

Center for Strategic and International Studies

“Schieffer Series: A Discussion of Critical Foreign Policy Challenges Facing the Trump Administration”

**Hosted By:
Bob Schieffer,
Trustee,
CSIS**

**Panelists:
Michael J. Green,
Senior Vice President for Asia and Japan Chair,
CSIS**

**Heather A. Conley,
Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia, and the Arctic; and Director, Europe
Program, CSIS**

**Christopher K. Johnson,
Senior Adviser and Freeman Chair in China Studies,
CSIS**

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BOB SCHIEFFER: It looks like we've got a few still coming in, so we'll wait just a second here. OK. And if anybody would like to come up more this way, I think we're going to have room. Or if you're comfortable where you are.

OK. Well, welcome, once again, to another Schieffer Series. This is the joint project of TCU, where I went to school, and CSIS. I want to thank the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, who have been our sponsor, as it were, for these many symposiums that we've had on just about every subject you can imagine. But there's never a loss of anything to talk about. And I think this week you can underline that.

We have a new president, after the most unusual political campaign of my lifetime. And now I would say one of the most unusual transition periods of my lifetime. So what should we expect? Donald Trump was elected – the joy of some, to the despair of others, and I think it's fair to say to the surprise of most. If you think you were all alone in getting this election wrong, I would just tell you – and how it was going to come out – I would just tell you this: A colleague of mine at another news organization, who is basically in charge of their polls, and one of the big ones, told me that on the day before the election he was talking to the Trump polling people, and that point they told him they thought they had a 20 percent chance of Trump winning. So a lot of us were not sure it was going to come out the way it did. But clearly the Trump people didn't think it was going to come out that way either.

So here we begin. What will be the state of the world? And what is the world going to look like when Donald Trump starts, when he is sworn in on Friday of this week? From what we learned during the campaign and the transition, what can we expect even the problems to be and how will he deal with them? Today we're going to focus on those challenges. I can't think of three better people to put the questions to than the three we've assembled here.

Heather Conley, CSIS's senior vice president for Europe, Eurasia, and the Arctic. She's the director of the Europe program here. Before coming to CSIS she was an officer of the Red Cross. 2001 to 2005 deputy assistant secretary of state in the Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs. Before that, a senior associate in the consulting firm headed by former Deputy Secretary of State Rich Armitage, which I'm sure so many of you know.

Michael Green is CSIS's senior vice president for Asia. He holds the Japan chair. Has a new book coming out next month. It is called, "By More than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific since 1783." So he goes back a ways on this problem. (Laughter.) He is also the chair in modern and contemporary Japanese politics at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service from 2001 to 2005. He served in various posts at the National Security Council. He served as an advisor to the secretary of defense. He's authored numerous books on what we're talking about today.

And finally, our friend Chris Johnson over here, who holds the Freeman chair in China studies at CSIS, has served two decades in the intelligence services, and the – for the government and for foreign affairs – various foreign affairs communities. He served as the intelligence liaison for two secretaries of state. Has had extensive experience working on Asia. And he is just back from China. In fact, we were going to have this gathering last Friday, but Chris was in China. (Laughter.) And we wanted him to be a part of it. And so, Chris, we thank you for finding the time to get here today.

I like to start with the news. So I picked up The Washington Post this morning, and the headline in The Washington Post was: Trump stirs fears of break with Europe. I then picked up The New York Times. And it said: For a wary world Trump aims remain unknown. And then – I take three newspapers at home – and then I open up The Wall Street Journal. It did not make the front page, but on the inside page it said, referring to his remarks last week about Europe: Trump remarks prompt European unity unease.

So I'm going to start with Heather, because Europe is your department.

HEATHER A. CONLEY: Thank you.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do these leaders have a right to be uneasy? And what do you see as the situation across Europe today?

MS. CONLEY: Well, yes. Europe has an enormous amount to be uneasy about. We all woke up to two very interesting interviews President-elect Trump gave to the Times of London and to the German newspaper Bild. And he said three things that struck me that we should pick apart a little bit. First of all, that NATO is obsolete. Now, President-elect Trump did say that during the presidential campaign. He also said that NATO was important to him. So we'll have to unpack that a little bit. And to think that NATO's purpose – the reason that NATO is obsolete is that its sole purpose wasn't to fight counterterrorism. I'll get back to that in a moment as well.

The second comment, he talked about that European unity, Europe itself was really not important to the United States. He focused his comments about the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union last June, that Brexit – that he anticipated more Brexits, more departure of European countries from the European Union. And then finally, he seemed to equate German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Vladimir Putin in his dealings with both of those leaders. He would see how it would go. He would see if he could build the trust.

So all three of those elements of that interview strike at the – at really 70 years of U.S. foreign policy when it comes to Europe, because NATO was created in 1949 to protect Europe from a growing Soviet threat. The European Union as the construct of European unity – this June we will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, the most massive U.S. investment in Europe, the security umbrella to protect it. Europe, in my view – and Mike and I may have a little bit of a tussle on this – I think Europe and European unity is America's greatest foreign policy success since the end of the Cold War. So to disparage it, in some ways, is to really undercut a major U.S. foreign policy objective.

And then finally, it is – I cannot comprehend by President-elect Trump would place a NATO ally in the same category as an adversary to the United States, President Vladimir Putin. And so there is a lot to unpack, but understandably Europe is very uncertain about the future of U.S. leadership. And quite frankly, I'm a little uncertain about U.S. foreign policy objectives when it comes to a strong, united Europe.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, Chris and Mike, what's the reaction so far to Trump in the areas where your expertise is? Chris, you're just back from China. Why don't you tell us what you found?

CHRISTOPHER K. JOHNSON: Sure. I think, you know, as with many other countries around the globe, there's a wondering of how to think about, you know, the various things that were said during the campaign, about China, obviously, in particular, and then Asia writ large. And the sense

I've gotten really since the election in the couple trips I've taken is that there's concern, primarily on the economic front, about possible trade moves, declaring China a currency manipulator, tariff issues, these sort of things. I would say, though, that the concerns that I've heard there – there's no panic in Beijing on this issue. They want to know if this is going to be, though, sort of, shall we say, held within bounds and not a full-court press, so on the trade issue.

I think the other strong sense really is one of opportunity, that they see the potential for a more inward-looking administration, one that certainly thinks – and Mike can speak to this much better than I – about the alliance structure differently. You know, certainly some interest in what's going to happen, for example, with our alliances with Japan, with Korea, how those are going to be potentially reshaped – you know, sort of lots of that. And then I think on my most recent trip, a very strong undertone of sort of – you know, if we think about what's happening in China domestically right now – the economy is struggling. It's a real challenge for Beijing. We have a major leadership situation coming up in the fall this year, the 19th Party Congress. President Xi is very focused on that, and sort of enhancing his stature.

