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TRANSCRIPT
Event

**“Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra on
Transatlantic Security after Ukraine”**

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FEATURING
Wopke Hoekstra
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

CSIS EXPERTS
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Seth G. Jones Thank you, everyone, for coming. I have the great privilege of welcoming the vice prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of the Netherlands, Wopke Hoekstra.

In the wake of the brutal invasion by the Russians of Ukraine, the U.S. has coordinated its response closely with its European allies and partners. Many European states have acted swiftly and boldly, both unilaterally and through multilateral institutions, including the European Union. The Netherlands have been active in this response, supporting various EU sanctions packages and sending various types of military equipment to Ukraine. So the U.S.-Netherlands relationship is strong. Thank you very much for taking the time while you're here to talk to us. And I look forward to our discussion.

Wopke Hoekstra Thank you very much.

Dr. Jones Welcome to CSIS.

FM Hoekstra Thank you very much. Thank you very much. And, ladies and gentlemen, it is very good to be here and be back here in the United States. The friendship, our friendship, the friendship between our two nations begun, as many of you might know, with gunshots in the Caribbean. On the 16th of November 1776, the American ship Andrew Doria entered the port of the Dutch island of Sint Eustatius and fired a salute. The Dutch guns of Fort Orange answered his greeting. And this small exchange, in the port of a tiny island, eventually made history. It was the first time a foreign country officially recognized the young American republic. It was the first salute also to the idea of America.

And in the two and a half centuries since then, our ties have only grown closer. Although we differ in size, we are very much united by our shared values and our shared convictions. We're both democracies. We both strive for international stability. And we both believe in justice. Today those ties, the ties between our two countries, are crucially important, because today guns are firing once again, not in salute this time but in anger.

Ladies and gentlemen, occupation of a sovereign territory, killing of civilians, bombing of cities. For a long time in Europe we wanted to believe that such horrors were remnants of the past. But those hopes were dashed when Russia invaded Ukraine and war returned on our continent. As diplomats, we tend to look at a conflict through a wide-angle lens, zooming out so that we can analyze it carefully. But actually, zooming in offers an equally valuable perspective, as I recently saw for myself.

Two weeks ago I witnessed the human face of war in a former bus station in the middle of Bratislava, Slovakia. There was an old hall, filled with Ukrainians who had fled their home country. And in the microcosm of that

bus station, I was struck by a truly painful truth. Freedom and security are anomalies. Not just in the broad sweep of history, but also in our world today. Yet, I also saw something else. Ukrainians, determined. Determined to seek a better future. Slovaks trying their best to help out. I saw their shared resilience.

And if you then zoom out and look at the war from a distance. You will see a situation that actually resembles that bus station. On the one hand, of course, a picture of immense injustice. But on the other hand, a picture of extraordinary unity both within and between NATO and the EU. Unity in response to ongoing violence and the ideology on which it is based, because this war is much more – I'm sure to all of us – than just an act of brutality. It also illustrates a broader clash between two different worlds. There's a fault line running through Europe, just as it runs through the Indo-Pacific, between democracy, on the one hand, and autocracy on the other hand, between rule of law and the idea that might is right, between the conviction that alliances matter and the mistaken belief that they don't.

Ladies and gentlemen, in times of crisis we see more clearly than ever the difference between these two visions of the world. The one is held together by shared values. The other relies, clearly, on force and on fear, and in this crisis the people of Ukraine have made a very clear choice. They reject force and fear and embrace freedom and democracy. The world Ukrainians choose to belong to is, in fact, our world.

But our struggle, as we all know, is far from over. Ukraine is bravely and successfully defending itself against overwhelming odds. But it is about to face a renewed Russian offensive that could be even more brutal than the atrocities we've seen so far, and in their fight for continued independence they are asking for our help and, in my view, we must continue to help them with supplies, with sanctions, and with weapons.

