to have to have a much more robust presence, simply to contain the new dynamic that Russia has entranced to that.

But the fact of the matter when you talk about this as a Europe issue or a US issue, it's first and foremost a US issue because we have to lead, we can only lead if we demonstrate the necessary commitment, that means putting in the forces necessary to do the job. Only then can we turn to the Europeans and ask them to do more.

Teri: Interesting. Would the anti-pivot side say the same? That the US absolutely must lead on Syria and cannot leave it to the Europeans, even after Paris, one might think that France would want to take more of a lead, push the United States to do more?

Nile: I agree that the United States has to lead on Syria, and of the moment there is no

real leadership coming from Washington, actually. That I think is sending the wrong signal across the Atlantic.

On the issue of how European countries should respond, it's very clear that the European Union itself is not really capable of doing anything. The European Union I think is a complete sideshow, a side player with regard to the Syrian situation, and it's down to the individual nation states to act.

It was very welcomed development yesterday that the British Parliament voted in favor of air strikes against ISIS in Syria. That I think is a very important signal that needs to be sending, and of course, France is already taking part in air strikes in Iraq and Syria, and hopefully even more European countries will do so. But we do need an overall strategy coming from the United States and key European allies to defeat ISIS emphatically.

Air strikes alone simply will not do that, but if anyone is looking to Brussels to lead with regards to what is a global war against Islamic terrorism, I think they will be sorely disappointed.

Teri: But there are two headquarters in Brussels, both the European Union and NATO, and you should point that out.

Nile: I'm referring of course to the EU, I mean NATO...

Teri: To be fair, not to be an EU defender, but they don't have a military, so you can't look to Brussels and the European Union for any kind of military...

Nile: That's a very good thing. I don't think you want to have the European Union with some sort of...

Constanze: Nile, you can't have it both ways. You can't say, "You shouldn't do this," and then blame them for not doing it.

Nile: No, you don't want the European Union having an army just taking resources away from NATO, and this is an important debate that's taking place in Europe.

Teri: And this is the British position that has prevented any sort of further reasoning...

Nile: It's not just the British position.

Constanze: Nobody wants the European army, it's not...

Nile: It's many European governments, and with very good reason. If there was a European Union Army, who would be fighting in it? It would overwhelmingly be the British and the French.

If you leave that to the nation states, not some supranational entity.

Teri: As it is now.

Ian: This is not a NATO versus EU issue.

Nile: No one is saying that.

Ian: This is about leveraging US and European military fire power. European resources when it comes down to development and reconstruction, and that's where I think the EU can actually play a very useful role, and ultimately the political will national governments are going to have to make, to make both of those contributions occur.

Teri: And Constanze, if you could add, what would possibly make any government do anything. Obviously, there's not enough people dead in Paris yet.

Constanze: I think that's a line of argument that I wouldn't want to take. I agree with Ian that there are perfectly complimentary roles for nation states, the EU, and the EU and NATO here. We shouldn't, because we're fighting a rear-guard ideological action, like Nile say, we should leave one of those out of the equation. That's just pointless, because none of us have enough...each of these actors has important resources to bring to the table.

The reality is, Nile, I'm sorry I really have to bang on you about this. You're flogging a dead horse.

Nobody in Europe is talking about, I don't know of a single European politician expect perhaps maybe some Looney old French guys out there somewhere who really want a European army, or who want a supranational EU for ideological reasons.

The reason why some people are talking about deeper integration, including in defense and security is for the simple reason that it appears very clear that we cannot always require the Americans to provide the defense and security backbone of what we do.

Good example is the EU naval force, under an EU flag in the Gulf of Aden, which has very effectively helped contain the threat of piracy from Somalia. This is not illegitimate, it's not anti-NATO, it's not anti-democratic, people want it, it's working, it's useful. So why be against that? It seems to me that that is a pointless waste of energy, frankly.

So, what we really need on a European level is counterterrorism intelligence cooperation. That is not something that NATO provides a framework for. I frankly don't care what the framework is as long as it gets done.

Teri: Patrick, you wanted to come in?

Patrick: Well, Teri, just back to your question on Syria. We don't really have a strategy on Syria, and this is a real deficit that we're lacking. It's even before you get to a deficit of capabilities including European underinvestment in defense, including political will, a deficit of political will in Europe. Obviously, that's changed since Paris perhaps, at least in some areas.

But United States and Europe, if they're going to do something effectively in the

long-term, as Ian points out, this is a long-term challenge, and it's more than the Islamic State, so called. This is going to take not just kinetic action, it's going to take a very long-term sort of multi-level strategy.

If we're not able to come together with NATO allies and think through that strategy before we think through a US-led military operation, then what is the good of NATO?

NATO needs to help United States also understand the right strategy to succeed. We're looking for strategic effect in the Middle East, and so far the strategic effects have been working against Europe and the United States.

Teri: Fairly enough. Nile wants a double rebuttal.

Nile: Well just to respond to Constanze's...

Teri: Briefly, very briefly.

Nile: Very briefly, because I think her argument that there are not major forces in Europe pushing for greater centralization of power, that's completely wrong. Look at your own German chancellor who is the leader in Europe pushing for more and more integration, for more and more powers for Brussels. The centralizing force is at the heart of Berlin, actually, if you want evidence of that. That's an extremely important point.

There's a huge debate in Europe between those who want self-determination and those who are pushing for more and more powers for the European Union and Brussels.

Teri: There is one comment, Constanze, which you probably remember from European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, who was until very recently, like a couple of months ago, calling for an EU army and said that at the moment the European Union's common defense policy has less cohesion than a flock of chickens, was it?