And so, of course, as has always been sort of the case as the top Chinese leader, you have to demonstrate that you can manage the country's number-one bilateral relationship well. Otherwise you're going to have a lot of criticism. And in a highly politicized year, that's going to be even more amplified. So in fact, the sense that I get is that President Xi and the Chinese government, they're actually looking for a sort of a modus vivendi, if they can have it, and may be willing, actually, to give a fair amount. And so I think the challenge for the incoming administration is while this notion of, you know, if we push in certain areas we might have some leverage, it's very important not to overplay that and miss the opportunity to actually get some gain.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right. We're going to, obviously, get back to you because we want to talk about Taiwan and some of those other issues. But, Mike, how is all this going over in Japan? I found it very interesting that immediately after the election the Japanese prime minister got on an airplane and came to New York. And some people I know say he basically was just coming to find out what the policy was going to be and what is the new administration's view of its alliance with Japan.

MICHAEL J. GREEN: Well, he was coming to find out what the policy would be. And by all accounts, he came back not certain. But even more important, he wanted to establish a personal relationship with Trump. I think this is something that will distinguish different countries. In general, where there is reliable public opinion polling in Asia, which is outside of China – Australia, Japan, Korea – Mr. Trump's negative ratings are very high. And there's anxiety. And I think it's similar to Europe. The great anxiety people feel is the unpredictability, which is sort of hallmark of his way of doing business. But even more to the point, there's nothing in Mr. Trump's narrative that distinguishes democracies and allies from Russia or non-democracies. So that's kind of leveling of all countries as counterparts to make deals with is unprecedented for our friends and allies. They'd never seen it and they're nervous about it.

On the other hand, you know, Prime Minister Abe went to New York, met with Mr. Trump. They had a good – they had a good relationship – a good opening atmosphere. Other strong leaders, particularly in Asia, are going to be similar. I think Modi in India's going to be like that. Abe has close to 70 percent support in some polls. Modi is very strong. So leaders who are very strong at home can kind of buck the domestic public opinion and do well. I think Europe's problem is there aren't very many leaders who have strong domestic political support.

And the reaction against this selection is always stronger in Europe. And so they're each going to – you know, Japan, Korea, they face very real and immediate present threats and they're going to be pragmatic about it. And they're encouraged by General Mattis. They're encouraged by Rex Tillerson. And they know from history that, you know, what's said in the campaign or transition tends to change. And so like Chris described China, I think there's not a lot of panic, but there certainly is some uncertainty.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, there's always uncertainty. Isn't that the case? I mean, maybe not at the level we're seeing now, but there's – when new leaders come to any country, I mean, there's always uncertainty.

MR. GREEN: That's right.

MR. SCHIEFFER: But let's just – I just want to get to this thing with Putin. You know, is it a bromance? (Laughter.) I'm not suggesting this is true, but, I mean, some have suggested he might – the Russians may have something on him here that could be used to blackmail him. What is – and let's just talk about, what is this all about, Heather?

MS. CONLEY: Well, I wish we know. I think that's why we're going to have a Senate Intelligence investigation. And we're – this is going to take a long time. I think for me, again, based on the interviews that President-elect Trump gave yesterday saying that NATO is obsolete, the Kremlin spokesperson agreed with him completely that NATO is obsolete. And I think it sort of gets to Mike's point of sort of, OK, freeze frame that. Here you have in some ways equating those two policy views.

It strikes me analytically – putting aside the question of the interference into the presidential campaign, the questions of ties or lack thereof, just putting that aside – what Mr. Trump articulated yesterday in these series of interviews I could probably, just putting my hand over Mr. Trump's name, that's exactly the goals and aspirations of the Kremlin, to erode NATO's credibility, to erode the European Union and to conquer and divide, to get to a great power relationship on arms control where, again, it's sort of – we're back to the future and those two great powers will solve everything and they'll agree to their spheres of influence and we won't involve ourselves in each others, and we will fight the common fight of terrorism.

So I understand those are Russian interests. And they are described as such. I want to understand what U.S. interests are, because my understanding of the U.S. alliance system – based on American leadership – is that it supported U.S. national security interests. And that's what I'm interested in. How do you protect the United States? How do you grow our relationships and our alliances to make our economy grow and to protect our citizens? That's what I'd like to understand in an articulation. This is less about Mr. Putin, in some ways, and more about who we are, and what do we stand for, and what are our principles. We've taken them for granted and now we're going to have to fight for them a little bit more.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Chris, what do the Chinese think about this?

MR. JOHNSON: I think – it's interesting the way that they've sort of framed it. Early on, after the election of Mr. Trump, there was a lot of interest from my Chinese contacts on sort of, well, what's he going to do with Russia? You know how should we – how should we think about this? And I think that the tape that was playing in the background for them was effectively you can make the case that prior to the last eight years, the – there's always a U.S.-China-Russia strategic triangle. And the United

States had been sitting as the fulcrum of that triangle for 30, 40 years. Then we've had, in effect, no relationship with Russia. And that's allowed them, to some degree, to move into the center, if you will, of that strategic triangle. And they have some concern that that might change.

I also think that there is a sort of sense that – of concern that somehow Mr. Trump might be thinking about an axis, if you will, a very tactical one, U.S.-Russia, that would seek to constrain China in some way. And I think their very strong view is, A, that's not going to work, because their own sort of relationship with Russia has come as far as it has. And, two, there's a sense that they don't want to be left as the odd man out strategically in this regard. And so they're watching it very carefully.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And the rest of Asia?

MR. GREEN: Well, Prime Minister Abe's trying to build a relationship with Mr. Putin. So I don't think he's unhappy about this particularly. But I would say at a time like this, you don't have to go back to 1783, but history is often a good guide. You know, the guy Heather and I worked for, President George W. Bush, met with Putin early on, said he looked in his eyes and could see his soul. Eight years later John McCain ran and said he looked in Putin's eyes and saw three letters – K, G and B. (Laughter.) You know, Secretary Clinton did the reboot – reset button. And of course, Russian-U.S. relations couldn't be worse.

But it's not just Russia. You know, President Bush was very strong on Taiwan. But, frankly, after eight years with the Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian and very rough relations, it was a rough situation. And so, you know, relationships with leaders – and you see this, working in the White House – take on a whole new meaning when you're actually meeting them in person and when you're trying to get problems solved, and particularly if those leaders are causing the problems you're trying to get solved. So I'd be very surprised, frankly, if the relationship between Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump is the same in a year or two that we seem to see today.

MR. JOHNSON: If I could just add to that, because I think it's so important – it really, in my mind, has to do with what are the limits of the ambition of the incoming administration? Is it, we can forge some sort of tactical relationship with Russia on very discrete issues? Then I think perhaps there's some possibility there. If they think this is going to be some geostrategic, you know, reworking of the system, I think you'll find, just like the current administration has, that they'll be disappointed.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, it is interesting that at this particular point – and I think one of you made this point to me before this – we have the three leaders of the – probably the three most powerful countries are somewhat, call them charismatic – I'm not sure I would use that to describe them – but Putin, Trump, and Xi Jinping. There are great similarities there. Is – what does that mean? I mean, and then, you know, at a level below that you have Angela Merkel and then, of course we have – you mentioned the Prime Minister of India and then – and in North Korea, of course, we have what we have there. (Laughter.) What is this – you know, this – these personalities – what does that – what does that mean?