And throughout this crisis, the U.S. has played a leading role as a communicator, consulting closely with European partners and allies like the Netherlands, as an analyst, declassifying and sharing intelligence and providing much needed funding, and as a trusted military leader, strengthening NATO's deterrence and defense posture.

But, above all, and it is essential to the whole endeavor, U.S. leadership was crucial in fortifying the West's resolve.

Ladies and gentlemen, in Europe, we are, once again, fully aware of our own responsibility. Over the past few weeks, we've taken steps that were thought impossible, and that was only a couple of months ago. We've excluded the main Russian bank from SWIFT. We've imposed sanctions on the Russian elite like never before.

We've transformed a European peace facility into an instrument to finance weapon supplies to Ukraine. Through this channel, we've already sent 1 billion euros worth of arms to Ukraine and an additional 500 million euros are on the way, and that is, to a large extent, in addition to what individual member states of the European Union are doing.

Last week, the EU imposed a fifth package of sanctions following the atrocities of Bucha. Ships with a Russian flag and trucks with Russian license plates are no longer welcome in the European Union. And with measures like these, we aim to increase pressure on the Russian governments and on the Russian economy.

At the same time, EU countries are investing in their own defense, in our joint defense. Even before the crisis – it seems like a very long time ago but it was only in January – the new Dutch government had already allocated an additional almost 11 billion (euros) for the Dutch armed forces and that was, if you look to the size of our country, the size of our defensive budget, the largest increase in decades, a more than 25 percent rise in budget.

And we're now working on an even greater increase to full 2 percent of our GDP as the NATO allies agreed and the conversations and negotiations on this are currently going on within the government's push for this by parliament.

And this war has also accelerated the EU's progress to geopolitical maturity. We have shown our regulatory and economic power, as we should, our diplomatic and humanitarian capability and also late, but better late than never, our growing military awareness, and when I talk to my European counterparts they all say the same thing. The EU is also a security project – ladies and gentlemen, a project that can only be successful – and let me stress it – that can only be successful if the EU and NATO work together. Indeed, the only response to Russian aggression is a joint response, a truly joint response – one that utilizes every single aspect of our joint strength, not just militarily, but also economic and politically.

There's a saying that I'm sure all the experts in this room are very familiar with – Carl von Clausewitz famously called war the continuation of politics by other means. But in our own modern world, those other means have largely been replaced by the things that tied the world's nations together – trade, financial flows, migration, and internet cables.

They give us countless options for action that falls short of war, and that is actually where the European Union can make a difference by translating its economic priority into effective action that is coordinated with NATO. Because in this age of connectivity, we do need both. We need the deterrence

of NATO's military power, and we need the EU's economic strength and willingness to use it so that we, together, can meet common challenges – hybrid threats, cyberattacks, disruptive technologies, and, of course, climate change.

The alliance and the union are two of the pillars supporting the Western world and Europe, in particular. If they stand stronger, I am convinced that we all stand stronger, and that is why it is my firm conviction that strong and ambitious cooperation between the European Union and NATO is more essential than ever.

You can't teach an old dogma new tricks, as Dorothy Parker allegedly said, and that is to me an instructive statement. When we look at our own dogmas, like the one that – the idea that the EU and NATO are incompatible, or the belief that the EU's military structures will always come at the expense of NATO, and of course the claim that European countries are sheltering comfortably under America's security umbrella without contributing our fair share, to me our unified response – our unified response to the war in Ukraine proves these old dogmas are outdated. Europe is dead serious about becoming a true security partner.

The EU made it clear several weeks ago when it presented its Strategic Compass, an ambitious plan to further strengthen EU security and defense policy, and at the heart of this document that we've put together is the realization that Europe must be able to defend its own security interests. And to this end, the EU is developing tools like a new EU rapid deployment capacity, which can be used for stabilization missions, rapid interventions, but also for evacuations. I believe these kinds of innovations are truly vital because strengthening Europe's defense capabilities will in the end also benefit NATO.