Constanze: Look, there is a serious debate to be had on this, and I think it's unfortunate if Juncker uses an expression like an EU army, he does that obviously to get media attention, and it worked, but it worked in the wrong ways.

Teri: But the Germans were his biggest supporters in that.

Constanze: OK, now two points. Angela Merkel, just to set the record straight, is the woman who turned Germany away from deeper European integration to espouse what she calls the union method, which is intergovernmentalism, pure and simple. The Germans have actually resisted the European integration on economic issues such as banking union. The Germans have been dragging their feet on this.

As for defense, what the Germans have been suggesting, and I would suggest it is something very interesting. The Germans have been putting forth something that they call the framework nation concept, which would allow Germany to provide a military backbone in cases where we cannot presume on the presence of an American backbone, because Americans need to deploy their assets elsewhere.

What that means is that smaller nations can specialize or concentrate on certain capabilities which they have already de facto done because of technology cost, and then attach themselves to German units. That is happening in very important and very creative ways, and it is Europeanizing forces as we speak. It is creating common forces.

But again, this is not an ideological drive, it's driven by practical necessity and by defense costs, and it is not anti-NATO, all of it is fully NATO interoperable.

Teri: I think we'll definitely come back to more NATO questions.

Constanze: Sorry to be so technical.

Teri: We'll definitely come back to NATO. I want to just launch one more question before I go to the audience, and that is about what used to be the biggest issue that I covered in Brussels, and was asked to cover by US media clients, and that was the refugee and migration crises. Until terrorism hit, we were talking only about refugee and migration for days and days and weeks and weeks. It also exacerbated the cracks in European solidarity like nothing else except the Greece crisis to that point had done.

Constanze, you even wrote that at this point after all of these strains, that the European project is in danger of falling apart. I thought that during Greece, I thought I'd never heard European governments speaking that way to each other until the migration crisis came, and we've never seen anything like this. Countries literally building fences, not just Hungary. So I would like to get your takes on this.

Does the US, can the US do more to ease the burden of Europe? Nile, I know what you think about this. I'm going say something for him. He says the European Union is doomed anyway, and the refugee crisis is just going to...

Constanze: Doom it some more.

Teri: ...doom it some more, hasten its welcome demise. Should the US do more, and that isn't just take 10,000 Syrian refugees, which is nothing, nothing to help ease the burden of those countries that are getting hundreds of thousands per day.

So, what should the US do? Is this another test of transatlantic solidarity, what can the US do? Should it be doing more? Or is Europe just stuck with its own problems?

We would look at things like you can blame the US back in Libya, what used to be the main route of refugee smuggling and transit until Turkey became such a big hub.

I'd like your views on that, and we've really got to stick to time. If everyone wants to answer, let's have one minute each, please. There's the clock.

Patrick: Simple, United States, obviously, should take more refugees, but we're not going to take 100,000 refugees, we're not going to take 150,000 refugees.

Teri: Even 100,000 is nothing.

Patrick: We can take 100,000, that's not going to stop the problem in Europe. So stop the problem in Europe is ending the conflict in Syria and bringing stability to Iraq.

Teri: What about Libya?

Patrick: You know, if we can do that, that would help too. But your biggest and most urgent challenge right now is in Syria and in Northern Iraq.

In the absence of real, clear strategy with coherent ends, and long-term commitment, commitment of resources, that is military and financial, that problem is not going to be resolved. That's how the United States can make an effective contribution to this challenge that's facing Europe.

Constanze: Can I maybe come at this from a slightly perhaps unconventional side, and suggest that the degree to which we are able to not just absorb but integrate and assimilate Muslim migrants from conflict zones in the Middle East will have a significant impact on our credibility and our legitimacy as actors in the Middle East, and at least these two things are, therefore, connected.

So, I'm suggesting that we not be sucked into false dichotomies, and say we have to do one or the other. We do both of these things. We gracefully accept the refugee challenge, and deal with it, but we also try and deal with the root causes and we also try and take some of the burden off Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, which has taken a far bigger burden than we have so far, and help stabilize those countries that are on the brink of disintegration themselves.

Teri: But your chancellor tried to do that, and ended up also having to close your borders, even temporarily, and having to limit the floor. That was her original idea.

Constanze: Yes, but these are temporary measures. People I think outside of Germany are not aware of just how many refugees and migrants we have integrated since 1945. I think even Germans weren't aware until people sort of dug up the numbers and realized just how much this was.

My society has completely changed, even since my childhood. We used to be white and Catholic or Protestant. That has utterly changed.

I am actually reasonably confident that we can do this. I think as there is a direct linkage to our credibility in foreign policy, but I'm also relieved that Germany is now sending [inaudible 41:36] is sending a frigate, and is sending ground troops not to fight in Syria, because we appear to all be agreed that that is not on the cards at this point, but I can see my government doing more if we all decide to do more.

Teri: But that was a decision that came out of France's calling of 42.7, wasn't it?

Constanze: I'm not sure that was the only...look, we have a very, very close relationship with France, in much the same way we have a very close relationship with Poland. A threat to France is a threat to us. The same way Ukraine is a threat to Poland and,

therefore, is a threat to us.

It follows from that, that we helped. But the larger question to which I think none of us have any simple answer, and I would distrust anybody who has a simple answer is how to truly grapple with the root causes.

As I say, I think the way we deal with Muslims in our midst is going to have a significant impact on that, and let's not forget that.