MS. CONLEY: Well, Bob, I think in part it's part of the amplification of globalization. It feels like things are out of control. Economically we can't control forces that are changing how we work and our lives. There's so much social change going on, which unsettles people. Immigration is a huge question of change of identity, of community, of sense. And so what's happening is – what I sort of call the rise of the autocrats. And it's because – you know, how does one take control? How to get

control of all this. Who made all these decisions, these – the governments, these establishment, these large multinational corporations. We want to take back control.

Now, that was the message of vote leave in the U.K. referendum. We have to take back control. And so strong, powerful leaders that can message that strong sense of I am going to fix it, that's very attractive to citizens that are, quite frankly, deeply disturbed and concerned about how their children, what world they're going to have. And so in some ways that's the instinct. But by taking control, we cannot lose sight of our values, our principles, and what makes us who we are. And for me, the most damaging part of all this – again, just to pull on Mike's comment – to equate democracies and non-democracies, that is where, I think, we have to be very clear. Because if we're equating them, and we are equating our systems, and I believe we should fight for an imperfect democracy, but fight for it all the same.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Are you in some ways sort of referring to Trump's comment when he said: I'm going to start out trusting both Merkel and Putin and sort of –

MS. CONLEY: There is an enormous difference between a leader of a NATO country and a non-NATO country, just our treaty obligations to them. We also have an enormous economic, political, social, cultural relationship. It was equating the two. It was minimizing the distinction. And in some ways an autocrat, if they wish to manage democracy or have a sovereign democracy, they like the veneer of democracy for its legitimacy, but they are not democrats – in a small-D sense. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Is this – go ahead.

MR. GREEN: I was going to say, you know, this – and I think Heather's absolutely right about the rise of the autocrat. In most countries where public opinion polling is reliable, institutions are not trusted at all. And it's the same story in Europe, in North America, in the democracies in Asia. The press, universities, religious organizations and institutions, legislators especially – legislatures all are just plummeting in public trust, and have been for a decade. The one institution that has, in most of the countries, the highest support – outside of Europe – is the military, even in Japan – pacifist Japan. The military is the most trusted institution. So these leaders – whether it's Modi or Abe in his own way or Donald Trump, are running against institutions which people think have failed them.

I think the difference with a democracy is when you win those institutions. And there's pressure to provide results. And the polling suggests Mr. Trump won not only because voters were unhappy about the domestic situation, they were also unhappy about getting pushed around in the world. And alliances are an amplifier of American power. And those voters – Republicans, a large majority, who voted for Mr. Trump because they're tired of being pushed around in the world, will recognize whether or not we're having success. And I think the success will hinge on how effective our alliances are. So I think that's going to be corrective in some of the rhetoric from the campaign. And you can already see it in what Mattis and Tillerson, and others are saying in their testimony. And seeing as our allies have no other places to go – (laughter) – we probably will get through this. But it is a very stressful time, particularly in the transatlantic relationship.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, what an unusual transition this was, though where, as you mentioned – you mentioned Mattis, you mentioned Tillerson. Where we had nominees for these high Cabinet officers who apparently totally disagree in various ways with the person who's nominated them to that office. I don't recall that. And you know, during the campaign – and as the campaign was over – we

in the press were often criticized for taking Trump literally but not seriously. And I think one reporter – whose name I can't recall now – famously said, you know, his supporters had just the opposite view. They took him seriously, but not literally.

Which raises the question to me – well, I mean, number one, from now on when we do stories should we quote the person who says it and then put in parentheses, but I don't think he means it? (Laughter.) I mean, it might be a new paragraph to put in news stories. But how do we – how does this transition shake down? I'd just like to ask all three of you. What will we see? Will these – will these office holders follow their own lights, or will they – will Trump be running the show? How's this going to work?

MR. GREEN: Well, a majority of the public wants Mr. Trump to stop tweeting. If I were his ambassador overseas, as your brother was in Japan, I'd especially want him to stop tweeting, because every morning you have to explain it. But I – personally, I don't think he'll stop because it's been very successful for him. Politically he's really dominated the news cycle every day using this technique very successfully – even now. You know, most of the headlines are about him, and probably half of those are because of a tweet. So I think he'll continue it.

I suspect if that happens, we'll have kind of two narratives coming out of Washington. And one will be from the Cabinet primarily. And then you'll have one which will be from the White House in the form of Twitter. And that's probably not sustainable for long. For one thing – I was in the NSC staff for five years. When we planned what we would do in the event of a North Korean nuclear crisis or, you know, a Russian grab somewhere in Europe, you have your military instruments, you have diplomacy, economic sanctions. But one of the most important tools we always had somewhere in our playbook was when does the president go in front of the press and say, no further. Or, you know, if Mr. Trump keeps tweeting, he's going to kind of devalue that real important tool in American foreign policy.

So I suspect he'll continue. I think others will convince him it's probably not worth continuing. And you know, our friends and allies and the Chinese and others will just sort of have to sort these out. They're not panicking, as Chris said. Nobody's panicking about this. They sort of realize this is how it's going to happen and they'll have to feel their way through it for, I suspect, a year or more.

MR. SCHIEFFER: But it seems to me that other countries – that when our government officials speak, they have no credibility unless other countries believe that they are representing the president, and that they're all on the same page.

MR. JOHNSON: I mean, my own view is this is where we're in uncharted waters here, right? Because we're all trained – and especially those of us who have been in government – (laughs) – you know, when the president speaks it matters – whatever the form of communication is. But now we're in this weird space where, to your point, Bob, about, you know, taking him seriously versus literally and all that – how do you – how do you interpret this?

And especially for Mike and I, I think, when working with Asian governments, who do really focus on – (laughs) – what gets said and in what order because certainly, like, in the Chinese system, they put a lot of effort into exactly how they prepare the phrasing. I think it's fair to say that for our – whether it's Europe, Asia, anywhere, for our partners and friends abroad, and all other countries, you can argue that the U.S. has problems staying on message on a good day. And so now we're going to have perhaps a sort of proliferation of this.

I agree with Mike. I think that over time this will be perceived as having some diminishing returns. But I think to your question about how does this all shake down, I think we're going to see what we might call phases of how this works out. And the first, it seems to me, is what does President-elect do the day after Friday, you know, and in those first immediate periods. Secondly, I think we need to – and it will tell us a lot – see how the rest of the Cabinet positions get filled out – not just the deputy secretaries but also down the food chain.