Ladies and gentlemen, one thing is crystal clear: the future is again – once again very uncertain, and that is precisely why we do need to look ahead. Because we are presented with a clear long-term challenge – authoritarianism is trying to redraw borders and attack our values. Today, in Europe – tomorrow, who actually knows where. A permanent member of the U.N. Security Council has taken an axe to the most fundamental principles of the U.N. Charter, that is what is currently going on, and we must all reckon – we must all reckon as nations of the world with this sobering fact: to restore the international rules-based order, democracies must invest heavily in their diplomatic soft power. It is up to us to build broad and effective coalitions against tyranny, and in the months and years ahead, we must continue to do all we can to support the people of Ukraine.

Because this war has the repercussions for the European and indeed the global security architecture. And one thing is very clear to me and I think to

all of us: This war, more than anything else, has managed to unite the West. We must now take further steps to strengthen our armed forces, our long-term deterrence, and our defense posture, and we must make clear that strength cannot exist and will not exist without justice. Countless atrocities, truly countless atrocities, have been committed in Ukraine. I think we've all seen the horrible, truly horrible, images. We've all felt the pain in our hearts for the victims and their families and their relatives. And that is why we must do everything we can to bring those responsible to justice.

Fortunately, The Hague has plenty of experience in dealing with war criminals. The Dutch government is doing all it can to support institutions like the International Criminal Court in their prosecutions, and in our view, the international community must now coordinate the various accountability initiatives and make sure that they meet the needs of Ukraine and the ICC. We also need strong standards for evidence so that no perpetrator will escape justice.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude. When I visited Slovakia and the Czech Republic last month, many of the people I spoke to mentioned the same name and that was the name of Madeleine Albright, who had passed away just a few days before my visit. She was a beloved member of this Center. And she was a source of inspiration – she was a true source of inspiration for the whole of Eastern Europe and for all of those individuals who wanted to change their nation's course towards Europe and also towards democracy.

So let me finish on a note that illustrates how bright the light was that Madeleine Albright shone on Europe. It was 20 years ago that she said, all work that is worth anything is done in faith, faith that the future can and must be better than the past. Ladies and gentlemen, faith in democracy, faith in our alliance, faith in our unity, and faith that together, whether it will take weeks, months, or years, we will see this through. We will see it through for the benefit of our generation and of all the generations to come.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Dr. Jones

Thank you very much for your thoughts and your note at the end about Madeleine Albright, who was closely associated with many of us, as have others in this institution that have been strong supporters of The Netherlands and the European relationship, including Zbigniew Brzezinski as well, who was here until he passed away.

So let me begin. You've raised a lot of issues that we'll deal with while we have you here and then we'll also reach out to the audience for questions that they have as well. Let me first start off on the defense side. This is what you noted, in part, at the end of your comments. The Dutch contribution has

been significant recently, with a detachment that's already in Lithuania, Dutch Patriot missile systems going to Slovakia, troops to Romania. So the first question that's really two-part is, first, are the new battle groups that have been deployed sufficient, particularly in the midterm, to strengthen deterrence along NATO's eastern flank, and how should we be thinking about a more permanent posture, NATO posture in these front-line states?

FM Hoekstra

I think actually there, there are three, maybe even four layers to that. The first is – and we indeed have been on the forefront of that – is to make sure we support the Ukrainians with as many and as necessary weapons as possible, and U.S. has done, of course, a fantastic job on that. The Netherlands has also been on the – very much on the forefront on the forward-leaning side of things in providing what we can do actually to help them out, so I think that is one.

Then the second layer is, indeed, about the eastern flank. And when you look back, we might have actually underestimated the importance of a significant presence in the Baltics, but also more broadly on the eastern flank. And the Netherlands, but also others, are making up for that now. Our troops in Lithuania have been there already for a longer period of time, but we have increased in the number. And as you rightfully said, we're also moving into another couple of countries, with Slovakia with Patriots, Romania. But we're also doing air policing in – we've been doing it in Poland. And we're also – we'll be doing it in Bulgaria. So I think that is the – that is the second notion.