Patrick: I agree Teri that the United States needs to play a leading role to try to contain and tamp down the conflict at its source. We also can play a leading role in mobilizing international support in dealing with refugees and internally displaced people in the countries in fact that Constanze just mentioned, in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan. That includes, by the way, Asian contributions, not just European contributions or American contributions.

Yes, the United States can support Europe in terms of how we can try to help take off maybe just at least a symbolic number of refugees to show that we care, but in reality we can't fix the problem that way. It's consistent with our values, and it's our interests in global order.

Teri: Does 10,000 show we care?

Patrick: I don't know what the number is.

Teri: That's OK. Nile?

Nile: On the refugee issue, I firstly as Patrick says, more should be done to assist with the refugee camps in nations bordering Syria. Ultimately, if we want to end the refugee crisis we've got to deal with ISIS, and we've got to emphatically defeat ISIS, and that's what we have to do. That's the most important role the United States can play. Taking 10,000 refugees is not going to make any difference.

On the European front, I would say that the refugee issue should be a matter for nation states. If Poland or Hungary does not wish to take any refugees or migrants, that's their choice.

Constanze: Or only Christian ones.

Nile: If they want to take only Christian refugees who are by far the most persecuted in Syria, then that is the choice of the Polish or Hungarian governments. It should be their decision alone. This idea that Germany can dictate to the rest of Europe how many refugees each country should take has been firmly and emphatically rejected and rightly so.

Teri: It wasn't only Germany.

Nile: If Germany wishes to take 800,000, 1.6 million refugees, that's up to Germany, and

it's up to them how they're going to deal with that situation.

Teri: But then it's also up to Germany how much money they want to allocate to the Eastern European states who aren't helping.

Nile: They must not, Germany is in no position to be lecturing other countries about who they should or should not be taking inside their own country. I do think the German attempt here to yet again, I mean Dominate Europe has been completely rejected by many countries, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, and also by Britain as well.

Teri: It was only four countries I believe, in the end, who were opposed to that measure, even though they may have been strong-armed. Only four.

Nile: I think you'll find more countries than that. But this...

[crosstalk]

Nile: At the end of the day, this is an issue about controlling your own borders, self-determination, and no country is under any obligation to take a certain number of refugees. If Angela Merkel wants to make that personal invitation to large numbers of migrants, that's her own choice and the German people should face up to the consequences of that.

Teri: Do you know which country has the most expatriates living in Europe?

Nile: UK?

Teri: It's you.

Nile: Yeah, and that's an example of Britain being an incredibly successful entrepreneurial society.

[laughter]

Teri: Unlike Poland, right?

Nile: That is a testament to free markets, capitalism, and taking a lot of the best talent from across the world, including from the United States which is why...

Teri: I might not be true once they need a visa, right? Like...

[crosstalk]

Nile: Why would they need a visa?

Teri: If you leave, they might need a work visa.

Nile: I think that the idea that Great Britain as the world's fifth largest economy will overtake Germany's economy by 2030, the idea that the United Kingdom will somehow be sidelined, isolated, after it leaves the European Union, I think is scaremongering of the

lowest common denominator, and I think that very few people are buying that argument in Britain itself, actually.

Teri: Good enough. OK, I would like to take questions from the audience.

Sir? First in the front? I did have microphones for people. Thanks.

Russell King: I'm Russell King, retired federal employee. I haven't taken a side in this debate yet, but I believe that you should not put all your eggs in one basket, and you should be able to move the eggs from one basket to another without breaking them. I believe the US military is designed to be in tuning up conflicts at one time.

Just recently, we were in Afghanistan and Iraq, so that's two conflicts in CENTCOM region, so you're arguing EUCOM over here, and PACOM over here, but I wonder if you could comment about inter-theatre mobility, the movement of resources from one command to another. I know there's also been AFRICOM, there's been a new command that just came, but from a standpoint of the commands as well as the logistics, how has inter-theatre mobility improved over the years.

Teri: Thank you. He jumped into that and did it perfectly, please give your name and your organization, and not too much editorializing and get to a question quickly.

Patrick: We have a global force, US has global interests, so wherever the forces are based, they have to be prepared for global contingencies.

The administration has announced that they're shifting, especially naval assets, but also air assets, from a 50/50 percent ratio based in Pacific versus the rest of the world, to a 60/40, but that's on the basis of a smaller and shrinking force structure.

In fact, what the administration mostly doing is putting the best face on preserving the status quo, but it is improvement. I don't want to trivialize the improvements, because some of them are the high quality of ships that we're building, although in some cases the littoral combat ship has more limited capacity than some of our traditional ships.

So, it's a mixed bag in what we're building up in the Asia-Pacific, but it's meant to be focused on ready for deployment in the Asia-Pacific and the Gulf-Indian Ocean regions.

So reinforcing the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, the Seventh fleet in Yokosuka, Japan, but for global missions. We could argue that we should put a second carrier in Japan and make an operational command in Japan, and make it a rotating fleet that could go all the way through the Indo-Pacific on patrols with other allies like Australia, but new partners like India and other allies like the Philippines eventually, as well as Japan and Korea. The reality is though, that these forces are still lacking in numbers.

We're not in the Mediterranean, we're not in the North. There are real reasons, there are real shortfalls that I'm concerned with as well globally, but that has to do with our global investment and our force posture. We can't afford everything, so we're going to have to

leverage allies.

We're asking all allies to do more, not just in Europe where we're critical and have been critical for years in not meeting their spending targets in NATO, but we're also asking all of our Asian allies to do more, so much so that our pushing Japan to new defense guidelines is being criticized by even our Korean allies as maybe too aggressive, because they're not comfortable. But we need our allies to do more, we need our force posture that's ready to be global, but in reality we have some real gaps.