And then, third, there's this whole notion of how is Donald Trump going to run the policy process. I think that's a huge question mark. I think when people think about him running a principles committee meeting, for example – it's just sort of hard to consider how that might work. But he will have to do these things. And so I think, as Mike was saying, we're all going to have to be sort of very flexible, because we are in uncharted waters here. And it's going to take time for this to shake out.

MS. CONLEY: But I would say the third force to watch is watch Congress. I think Congress is going to play an incredibly powerful role, particularly on foreign policy, where we may actually manage to rebuild a bipartisan center on national security. And that's been missing for quite a while. So if you can see any silver lining in what is happening –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, how would that work, Heather?

MS. CONLEY: So, I mean, I'm just – my example, after there were some – you know, some views that perhaps President-elect Trump would, by executive order, eliminate sanctions on Russia. Now said they may not do that immediately. You just saw a bipartisan 10 senator piece of legislation land last week on sanctions. It was comprehensive. It was – I mean, this is where I think – and obviously Senator McCain on the Senate Armed Services Committee, on the House side Congressman Thornberry, other voices. This is where we have a chance to rebuild bipartisanship on national security. It has become too polarized, too partisan. And this is one place where it shouldn't, you know, cross the water's edge. So that's the silver lining.

And as Chris said, you know, the government is a massive undertaking. A transition is always complex, even under the best of circumstances. It takes so long to get people in place and confirmed. Because you can state, I want to do this, but you have to have the wheels of government, the leaders, the managers, to turn those wheels to make that work. And I think in some ways the Obama administration sort of appreciated by giving out a speech and saying I'd like to do this, but then actually making all of those wheels turn. That takes a huge amount of effort. If this is – this is going to be, I think, a slow transition, just getting the people and personnel in place. And other countries do not wait for us to get ourselves in line. This is going to be a very volatile, very fluid international situation.

So to me, this is a very dangerous moment. We are just – we're not going to transition quickly. There are so many questions between Cabinet secretaries and the president-elect. It just makes all of this a little more uncertain than any of us would like.

MR. JOHNSON: I think that's actually a very good point too, is that, you know, other countries aren't going to wait while we sort this out. They're going to start making decisions. And some of them already are making decisions.

MR. SCHIEFFER: In Europe, we're already – and I guess –

MS. CONLEY: Yeah. Well, Angela Merkel just said that basically: We understand that we've got to – we've got to figure this out ourselves. And this is where, you know, the more that allies or adversaries make decisions about the direction, we've already now moved into a different – you know, this may – OK, this is uncertain. But, no, this is actually – countries are making decisions. And what I sort of – what keeps me up at night is the thought that there is going to be a leader that takes a tweet literally and starts moving forces because it believes it has to take this seriously. And then we get into a 1914 – we all start moving the machinery without thinking. I mean, that's the worst-case scenario. But this is why this is so powerfully dangerous, potentially, if a country misinterprets something and believes it has to take an action to protect itself. So this is very dangerous.

MR. GREEN: And the prime candidate for that country is North Korea.

MS. CONLEY: That's it. That's it.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, let's just talk about that. So what happens now in North Korea? And Trump has said during the campaign, China's got to take a bigger role, all of that. Is this the most dangerous place in the world right now?

MR. GREEN: It is the most dangerous. North Korea is on the cusp of – some analysts think has already crossed the line – in developing and being able to deploy ballistic missiles that could strike the United States with nuclear warheads. They're probably there already with respect to Guam, Japan, Korea, our major bases and allies in the immediate neighborhood. And Kim Jong-un, the young leader in Pyongyang, has none of his father's and grandfather's ability to go up to the line and then back off. He doesn't appear to know exactly where that line is. He perhaps is feeling bolder because he has this nuclear deterrent to back up whatever provocations. And he is much more likely – and the North Korean system is much more likely – to react to a presidential statement or tweet. I was in a lot of negotiations with the North Koreans when I was in government, and their delegations would respond to New York Times stories because they just don't understand our system.

China – saying China will take care of this is – Chris and I can remember how many times someone has come in and said: I've got a solution; let's get China to take care of this. Chris can speak to China's willingness and ability to do that.

Ultimately – and I think Chris will agree – our purchase on this problem depends on, well, how well aligned we are with our allies. If we, Korea, Japan, the European allies, Australia, if we're lined up on this and there's not a lot of daylight, then China moves. Then the North Koreans are boxed in. Which is why the alliance piece of this is so critical right now, because North Korea is not going to wait.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, what does China do? Could they do?

MR. JOHNSON: No, I agree with Mike's position. I mean, I think if there is a criticism to be levied of the North Korea policy in the last several years – this is a bit hyperbolic, but in effect we have to some degree sublet our North Korea policy to China by saying you have all the leverage, please use it and help us here. And, to Mike's point, I think oftentimes what gets China motivated is the concern that they're being left out of that discussion, in fact; that their interest, their sort of weight in that is not being paid attention to. And that can motivate them. We saw this during the Bush administration with sanctions on Banco Delta Asia, you know, other things. And there's a lot of talk about secondary sanctions, how this might happen.

My concern from my discussions in China is that while all this is moving – and to Mike’s point – you know, you have not only that strike capability, you have the buildout of a notional nuclear triad coming in North Korea. You certainly have a situation where we may confront a situation where North Korea has stacked a Taepodong-2 missile and we don’t know what’s on top of it. They tell us it’s a satellite; you know, we don’t know. What do we do? And so this is a real issue.

And when I think about that, what I hear instead from Chinese interlocutors is they seem to be sort of stuck in an internal monologue that emphasizes a lot of concern about regime collapse, refugees coming across the border, you know, et cetera, rather than thinking about this is a clear and present danger to the United States; how might we – might act on this. And I think, you know, in terms of what we might see, I think you could see changes in U.S. declaratory policy with regard to – if that scenario I just described were to occur in North Korea, we may tell them, you know, we have every right to preempt, and we will. And that would certainly get China’s attention.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That we – if we said that was our policy, that we might find it necessary to preempt this?

MR. JOHNSON: It would – it would put North Korea in a very unique club. (Laughs.) Let’s put it that way.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yeah, we’ve never done that before.

MR. GREEN: There is some utility with North Korea of having a little bit of the madman theory. We’ve become far too predictable. To Pyongyang, they know when they escalate we might round up the usual suspects, go to the U.N. for sanctions, but eventually we’ll – we can’t handle the heat. So there’s something to be said for a president who is more of a risk-taker, and there’s something to be said also for a president who’s willing to increase defense spending, which is critical right now. But it’s got to be within a larger strategy that is very predictable to our allies. And if we start scaring our allies on this and they start hedging or defecting, we’re going to be in a very, very weak standing in Asia to deal with this problem.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, the point you raise about we don’t know what’s on top of that missile if they decide to put it up there, and I understand – I’ve heard from others that this is one of the things that’s most concern, including Victor Cha here at CSIS would say the same thing. The other night at this farewell dinner for Ash Carter, the outgoing secretary of defense, I asked him at one point, you know, what would we do. And he said, look, we are on a go-to-war-tonight footing for all of the forces that we have out in that part of the world, and he said we’ve been on that footing for two years at least. And I said, so what if they do fire a missile? He said, well, if we determine it’s going to South Korea, Japan or the coast of the United States, we simply shoot it down. But that’s the question, is we can’t know whether it is a satellite or not, or how – how much of a problem is that to understand what’s on top of that missile? And I would ask this second question: Are we certain that we could shoot that missile down?