Then the third is, and it is true for the Netherlands but actually for many other countries in Europe as well, now is the time to truly step up our defense spending. We already did that as a government, as I mentioned, when we started in January. But given the situation we're in, I think much more is needed. And that is the strong conviction of our parliament, also of our government. And we're currently looking into how to structure that.

And in the fourth, and that is a complicated one, I didn't mention it in the speech, but it might be good to share that with you as well. There is this theme of interoperability. Yes, it is a very good thing that, you know, Europeans now get serious about their ability to defend their own continent. And that requires increased defense spending. But we also have to become more effective. And we need to make sure we bring down the – some of the boundaries that we face in working together with the various nations of NATO in Europe.

Dr. Jones

So one additional component to that gets into – there have been a number of steps that the Netherlands has taken, that other European countries – that the U.S. has taken as well, certainly in the short term. Some are more mid-term issues. What's your – I mean, every signal I think we're seeing from the Kremlin is that this is likely to be a protracted war. We're seeing them

continue now to push out – or, pull out of that Kyiv axis, but to push in forces and to prepare for a sustained combat in the south and the east of Ukraine. So what is your sense about how long this war is likely to take? And how do we think about sustained support for Ukraine, but also for those NATO countries on the eastern flank as well?

FM Hoekstra

No one knows. I think that's the honest answer. No one really knows how long this war will take. Will it be weeks, months, or even years? But that the Russians are very serious about what they are trying to establish in the east, that is crystal clear. And our job is to make sure that we continue to support the Ukrainians with weapons and with sanctions, because that helps them on the ground, but it also helps them on the negotiation – at the negotiation table. If we want to make sure that they are in the best possible position there, they will need to be as strong as possible on the battlefield, and sanctions will need to be felt in Moscow and beyond.

Now, the bigger and much more difficult question is how this will shape diplomacy and geopolitics for the years to come. My view truly is that we have clearly entered a completely new terrain in terms of geopolitics. It is much more than just this horrific war, where the Russians don't take into account international law at all. This is also a values conflict, if you will. This will likely shape the future of Europe, the future of NATO, and the broader dynamics in the world for years to come – way beyond this specific conflict and this war.

Dr. Jones

So one of the more interesting questions, and certainly one that Moscow is watching, is the NATO expansion question. So, I mean, I think anybody living in Finland and Sweden now would be nervous – is nervous, now seeing the Russian decision to actually, A, invade, but, B, use and conduct the kind of atrocities that they have committed. So how are you thinking about the broader NATO expansion question, particularly regarding Finland and Sweden?

FM Hoekstra

This is truly a very interesting question also, because if you look at the aim – or, what we probably think was the aim of Putin, what clearly was not on his list was NATO enlargement. And in many ways, he seems to be getting the exact opposite of what he sought.

And you know, in terms of Sweden and Finland – and I've said this before, but let me share that also with you – as a finance minister – I've been a finance minister for four-and-a-half years. I had many conversations with my colleagues from Sweden and Denmark while they wouldn't join Europe and my colleagues from Sweden and Finland why they wouldn't join NATO, because to me that always seems like an excellent idea. But of course, I knew the sentiment amongst their countries, and they have always politely but explicitly said, well, you know, maybe in another couple of decades.

And this actually shows you how much the world has changed. Sweden has gone from, you know, just a couple of weeks ago a country that hadn't provided any other countries since the Finnish – Finno-Russian War of 1939 with weapons – not a single time, not even in the Second World War, only in the – in what we call the Winter War. And now they are not only providing the Ukrainians with weapons, they are also seriously contemplating to join NATO. Finland, same story.