Teri: Thank you, and I would like to point out to anybody who's watching this on live streaming, or anybody here, you can tweet about our debate at #MIDebate and because I asked on Twitter people to send me questions, and I got a rather meager response I want to reward those who did, and this would go into Ian, did you want to answer this question? But let me throw in the question of Stephan Susanto.

He said he wanted to hear more about the role of nuclear deterrence in a transatlantic sense, and also missile defense burden sharing, and that would fall under the NATO category to a large extent.

Ian: To follow on Pat's comments, cross-theatre operations has become a refined art in the US military. Just look at the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the roles the UCOM forces played. Almost all UCOM forces one way or another, at one time or another in either of those theatres, so that's not really a challenge.

The problem is, since we're talking about pivot to Europe, is that the 60/40 reorientation of the current administration has made in terms our global force posture, 60 percent going to the Pacific, or Pacific-oriented, ignores the kind of challenge that we face in Europe, ignores, I think, warning signs that were emerging well before the Obama administration that were on track to a confrontational relationship with Russia. Invasion of Georgia in 2008 should have been a signal.

The 2007 attack, cyberattack on Estonia should have been a signal. The articulation of policy by Putin 2004, 2005 outlining his aims and objectives in Europe should have been a signal.

So, what we did was we basically pulled our forces out of Europe, ignoring what was a clearly emergent threat. While we were downsizing our forces over there, and while the Europeans were downsizing their military capabilities, the Russians were embarking on a long-term modernization plan of which we're now seeing some of its products in more effective special forces, operations forces capability, greater deployability of forces, more rapid mobilization rates, more effective and accurate strike capacities, with Iskander, and Kalibr missiles -- increasingly capable air defense systems.

This is why the pivot away from Europe has I think, in my mind, been a mistake. It's not an issue of intratheater lift, it's an issue of being where you need to be, and we need to have more robust force posture in Europe if we're going to effectively work with the Europeans to deal with this not in the longer emergent, but the very real Russian threat

that we face.

Teri: Missile defense especially with regard to either Russia, at whom it is not directed, or perhaps Patrick at North Korea, at whom it may well have been, or Iran.

Ian: Are you asking me?

Teri: Either one of you, a quick answer on missile defense.

Ian: On missile defense, NATO-US missile defense policy regarding Russia has been completely mistaken.

Teri: It's not about Russia, remember?

Ian: Exactly. As I said, it's completely mistaken. To say that we're going to be orienting our threats against Iranian missiles is nice and probably useful, but to intentionally not direct or avert our radar coverage and our interceptive capabilities from Russia is beyond me.

Teri: So you're saying we should openly say this is directed against a Russian threat.

Ian: Missile defense is a defensive action. It's not threatening to Russia. It's beyond me why, in the face of increasingly provocative Russian military conduct, in the face of an increasingly offensive force posture in Russia...

Here, we're talking about the caliber cruise missiles. We're talking about Iskanders. We're talking about Russian exercises.

Teri: In Kaliningrad, no less.

Ian: Deployments of Iskanders in Kaliningrad. We're talking about Russian exercises that simulate the use of ballistic missiles, sometimes with nuclear warheads, against the West. We should have missile defense against that. There's no question in my mind on that.

Patrick: We have problems in Asia as well. Even the commander of US Forces Korea has had a hard time convincing our South Korean allied government that we need another layer of missile defense, THAAD, to protect US forces as well as Korean forces against the growing arsenal that North Korea is trying to build, however unsuccessfully, and expanding a nuclear weapons program that could parallel that of Pakistan if they're allowed to continue over the next 5, 10 years.

Missile defense is a global issue as well because systems, the connections and the information systems with the redundancy and resiliency built in, are essential for our operations. In Guam, US territory in the Pacific, we just had the largest delivery ever of a forward deployment of THAAD missiles.

That's because we're replacing the interceptors in preparation probably for the May 2016 North Korean Congress, which hasn't happened for decades, because there's likely to be

an ICBM launch about that time, I would suspect. I'm just guessing.

The reality is that we have to protect our assets in Asia Pacific, reassure allies and partners, and not give in to Russian or Chinese pressure about these systems are hurting them. They're not. These systems are too minor to affect a major military power like Russia or China.

Teri: Which isn't exactly good news for NATO.

Patrick: It isn't exactly good news, but it's the reality. Deterrence works though.

Teri: Quickly, Kurt, do I get 10 extra minutes because we started late? Nice.

More questions? Up in the middle.

Michael: I guess I can just do this without a microphone.

[crosstalk]

Constance: I'm not sure you should because it's being live-streamed. Wait for the microphone.

Teri: Thanks.

[crosstalk]

Teri: Let's try to do bullet rounds now. One minute answers, please, from my panel. You can direct them towards somebody if you want to, or they can just...

Michael: My name is Michael Buckalew, recent graduate of Korea University. I have a question related to Russia specifically. When we compare Russia to the Soviet Union, we see a couple facts, that Russia is much smaller, much less populous...

Teri: This part should be very short because everybody here knows that.

Michael: Fair enough.

[laughter]

Michael: I would say in the context of Russia being relatively more compact than the Soviet Union in a lot of ways, does Russia solely justify a pivot back to Europe?

Teri: Who wants it?

Ian: I love that one.

Teri: Take it.

Nile: Me too.

Ian: Absolutely. Russia just invaded Ukraine, invaded Georgia. It's conducting offensive exercises. Just this spring, it conducted an exercise in which it simulated the seizure of parts of northern Norway, the Åland island of Finland, the Gotland island of Sweden, and Bornholm of Denmark.