MR. JOHNSON: Mike’s probably got a better view on that.

My own view is that this is an extremely challenging problem. We’re dealing with what in effect is a hermetically sealed country. I think it’s fair to say just by the nature of that problem the development of their program has outstripped, for example, the intelligence community’s assessments

of where they might be in this process. And it's a challenging – probably the most challenging intelligence target, trying to sort of figure this out.

And so you find yourself very quickly in a position where, whether you're the intelligence community or policymakers discussing the issue, you have to deal with that uncertainty. And I think, you know, given how developments have occurred with regard to the rapid development of the North Korean program, the tendency is going to be to err on the side of we have to assume it's bad. Even though we may not know for sure, we have to assume that there is a problematic piece developing here. And that's a major change in how we think about those –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you, Mike – do you think we might actually develop a policy – a preemptive strike policy? What's the likelihood?

MR. GREEN: I think we'll – I think the next administration will responsibly have to put that on the table, knowing full well that there's a danger – I'd say it's well south of 50 percent, but it's a scary scenario – that the North Korean regime might open up on Seoul and Tokyo with hundreds of missiles and thousands of artillery tubes, with a chemical and biological arsenal. We don't know how far this would go. I say it's unlikely because the next step is the destruction of the North Korean regime, certainly. And so –

MR. SCHIEFFER: I mean, there's no question in your mind we would respond, but –

MR. GREEN: Oh, it would be – I mean, it would be a suicidal move by the North Koreans.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yeah.

MR. GREEN: But their system's opaque is an understatement. There's a reason the intelligence community calls it a hard target. So it's a non-trivial danger.

On the other hand, I think preemption in the scenario where it could potentially hit the U.S. or an ally has to be on the table. But here's the thing: if you're going to put things out there like we're considering all options or things like that, it has to be very carefully calibrated and considered by the Cabinet, by the National Security Council, by the – by the Principals Committee. It can't be a sort of off-the-cuff thing, particularly if you want the deterrent effect without the danger. So all of this transition, all this process, they've got to sort this out pretty quickly, I think. And I think a lot of allies would tell them you got to sort this out pretty quickly.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Are we going to get in a trade war with China?

MR. JOHNSON: (Chuckles.) Well, you know, a lot of that I think depends. I think what we can say is that you can argue that over the 40 years of our relationship with China, since the opening or diplomatic – or the resumption of diplomatic relations, the economic relationship has always acted as sort of a shock absorber. When we run into security tensions in our relationship over Taiwan, over South China Sea, cyber – you know, there's a number of issues – that economic relationship is always the shock absorber that keeps us from tipping over into a Cold War-style relationship with China. So if that economic piece becomes scratchier, that can really be problematic.

I think again, as I mentioned earlier, President Xi, the whole Chinese system, they have a desire to keep this – you know, they don't want a fight with the United States. And in fact, the sense I get is

that, you know, whether it's the trade balance issue, agricultural exports into China, high-tech exports into China, market-access issues and so on, at least for now they're willing to sort of put a foot forward and – you know, if they can get the right noises. But they're definitely preparing a retaliation, you know, sort of approach as well. And you –

MR. SCHIEFFER: What would they do?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, you know, basically any U.S. multinational corporation that either produces things in China, has a supply chain there, or sells into that market – and many companies have both – will be high on that retaliation list. So, you know, pick your – pick your major MNC, that's the case.

And then, you know, broad communities like the agricultural community, I mean, I think a lot of people don't understand how many U.S. soybeans go to China, you know, these sort of things. And we saw a little bit of this. They just in the last week conducted some anti-dumping measures to sort of signal the administration. I was just in a panel on the Taiwan Strait just before this one and, you know, we were talking about the movement of the aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, through the Taiwan Strait. And these are sort of very strong signals, but I think there's opportunity.

And so I think the question is, when you read, you know, some of the writings of the people who, you know, seem to be holding important positions now, there's two things that come through. The first is that, you know, having a scratchier economic relationship with China, they'll be the bigger loser in that our core economic strength domestically and so on is such that we can weather that better than they can. And I think that as a premise is largely true. The risk piece is an assumption that while we may not come out of that problem unscathed, we would weather it relatively lightly. I am not sure that's the case.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Is TPP – is that dead?

MR. GREEN: Well, you know, people in the transition team have said it's dead, but I don't think it's dead. The reasons are, A, I don't think that it's TPP itself that is the problem; it's the label. It's sort of the symbolism of an international economic policy that a lot of voters thought didn't take care of them.

Number two, as Chris said, these states that helped Donald Trump win – the “blue wall” that broke down: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Ohio – these are exporting states, especially agriculture exporting states. And if you're going to grow foreign markets, you need trade agreements, and there's going to have to be some give and take. And in deals like TPP, we do very little liberalization; it's almost all on their end. And I think there are going to be – I think there's going to be pressure from within these same states, which are in polls a majority free trade, to start getting some deals going.

So the name may change. You know, they talk about bilateral/multilateral. But I don't see how, politically, you get too far without some kind of trade strategy to open markets. You can't open markets – to Chris's point, we don't do mercantilism well. We don't do protectionism well. An authoritarian system can. None of the governors are going to sign up for this. Most members of Congress and most agricultural exporters, industry are not going to sign up for this. We will suffer less in a trade war because our economy's so strong, but we're just not good at it. So I think in time some of these things will start to take new form and move forward.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So you think there will be something like TPP, maybe something by a different name?

MR. GREEN: It's going to be a couple years.

MR. SCHIEFFER: This reminds me of the solution to Obamacare. A very wise philosopher and geostrategist at our house, my wife – (laughter) – says that the solution to Obamacare is just change the name to “Trumpcare” and go on from there. (Laughter.) So it sounds like you're kind of proposing – (laughter) –

MR. GREEN: Well, a lot of our partners are joking they should call it the “Trump-Pacific Partnership.” (Laughter.) I don't think it's that easy.

MS. CONLEY: Oh! That's –

MR. GREEN: You know, there are about six or seven centers of gravity for international economic policy in this administration right now with very different views on trade. And you know, Clinton wasn't unlike that in some ways in the beginning. It's going to take a while to sort all that out. But I think that domestic interests and our international position will start to nudge us towards trade deals. I just don't know how long it'll take.

MR. JOHNSON: And I think the issue of TPP, I mean, it really gets to this core issue we were discussing earlier about how does policy get made in this incoming administration. If you look at those sort of interests, I mean, you have a situation where – I mean, take Governor Branstad, for example, who's going to be our ambassador to Beijing. He's built his gubernatorial career on agricultural exports to China. That's been huge. And so how does he manage those instincts versus, you know, what seems to be coming out of the administration?