Teri: And now Turkey.

Ian: Turkey was just a series of Russian provocations challenging the airspace, sea space of allies.

Russia right now has a very sophisticated capability to rapidly mobilize a large amount of forces to quickly seize a limited swath of territory in its proximity. We're not postured for that.

In light of what Putin is saying he plans to do, in light of what his objectives are and the way he conducts his exercises, you have to respond to that. Otherwise, you're setting yourself up for a fiasco.

Teri: Nice, short answer. Nile.

Nile: It doesn't take a whole pivot though to deter Russia. China has been growing by 10 percent per annum since Deng Xiaoping's market reforms in 1978. If you look out to the middle of the century, even with a slowing down of the economy that we see now in China, China is hoping that the Chinese Dream, on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 2049, will be the dominant power.

The United States has to be there to engage it, to dissuade it, and to shape the region to our liking. Not because it's a direct threat yet, but we don't know about the future. We have to do both of these things at the same time. Yes, Russia more attention now, but that doesn't take a pivot.

Teri: You wrote that it could be by 2030. I think I read one of your papers that said it could be if not the, at least a dominant power already by 2030. Can the US even afford to look away from Asia?

Nile: US has to grow. We need a growth strategy as well, which is why we can talk about the Trans-Pacific Partnership and TTIP. Those are the two sides of the flying buttresses that hold up the future global trading regime that we would like to see in the 21st century. It's essential. It's both Asia and Europe.

Teri: Thank you.

Constanze: Russia challenges fundamental European values and principles. Principle of sovereignty, self-determination, agency of civil societies. That cannot be let to stand.

We are going to have to counter that. We're going to have to contain it. We're going to have to deter and defend. We will have to do that with hard power. We will have to increase our defense budgets and deploy hard forces wherever that is necessary.

However, that effort also has a soft power side. It starts with the resilience of our societies, of our economies, and our political systems. That is where the EU comes in. That is where national governments in the EU come in.

Again, I'm not at all ideological about this, although I do firmly believe, unlike Nile, that the EU has a role to play here.

[laughter]

Constanze: This soft power arena is ultimately our primary responsibility, but it is one where America can help us. TTIP, for example, has role to play in our economic prosperity. TTIP is a good idea, whose strategic importance goes well beyond its free trade zone, but that has been badly supported. In my own country, 100,000 people went on the streets against it recently.

We also have to win the war that the Russians are waging against us in the social media zone. They are funding fascist parties in Europe.

[crosstalk]

Teri: In response, the EU is not funding a five-person bureau. The EU's counter-troll unit is about five people, which don't have a budget. They're all seconded.

Constanze: Yeah, but NATO has a center of strategic communication in Latvia. Again, you have to ask yourself where you want to put this, and you don't want to duplicate.

The reality is, again, I don't think that one should fight propaganda with counter-propaganda. You fight it by defending your free, open, and liberal societies.

Nile: How can I not respond? I do like the idea of a counter-troll unit. That sounds excellent.

[laughter]

Teri: I think I made that up.

Nile: Talking of Russia does actually feel a bit like Moscow in this arena, it's so cold here.

[laughter]

Nile: You make a very good point, comparisons between Russia today and the Soviet Empire. Sure, the Russian power is nowhere as great as it was under the days of the Soviets.

However, I think Vladimir Putin is, frankly, just as evil as many of the people around the Soviet Empire. A man who can supply missiles, shoot down an airliner over Eastern Ukraine, this is barbarism and savagery. It's pure terrorism, backed by the Russian State,

and we should not forget what we're dealing with in terms of standing up to the Russians.

The Russians understand only one thing, and that is a message of strength and resolve. I don't think Mr. Putin cares one jot what the latest EU resolution is.

Teri: That's not true, Nile. The sanctions have hurt his economy, and that's proven. You don't think he cares?

Nile: Well, sanctions, of course, implemented by individual European countries...

Teri: Under an EU... [laughs]

[crosstalk]

Nile: But, as you say...No, no, no...

Teri: Maybe we can get [inaudible 61:41] .

Nile: We need to distinguish between the power of the European Union and the power of the nation states. I don't see why you think that is...

Teri: They could, all 28, have done it unilaterally, but they didn't.

Nile: People will die for the nation state. They're not going to die for the European Union -- I can assure you that -- on battlefield. Vladimir Putin knows this, and this is not a laughing matter here. Mr. Putin understands when NATO stands up to Russian expansionism. He understands when the United States stands up to the Russian super-power.

Unfortunately, at the moment, there isn't a lot of US leadership, and the Russian reason, I think, has been fundamentally disastrous. We need to be very, very clear with regard to what we're dealing with, in terms of the Russian threat.

Vladimir Putin is quite capable of doing what he has done already in the Crimea, in Ukraine, and in George, to other parts of Europe, especially the Baltic States -- Poland, for example -- with very good reason. Leaders in the Baltics and in Eastern Central Europe are deeply concerned about the Russian threat, and also about the lack of American leadership on this issue.

They're also concerned about the lack of leadership coming from inside of Europe, as well, on this matter. There's an awful lot of appeasement of the Russians, especially coming from Germany and France, I might add.

It is important that, on both sides of the Atlantic, we see the kind of leadership that is needed to stand up to what is, in my view, a brutal regime in Moscow, that has to be confronted.

Teri: Another question. #MIDebate, everyone.

Constanze: Sorry. Can I just mention that Merkel was holding together the sanctions consensus?

Teri: You just did.

Constanze: Just for the record, for anybody who isn't aware of this. I'll waive on the rest.

Batu Kutelia: Batu Kutelia, McCain Institute, Next Generation Leader. I'm from Georgia.

Teri: I suspect this will be about Russia?

Batu: No, it's not about Russia. It's all about vision and idea. It was mentioned that people would not die for the European Union. People will die for the idea, and Ukrainians died in the streets with the European Flag in their hands.

Teri: That's a good point.

Batu: Now, coming to the idea and the vision. To navigate through the troubled waters for transatlantic partnership, we need a compass. That compass was existed, it was an ideal, Europe whole and free and in peace. But somehow it disappeared.

You get the bits and pieces of this vision, what should be the transatlantic partnership, or what's the future of the Europe.

How the European nations or European leaders see the future of the Europe, like, in Germany or in Great Britain, and how the US sees the future of the Europe. What is the discrepancy between those two visions.

Teri: Thank you.

Is there a fundamental difference between how the two sides of the ocean see the future of Europe? I mean, we know Nile.

Nile: Well...

Teri: Quick answers.

Nile: Let me respond by this...

Teri: Really quick answers, guys.

Nile: I think that the United States should apply the same values with regard to Europe that they're applied here at home and respect for sovereignty and self-determination, the right to decide your own future.

This is at the heart of the European debate at the moment, which is why it's important that the United States needs to be on the right side of history here rather than lecturing Europeans about how they should be voting in their referendums. The Obama

administration is issuing countless edicts on this issue. It is a direct intervention in internal affairs there.

Teri: But it's helped your vote, you believe, right?

Nile: Sorry?

Teri: It's helped your side of the vote, you believe.

Nile: It's actually, it does, ironically, help, yes, that's correct. But that doesn't remove the fact that I think that the idea that US administration should be lecturing European publics about how to vote on their own particular issues of national sovereignty.

Teri: OK, but you've made that point already, so talk about what the future of Europe.

Nile: With regard to the future of Europe, it's very clear that the United States, I believe, should be in favor of a Europe of nation states rather than a supranational institution. A supranational entity does not benefit the United States on the world stage.

Henry Kissinger once spoke about this idea of having a, just one phone line to Europe or one person picking up the phone. Well, if that person is Jean-Claude Juncker, he was probably the most anti-American figure, actually, in Europe. That's not exactly going to help Washington, is it?

I think that US policy makers need to think through what is, in my view, a really outdated strategy with regard to the future of Europe.

Teri: OK. This side. One of you?

Patrick: As an American, I'll say two things. On NATO, looking at Kurt Volker and perhaps others here, 10 or 15 years ago, there was a real core group that was excited and animated about a Europe whole and free. They saw that vision to the two institutions, EU enlargement and NATO enlargement.

I was part, I like to think I was part of that community. I think it was important, it was a powerful vision, it gave a purpose. We made great progress on that, multiple rounds of enlargement, in NATO 28 now, I forget how many are in the EU. That has led to a more robust, more resilient Europe, more robust, resilient transatlantic community.

My fear is that over the last eight years, because of a lack of US government commitment to that vision, that has sort of died. As a result, you can find different pockets and levels of support and opposition to this vision across the Atlantic, even across Washington, DC.

I'm kind of hopeful there's a silver lining to Putin's [inaudible 67:58] agenda, it's reanimating in the eyes of many people the importance and validity of that vision and the need to support it.

Teri: They hoped that would make European governments raise their defense spending,

and it hasn't exactly done so.

Patrick: Well, there's been a small progress that direction.

Teri: Tiny.

Patrick: Not as much as we would want, but there has been. The invitation to Montenegro is a step in the right direction. But more is going to have to be done to really give this vision real life and renewed momentum. That's got to, I think, really include United States standing at the helm on this.

But then a point on Nile's. Nile, I'm not a big fan of bureaucracies. I know the EU bureaucracy has gone out of control in some cases. But that's not a reason to trash the EU. That's not a reason to blow it up. Reform it, yes.

Then I would say also, I don't think it has been US policy, Democrat or Republican, to drive a bureaucratization of the EU. We want to see political comity, we want to see economic integration. I think that's a positive thing.

As someone of Central European descent, the EU has done great things for Central Europe. We have highways and pipelines that come from EU funding. That's been a benefit.

Yes, it's an institution that has its faults and its quirks and its inefficiencies. But ultimately, it's done a good thing for Europe, it's done a good thing for the transatlantic relationship.

Teri: Can I take another question from [inaudible 69:20] ?

Constanze: I'd like to jump in on this.

Teri: Really quickly, I need a question from this side.

Constanze: No, I'd like to jump in on the question of Europe whole and free, because this does matter and also, it speaks to Nile's absurd point about German appeasement.

Teri: She wouldn't let it go.

Constanze: Yeah, and I'm not, no, I'm not going to let that go, because I can't. It's insulting. It's also just factually wrong, which is why it's insulting.

Nile: It's true actually, yeah, I think.

Constanze: But the, here's the deal.

I think that in Berlin, it is fully understood that the stability, prosperity, and yes, democratic transformation of Europe's eastern periphery is in, not just in line with our most fundamental values, and the values informed the democratic revolutions of 1989 in East Germany and in Poland and in Hungary and elsewhere. But is also in line with our

strategic interests.

Germany foreign ministry is fully invested in Ukrainian transformation. There is a whole special task force that spends a great deal of attention on working with the Ukrainians, on progress across the entire spectrum of economic, political and civil society transformation.

The Germans are fully invested in the Warsaw Summit and in the commitments of Wales.