Likewise, I think you can say that if you look at what appears to be the developing economic team, you have four or five very strong-willed, very independent sort of people. How do you – you know, who comes out on top in that sort of knife fight, if you will, over policy is very challenging. In some ways it looks like it's being sort of set up like, you know, life imitating art, something like an episode of “The Apprentice,” you know, where you have contending groups. And trying to sort out who's going to come out on top, it's a challenge.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So, Heather, there are also various kind of trade questions that are going to be coming up in your part of the world.

MS. CONLEY: Yes, indeed.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And Brexit, how do we react to that? What do you see happening in – because, after all, Europe's a pretty important trading partner to us, too.

MS. CONLEY: A massive trade and investment partnership. And it's not just China that's been caught; Mr. Trump yesterday suggested that they would – that a new administration would put a 35 percent import tariff on German manufacturing if they would move the auto sector to Mexico.

So we have a big outline this morning. British Prime Minister Theresa May outlined what a Brexit negotiation would look like. It's going to be clean and hard. It was about the U.K. is not going

to pursue the single market. The customs union looks not as well. There may be some bits and pieces that they will remain. This is going to be quite disruptive to the European Union trading pattern. And Mr. Trump has suggested that there would be – one of the trade agenda he's excited about would be creating a U.S.-U.K. bilateral trade agenda. Now, that cannot happen until the U.K. formally leaves the European Union, and it's unclear how much they would do in those two years. But I think you are going to see a very strong U.S.-U.K. trade agenda. I fear it's going to be developed as an anti-European agenda, which again sort of – you feel like you're sort of, you know, time here.

We need a strong European Union. We need a strong United Kingdom. We have to manage this carefully. And right now, both the EU and the U.K. have gotten into a cycle: the other one has to be punished for the decision that they have taken. And that is just cutting your nose off to spite your face. That's what my mother would tell me that behavior is. (Laughter.) And the U.S. has to play, I think, a role in trying to make sure that both sides come out successful, because it's going to so dramatically impact the U.S. trade agenda. So –

MR. SCHIEFFER: I want to just say we got kind of off to a late start today. I was supposed to and I always promise to wind these things up on time, which would be about 11:30, which would be about five minutes from now. (Laughter.) I thought that what I would do is – we started at 10:45. I will let it go until 10:45 (sic; 11:45). But those of you who have appointments and wish to leave at 11:30, we'll completely understand. But I do want to get to some questions from you all in the audience.

And let me just also – we're just kind of, as we used to say, hopscotching the world for headlines here. So, going from one subject to another, there's so much to talk about. Talk about this whole idea of is the "One China" policy that we have followed since the Nixon administration, are we about to see some change in that? We had the overture to Taiwan. And then somewhere along in there we need to also talk about what's happening to those islands in the South China Sea. And then, once we get those two things done, I'd love to go to your all's questions.

MR. GREEN: I don't know if the "One China" policy is going to change. I suspect not in the most fundamental rendering of it, in the so-called Three Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act.

I'm not overly worried about this, personally – Chris may have a different view – because presidents who've come in very tough on this issue – Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush – ended up with the most productive U.S.-China relationships of their era. And so there's something to be said for a little bit of sort of tough support for Taiwan going into this, in part because when you're president you don't actually have as many opportunities to work directly with the leader on Taiwan. The pattern would be, you know, that we'll probably have a more productive U.S.-China relationship for that. President Obama came in without beating up Beijing on the Taiwan issue and ended up with a pretty rough relationship with Beijing. So on that one, you know, this could turn out OK, actually, the way we're starting out.

South China Sea, you know, most of our friends and allies would say they're worried about American willpower; that, while Ash Carter's been forward-leaning, for the most part the Obama administration's been reactive and hesitant to introduce risk into U.S.-China relations over the South China Sea. Most experts would say that was a tactical mistake, and we probably need to lean forward.

But we're playing two games here. One is we're trying to show American willpower. We're also trying to show to Beijing the consequences of their action are going to be isolation in Asia. Which

gets back to the theme we keep hitting: you need your friends, you need allies. You need Europe to speak with one voice on these issues because ultimately the solution, we hope, will not be military; it'll be convincing Beijing that it's not worth the risks they're taking.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And, Chris, Rex Tillerson said during his confirmation we should actually deny the Chinese access to those islands. Is that realistic?

MR. JOHNSON: I don't think so. You know, if you look at what's happened – or, you know, you would have to assume a tremendous risk for cost because a statement like that – I mean, I happened to be in China when those – (chuckles) – comments were made, and you know, sort of got the response you might expect. And if you look at, you know, sort of Chinese media and the way they handle that, of course, you know, there's – there was strong pushback. I think it's important for the incoming administration to understand this isn't just theater for them. You know, this is real policy, and there are certain red lines.

I mean, one thing that strikes me about just what seems to be the emerging policy – and this touches on the “One China” as well – there seems to be a very strong focus among the incoming team on this – the Chinese notion of a new style of great-power relations, as they call it, and a sense that, you know, this was a conspiracy theory by China to get them to – get the U.S. to accept all of their core interests – Taiwan, South China Sea, et cetera – while basically doing nothing for us on our core interests – market access, you know, things like this, and that, you know, the Obama administration in this narrative sort of fell for that, if you will.

And so the response that's being crafted seems to be sort of so our response should be that we will begin to push back simultaneously on each one of those core interests – Taiwan, you know, South China Sea, et cetera – until they begin to acknowledge our core interests and have more balance. And I think to Mike's point – and this touches on the “One China” piece – the fundamental policy is not going to change. I don't think that's going to change because it is not a negotiating chip as far as China is concerned. What I do think we'll see is more stretching of the limits of what we can do with Taiwan under the rubric of the existing “One China” policy and that probably will touch mainly on issues of the officiality of how we handle our relations with Taiwan – you know, things along those lines.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, I hope you all have some questions. Right here. Go ahead, and here comes the person with the microphone. And, of course –

Q: Peter Hofri (ph).

MR. SCHIEFFER: – the tradition here is we ask questions. We don't make statements. (Laughter.)

Q: Peter Hofri (ph). I'm an intel analyst and a former diplomat.

Executive Order 12333 forbids the United States from aiding, abetting or conducting decapitation exercises. It's an executive order that's been renewed by every president since Lyndon Johnson. It appears that that might be a solution to problems in Syria and North Korea. Is there any chance that the Trump administration would not renew that executive order?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Who would like to?