I think that you would find it very hard to fault, you can disagree with, I would prefer to have the Poles and the Normandy admin formats. I would like to have the US playing a greater role in there. I would like to certainly have the UK play a much larger role in countering Putin and in the diplomacy and in the transformational efforts there in the region.

But to suggest that the Germans are appeasing, to suggest that the Germans are morally on the wrong side of the story, is deeply wrong. Thank you.

Teri: Patrick, can I go to another question? Or do you have?

Patrick: Well, a one liner on that would be in between these two positions here, because there is a middle ground, wide middle ground. That's, Europe needs to pivot back to taking security seriously. It never stopped mattering to the United States, but it did stop caring a lot about security.

It's catching up now, it's starting to turn the corner. These are very reassuring words, but we'd like to see more.

Teri: Sure.

Patrick: If the European Union is getting in the way of effective defense, then I'm worried about that. If it's not, if it's complementary, then that's a good thing.

Teri: That answers one of the question of my other Twitter questioners, Zebulon Carlander, thank you for writing.

Question here?

Audience Member: Hello, my name is Daniel Robinson and I'm a freelance foreign policy writer. Anyway, I have a question.

Given Russia's erratic behavior in the last number of years, their deployment of the gas weapon as well as the implementation of the Iran deal, should a Republican president succeed President Obama? Could that potentially be another central fracture point for the EU and the US, given the EU's depressed economic state, and also given Russia's recent actions [inaudible 72:07] diversification crisis they're facing in terms of energy?

Constanze: There are two angles to this. One, I would really like to see the US get rid of its prohibition of exporting energy, which would be very helpful. I would like to see the

EU going ahead with Europeanizing the oil and gas market, particularly the gas market.

Before anybody raises it, I'll raise Nord Stream-2, the pipeline that is designed to circumvent Ukraine and the Baltics. I don't like the political signal that this sends from the companies that are running this. This is a Gazprom plus, I think, five European companies, including the UK, by they way, just in case we're getting in that direction again.

I don't like it, but we don't have the kind of system where the government, unless we're operating in a sanctions environment, like on Iran, where the government can actually say, "You can't do this." I could see it very well running up against EU Commission rules, for which, by the way, the EU Commission would be very useful.

I also, frankly, don't think it's going to be economically viable. It's questionable, even whether Nord Stream-1 is going to be economically viable.

The other thing is that the Ukrainians have worked very hard and very well on their storage capacities.

Teri: With EU help.

Constanze: With EU help, exactly. The reverse flow of gas to Ukraine is now in such a state that I think we have far less to worry about than we did, say to years ago. It is certainly true that Russian behavior on this front has really mobilized people. The problem here is people like to mention that Germany imports 36, 39 percent, depending on how you count, of its oil and gas from Russia.

The smaller European, Eastern European economies are 100 percent dependent on Russian oil and gas. The three Balts, Bulgarians, Romanians, that is where the real problems lie.

Teri: Less so, now.

Constanze: ...and that's where we. Less now, yes, but that is where we really need to work. In other words, that's a live issue that people are working on, but that needs more work.

Teri: This time of year, it's always huge, because Russia starts causing problems and cutting off the flow to countries like Belgium, where I live. Most of the European countries do need some of that gas.

Nile, you wanted to say something about that? Quickly, very quick, one minute.

Nile: I'm glad that, Daniel, you mentioned Iran, which hasn't really been discussed tonight, an extremely important issue. I would hope that they next US president would tear up this abominable agreement with Tehran, which frankly amounts to a surrender to their demands. I can see why the European Union was so deeply in favor of it.

[laughter]

Nile: On the issue of Iran, it's interesting to not, the planeloads of officials and businessmen flying in from Berlin and Paris, into Tehran, following that deal.

Teri: And the UK, I think.

Nile: Which is why it was so important, I think, for European countries backing this agreement. It's largely about money. Whereas, I think the Iran issue should be viewed through the prism of security, the future of the free world, and preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear power. I don't think this agreement does that at all.

I think that, with a new administration coming, if indeed it is a republican administration, then I would expect to see this Iran agreement to be probably torn to shreds, actually. That will, of course, raise important issues in terms of transatlantic debate. I think you're very right to be raising this issue.

It will be a major area of contention between the United States and Europe if a new administration comes in and tears up the agreement. I'd expect a republican administration to actually do that.

Teri: Can I take another question? Anything you need to say?

OK. One more here. I'll take both of these, and then we've got to go. I'm getting the wrap, so make it really, really fast please.

Ann Thompson: Am I on? My name is Ann Thompson, formerly with USAID and World Vision, and international public health consultant. If each of you four distinguished speakers were tapped to advise policy to the current administration, what would your two top policy point advice be?

How would that be similar or different if the same opportunity were given for a republican administration, with the backdrop of American not leading from behind?

Teri: I'll take this question, too, and then you can choose which one of those you want from my panelists, because then we have to go. Sorry, I can't see you guys very well.

Gary: Yeah, I know. Bad light. I'm Gary Sergeant. I'm a retired Army Special Forces officer. I spent a day or two in the Levant in my life, and I also spent a day or two in Germany. I've got to hold myself calm, just for a hair. People forget that about 14 years ago, we took down the Taliban with about 100 special operators.

Teri: So that's enough?

Gary: People forget that fact, but the bottom line is that initial, gradual insertion and helping indigenous capability be built is actually not the worst policy in the world.

Teri: I talked to somebody on the other side of it today, too, just in preparation for this, who says, "If the administration were serious, they would be doing a lot more than that,"

that that's a Band-Aid.

Gary: Yeah, and it may be true. The other point is I think an emboldened Iran was directly related to our failures in Iraq.

[crosstalk]

Teri: That was a comment. You don't have a question.

Gary: I'd just love hear your comments.

Teri: All right. This is our last question, and then you are going to have one minute each to wrap up, before I get hauled off, gonged. Shoot.

[crosstalk]

Teri: Which one do you want to take? One minute, please.

Nile: Advice to the current president, next, next president, extremely good question. I would say, firstly, you've got to confront ISIS and defeat ISIS and the broader Islamist terrorist threat. That's the immediate priority that has to be addressed.

I do think President Obama's a deer in the headlights at the moment. He doesn't have a clear strategy at all, and that shows on the world stage. Frankly, it's embarrassing for the world's super power to be projecting that kind of message.

Secondly, I think that the United States has to be serious about confronting not only Iran's nuclear program, but also its ambitions in the Middle East to be the regional super-power there. That's a point raised by the gentleman there.

A third point, you've got to confront the Russians, and stand up to Russian aggression in Europe, and also send a message to the Russians that they can't assert their influence as they see fit, wherever they want to in the Middle East.

This is a result of a vacuum of American leadership in the Middle East. The Russians have moved in there. You've got to send that message to Russia that the United States is still prepared to lead on the world stage. We need to have a president who really has a backbone and is willing to lead, as the world's super-power must lead.

Teri: OK, one minute, each of you.

Patrick: Especially for the next administration, again, we don't really choose what we have to deal with in security. We are going to have to manage other major powers like China and Russia, especially when they act in a revisionist manner.

We're going to have to deal with transnational terrorism and groups like the Islamist State. We're going to have to deal with Iran and North Korea. We have to deal with all of these things. What are the two things the next administration should do?

In the most simple terms, it needs to negotiate from strength, so it needs to have the force structure and the leadership behind it to use and force and power to achieve the strategic results we want vis-à-vis these big strategic issues.

We also need to use soft power, and since you're from AID, or were, we need some imagination on how we mobilize international support, because we're not going to pay for all the money, for human development initiative for the 21st century.

That's going beyond just the poverty reduction that has been the focus of a lot of the development work. It's capturing and competing with things like the Chinese Silk Road idea. They're going to build more infrastructure than we can, but we have ideas for technology, for health care, for the environment, and for energy and education.

Europe and Asia, allies, and the United States can do a lot with that.

Constanze: Afghanistan, don't get me started. I was there a number of times as a reporter, the first time in January of 2002, when things were still quite rough.

I have gone for evening walks in Kabul and Kunduz, on my own, without risking my life, and I regret the fact that that is no longer possible. I think that we are, to some degree, to blame for that, but that would be another evening of conversation.

As I think it's become somewhat clear, I don't have a problem with using hard force where that is necessary and useful. But my advice to the next American president, whatever party he or she belongs to, would be to work with us, to help us grow out of the infantile co-dependency that too many of us have been for too long a time.

Help us do, on our own, what we should, by rights and in your interests, be doing on our own. Help us do it in such a way that, whenever we need to work together, whether it's on politics, diplomacy, economics, trade, or military force, we can continue to do so together successfully.

That is actually quite a tall order, but I think, unlike some of us here, that the record of Europe working with the Obama administration has really not been so bad. A lot of good things have happened, and that makes me reasonably optimistic for the future.

Teri: Ian?

Ian: From a national security point of view, and I've worked mostly in the political-military realms, I think the biggest mistake of the Obama administration has been the president's conveying an impression that the United States is hesitant to use force, that US policy is driven by the objective of avoiding the use of force.

I'm trying to not sound like a warmonger, but this administration and the next administration has to demonstrate more clearly the United States is willing to regularly use force to defend its allies and partners, without hesitation. That's going to be important.

The second recommendation I have would be that the United States has to seriously restart resourcing strategic communications. We've been talking for over five years now about how we're losing the information war. We really haven't done anything. We haven't created any new organizational structures. We haven't really dedicated any serious amount of resources.

Teri: NATO puts out some fact sheets.

[laughter]

Ian: NATO puts out some fact sheets and has seminars. NATO is not the institution for strategic communications. It never has been. That's an organization that's designed to throw lead down-range, not write memos and do papers.

Back during the Cold War, we had the United States Information Agency. That was a stand-alone organization, whose director reported directly to the US president. It focused on nothing but the full gamut of strategic communications operations, everything from press releases to TV to radio, student exchanges to joint research.

Teri: They're still debating whether to even have that office inside NATO. Is it still a debate?

[crosstalk]

Ian: To me, it's irrelevant. NATO's not the role. This has to be a US government priority, and it has to be given its own independent department status, and its own resource pool. Otherwise, we're going to be behind in that game. This is where I think we're really furthest behind when it comes down to dealing with our competitors, be it large states or terrorist organizations.

Teri: Thanks. That, in fact, was going to be our last wrap-up question. Thank you for posing it. My apologies to Theresa Balen, who I know back in Brussels, who wanted to talk a lot more about China.

Thank you very much. You've all been a great audience, laughed at our jokes and things that weren't supposed to be funny, too.

[laughter]

Teri: I appreciated it. It was really a delight. Thank you to all the panelists. You guys were great.

[applause]

Ambassador Volker: Thank you very much. Let me also just ask you to join in thanking Teri Schultz for keeping it very lively and...

[applause]

Ambassador Volker: Thank you. Good luck braving the traffic, and have a very happy holiday.

Teri: And it's freezing down here.

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