MR. JOHNSON: I, personally, have no idea. But my sense is that's another one of these sort of, shall we say, touchstones where I think you can argue that the "machine" of the U.S. government will attempt to place constraints – handcuff, if you will – any move to move away from that would be my sense and I think the real question is does President-elect Trump kind of do what his predecessors have done, whatever their opinions might have been, and sort of accept the handcuffs that get put on or will he say, I'm different – I'm, you know, anti-establishment and reject that.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, your question reminds me we had so much to talk about today that we never got to the Middle East, which – (laughter) – that is an extraordinary situation. And you mentioned Syria. Let me just ask, Heather, where do you see those talks going? Do you think when Putin says he's now invited the United States to be a part of this what's he up to there?

MS. CONLEY: Well, the Syrian cease fire – the brokerage of that was Russia, Iran and Turkey. They hope to hold a meeting in Kazakhstan in the capital, Astana. This was done in some ways as a rejection of the United States. Europe not part of that as well. Again, it is – it is not for the sake of the relationship or the cease fire. It is the principles by which this is conducted. I think we have no idea. I'm going to be very interested to see.

For me, as I watch the Syria conflict, I focus on Turkey – Turkey, as a critical NATO ally. The Turkish-Russian rapprochement is something that we have to follow closely to understand, again, what the principles of that relationship will be. So this is going to continue to be destabilizing. Just to get back to Mr. Trump's view on NATO, you know, NATO is training Iraqi forces. Just on a counterterrorism point I should have made this – 15 years in Afghanistan on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism NATO has been working on the counterterrorism front. NATO is very relevant as it comes to protecting our NATO allies. So this is going to be an incredibly destabilizing part of the world and I worry about continuing collateral damage of neighboring countries.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right. This hand came up first. Go next here.

Q: Hi. I'm Cheng Hwe Hwa (ph).

MR. SCHIEFFER: We'd like to see some women raise questions here.

Q: Hi. I'm Cheng Hwe Hwa (ph), China Day.

Chris, you mentioned earlier that, you know, U.S. and our allies should step up to North Korea issue without China. Actually, you think just could be a viable option. But, you know, over this year the narrative has been the North Korean issue cannot be solved without the participation of China. You know, my question is really what incentive you think the Trump administration is going to offer to China to use more of its leverage on North Korea. Actually, we have Trump tweeting, like, if Russian helps in Syria, nuclear issue, we're going to lift the sanction probably on Russia. So what incentive is Trump is going to tweet tomorrow on the North Korea issue? Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Sure. First, let me clarify. I certainly didn't mean to suggest that the U.S. should be acting without China as a player. You can't on North Korea. What I was saying was that, and I think the point that Mike shared is that we have to have unity among the allies first. It's sort of an outside-in strategy, if you will, in managing the North Korea problem.

I do think that you can make the case, with some justification, that in recent years there has been a strong push on Beijing do more, do more, do more, and there hasn't been perhaps the appropriate recognition of China's own interests on the Korean Peninsula, how they think about the North Korean issue.

You can argue certain examples wherein, you know, they will agree to – at the U.N. to pursue stronger sanctions and we do that – you know, things like this. And, again, you can argue the different sides of the coin but, you know, from Beijing's perspective you can see how that would be considered sort of a letdown for them. So the policy, and this comes to some of the points we've been discussing earlier, requires this immensely fine balance in how to manage this process. But I think what we can say is we haven't seen enough activity on dealing with this. You know, strategic patience sounds good but what we've seen is the development of the North Korean problem – program to a very dangerous extent. We have to get Beijing more involved in order to be able to arrest that.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Mike, do you want to add to it?

MR. GREEN: Well, just to say I think the Obama administration has left two challenges for its successor on overall U.S.-China relations. One is in the South China Sea, to some extent, North Korea and cyberspace and steel dumping. In a lot of areas, the administration has been prudent but a little too risk averse and I – you know, if I were in government I wouldn't put it this way but as outside experts, I think a lot of people would say, we need to have a little bit more viscosity tension inevitably on these issues. As Chris said earlier about core interests, we need to stand up for our allies and our interests.

The second challenge, though, is you need that to be in the context of a vision for U.S.-China relations that's positive and constructive, and here the problem I think is more in Beijing than Washington. At various points in the Bush administration and early in Obama we had an interlocutor in Dai Bingguo. We had someone who had the leaders' trust in Beijing and so we could calibrate, put things in context, avoid strategic surprises. Chris has written very precisely on this. The decision making in Beijing now is so opaque, nobody knows who actually speaks for Xi Jinping, that we don't have the other end of the pipe and then everything we discussed about the communications on our side compounds it. And so building that kind of dual approach, which is – seems contradictory but it's not – is imperative and I don't know. It may happen but it sounds like the way this transition is going it may take a bit of time.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right. Right here.

Q: Dimitri (sp) from The Financial Times.

There's very little Asia –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Tell me – I'm sorry. I didn't –

Q: Sorry. Dimitri from The Financial Times. (Inaudible.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: It's funny. The sound in here coming back this way is very difficult. But you can hear it, I hope, as it goes out. (Laughter.)

Q: The – if you look at the Cabinet appointees, there's very little Asia experience there. A lot of the Republican Asia experts have signed never Trump letters. How worried are you that the Asia

bench in the administration is going to be very weak, and does it matter? And then, second of all, on North Korea, Trump, during the campaign, talked about the possibility of meeting Kim Jong-un. Think outside the box for a second. Is there any argument that he should think about doing that, given that U.S. policy on North Korea has failed for 16 years, at least?

MR. SCHIEFFER: You want to go?

MS. CONLEY: I'll go after a bit. Chris? (Laughter.) North Korea is out of my jurisdiction.

MR. JOHNSON: On the issue of Asia policy, I mean, I think the tricky bit is that you can argue that in the first Obama administration you had a lot of people who were, you know, had Asia experience, were interested. I think we saw that reflected in a very, in some ways, nuanced and skillful policy. I think in the second administration we've seen less of that and that there wasn't sort of a what I call generally an Asia gorilla or a China gorilla – you know, a Cabinet-level power ministry person who's sort of managing the relationship.

Historically, that model has worked very well, although we've also seen examples where people who had no previous experience in the area become interested, become smart, you know, on the area and actually turn out to be very effective. You know, it's just like in think-tank world or in government, you know, you can be too much of an expert on certain issues and sometimes it's useful to have a – just a sort of solid critical thinking, you know, practical lens looking at the problem and I think, you know, this is the – perhaps the advantage of what we're seeing with this incoming administration is that a lot of these assumptions and thinking about these issues there's going to be challenge and that could be a healthy exercise.

MR. GREEN: So you're right, Dimitri. Chris and I should have been secretary of state and defense. (Laughter.) But that's not going to happen so let me try to give you the second best. I'm, obviously, joking. You know, in a perfect world you want at least deputy Cabinet secretaries – in the Bush administration we had Rich Armitage, of course, and Bob Zoellick – who instinctively understand this region that most Americans think is the most important region to our future. Heather's right. The most important legacy of post-war failed policy is what we did in Europe.

Now it's the rise of China and the uncertainty in Asia that's going to – that's going to loom ever larger. So in a perfect world you want someone who will not sort of think that outsourcing North Korea policy to China is a good idea because they'll know what happens or who won't think, gosh, we have an awful lot going on in the world – let's reach a new model of great power relations with China so we just sort of work things with China without recognizing that completely devalues all our allies in the region. You want somebody who's not going to sort of fall for superficially attractive ideas. But you don't – as Chris said, you don't have to have Cabinet or deputy secretary-level people who do that. You need people with instincts. I would say Mattis, as a commander in CENTCOM, understands how to think about regions holistically. Big check in my – that's a big box checked.

Rex Tillerson – you know, ExxonMobil's had a lot of issues with China in the South China Sea and elsewhere. This is not new to him. And foreign policy making in Washington is a meta process. You know, think tanks, Congress, the media, NGOs, foreign governments all play a role in this. The important thing is you have people who instinctively understand, I would say, regional strategy.

The system – the international system today is under duress because we have actors in Russia, Iran, China and, I suppose, North Korea who are challenging us regionally, not globally. And so the

answer is you need grand strategists who know how to think regionally the role of trade, values, allies, and I think, at least in Mattis and Tillerson, you've got that. And then who do they reach out to – how do you plug in. So, you know, Chris and I, you know, we'll go into the next administration as Cabinet secretaries, I think, and we'll be OK.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me just – we've got to broaden that question out. What about the overall bench strength?

MS. CONLEY: So I think one of the challenges that we all had during the presidential campaign, usually we are able to, you know, assess the candidates and their foreign policy platforms and we have a sense of who is working on what team. We certainly had that on the Clinton campaign. We did not have that in the Trump team. There just – they were names –and I'll speak only personally myself – they were names and people that I had never heard of, had never had a chance for interaction.

I mean, I will take, you know, Chris' point about the fresh set of eyes. And, look, this was an election that rejected Washington and we have to appreciate and, look, we have some of that blame assigned on those of us who have been part of this process. But what you also don't want to do in getting that fresh set of eyes – that OK, a new thinking on it – you don't want to discount or disregard the 25-, 30-plus years of experience that we have all had dealing – bringing relationships with European leaders, understanding the history, which is so vital, understanding where it's going. Just like I am sure Mr. Trump would never want me to negotiate a real estate deal in Manhattan because I would have no idea, I hope that he would look at a variety of experts – Democrat, Republican, Independent, it doesn't matter – who has the knowledge, the ideas, who can get it done, who can protect and project U.S. strategic interests. That's what we need. This is a best and brightest moment, in my view. We are looking at a series of profound regional challenges that impact U.S. national security. Enough. Let's get the best and the brightest in there. We have got to figure this out and the world's not going to wait for us. So I hope that's a clarion call in building that bipartisan expert center again.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That's an excellent point. I think we have time. Did you wish to ask a question, here on the front row?

Q: Robby Harris, a former naval person and an interested citizen.

In trying to understand how President – well, President Trump will make decisions beyond ego, some observers have written that his closest advisors subscribe to a foundation of interests rather than values. And so democracy is not valued. Interests are, they argue, and that could explain the bromance with Putin, some say. So I just wonder what the panel thinks about could his decisions be based on interests as opposed to values? Is that a reasonable – a reasonable way to look at how he would make decisions?

MS. CONLEY: So –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Just go down the line and we'll let this be our final.

MR. JOHNSON: I think it is – it is potentially reasonable to see that that might be how they're – how they're thinking about the issue. I think, for me, this looks like so many areas with this issue. I think you can argue that, you know, perhaps what's been missing – I wouldn't use the term values. I'd just say what might have been missing in the last several years is a sort of realpolitik way of thinking

about the international system and a recognition that not everyone wants to play a role in this sort of globalized hand-in-hand to the future. And you can't just marginalize those people because in many cases they're serious powers in the international system. You have to acknowledge that these are, you know, in higher theory terms, Hans Morgenthau realists and that's how – and the world hasn't changed in that regard. So if we're saying that that sort of a lens could be useful I think that's right, and I worry about is the risk of overcorrection – you know, doing too much interest-based. But, you know, we're a country that does – is very proud of our values and it's always been part of our foreign policy, as I'm sure Mike's book – (laughter) – will tell us, and to abandon that would be to abandon who we are, I think, as a country.

MS. CONLEY: So my view is if we don't have a values-based approach, we can do this for the short term but we undercut our interests. It's that fundamental, and every time we have strayed from those values, and we have, we understand we are not where we need to be and we have to take our own course correction, sometimes at great cost.

I think so many of us have been trying to understand Mr. Trump and his decision making and we've sort of – everyone's reading "The Art of the Deal" and trying to understand the transactional nature of how this – but every businessman knows that every partnership is based on trust and credibility and consistency. That's the foundation of good business. And so this gets back to the trust we have is in our allies and U.S. leadership that's – and that's where our values are. So, you know, I hope that we don't get too much experimentation of the interests and the transactional behavior because it's shortsighted and in the long term it actually undercuts our own interests, at the end of the day.

MR. GREEN: Yeah. "The Art of the Deal" and the real estate – considerable real estate negotiating experience Mr. Trump has are not going to work, ultimately, in international affairs. The most important line in his book is that you have to be prepared to walk away, and if you walk away from a real estate deal it gives you more leverage the next time because they're all disassociated.

In international affairs, you can't walk away from your alliances. You can't walk away from proliferation. You can't walk away from U.S.-China relations. When you walk away, your leverage in the next deal is considerably undermined and it starts to cascade. That's why I'm reasonably confident this will – you know, this will start to be obvious.

You know, a lot of people in this administration looked to Ronald Reagan as the touchstone – I'm not sure Mr. Trump does but a lot of people going in do – and Ronald Reagan never separated values and interests. You know, his view, which was right, George Shultz's view, which was right, was that we are stronger when there's better governance in the world, when societies are more just. The person who fought that in Reagan was Al Haig and he was pushed out for his realpolitik. And the proof's in the pudding. In Asia, for example, or Europe we have far more democracies today than we did in the 1980s. In the long run, this has been a successful realpolitik strategy.

We've done surveys at CSIS – not since this election – before the election, but overwhelmingly, outside of China, Asian societies, Asian leaders want an American role – a leadership role. They – when they ask about values, the values they associate with are good governance, rule of law, democracy, civil society, not the Beijing consensus of authoritarianism. So, I mean, Heather's made a very eloquent point today about how our values are so central to who we are. I think that's right, but it's also central to our success. And so realpolitik and values really – our successes have been when we've managed to, as I think Reagan and other leaders did, combine them. And I think a lot of people – I mean, I heard that in between the lines in General Mattis and in Rex Tillerson's testimony, and I

think that's a pretty strong continuity to American foreign policy that's disrupted a little bit right now. But I don't think our general trajectory on this is going to change for too long, in my view.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, I think on that note, thank you all so much for the – and the Niarchos Foundation, TCU and CSIS. (Applause.) Thanks for coming.

(END)