And of course, it is up to them to decide. It is up to their parliaments, their populations, their governments to decide. But that they are now so serious about, you know – about this question shows us how much has changed in the world.

Dr. Jones

Yeah. One item that you brought up a moment ago on the sanctions issue, what is – what is your sense – there's still – you know, there's still a number of European countries, including the Netherlands, that do rely on imports of energy, including from Russia. What is your sense about how to – how to look at other options, continue to look at other options over the long run? And then also, when it comes to companies – including Dutch companies – how to pay for that, whether with rubles or euros or other denominations?

FM Hoekstra

Right. It might be good to stress – also, because I can imagine not everyone knows the exact specific situation of the various European countries – that, first, we have been very much on the forward-leaning front of the sanction discussion. From the very beginning, we have said there are no taboos and we're open to looking into any – literally any sanction that could be applied, as long as we keep this group of European and North American countries together, because unity is, here, truly the first commandment.

That is also true for the domain of oil and energy and coal. Our dependency on Russia is actually quite limited if you compare it to some of our European friends. So, therefore, from the beginning we have said that we would be open to look into it provided the others could see this through as well. And I think there, actually, the question becomes a bit more problematic.

For some of our friends, particularly in Eastern Europe and particularly if you look into gas, their dependency at least a couple of weeks and months ago was almost, you know, 80 percent. So it's a short-term victory to then actually cut that off, hopefully in full unity, but then in another two days you are not able to heat the houses, to heat the hospitals, and to heat the schools. And we know, you know, what that would do also to unity and the solidarity in the slightly longer run.

So what we need to do is actually two things. One, see how we – how there are at least subsets of, you know, hitting the Russians on oil and gas and coal

in a way that all the others can live up to as well; that also the Eastern European countries can really bear.

The second thing we need to do – and it is not so much about sanctions, but it is about articulating a path to zero, making sure that we become independent of Russian gas and oil. And for some, that will be a trajectory of months. For others, it might be years. But the Netherlands and other countries are dead serious about this. Never again the same mistake as 10 years ago, because 10 years ago we actually promised ourselves in the Netherlands and in many other countries, you know what, let's become energy independent. And we did the exact opposite. We only became more dependent on Russian energy because it was there; because it was cheap; because, well, you know, alternatives were difficult. So let's make sure we now finally get this right.

Dr. Jones I want to turn briefly to another subject you brought up in your comments, and that was war crimes.

FM Hoekstra Yeah.

Dr. Jones The Russian brutality in Ukraine has been significant. There have been early documentation of the – of atrocities. There are two questions here that would be interesting to get your thoughts on.

One is, how would you foresee an investigation going? I mean, I could foresee, for example, evidence built and analyzed on individuals that committed war crimes, including orders that were made to commit specific types of war criminal activities.

But the second is, how do we get around what will almost certainly be a challenge where the Russians are not going to cooperate in any kind of investigation, including handing over anyone that – where there's significant evidence? And I'm sure that there'll be support from countries like China to back the Russians up, just because they've been involved in atrocities themselves in places like Xinjiang in China. So how do you think about what needs to happen in an investigation? And second, the compliance issue along those lines?

FM Hoekstra They are very good questions. And to be fair, there is no easy answer to it. But let me start with the why. I think we see the why right in front of our eyes when we see these images. And everyone who has, you know, studied or heard from – heard from relatives about the Second World War, or has seen what happened in Yugoslavia, knows that we – after the Second World War, but also after former Yugoslavia and the atrocities that we've seen there, knows that we have said never again. And we are seeing on European soil the echoes of that brutal past – atrocities, war crimes, innocent civilians,

innocent children hands tied behind their back, sometimes signs of torture, and murdered in cold blood.

And we owe it to the victims. We owe it to their families. We owe it to future generations. And actually, we owe it to ourselves, because this is also what we stand for – or, do not stand for, to make sure that we see this through, and that we bring those responsible to justice. Is it going to be easy? No. It's going to be incredibly difficult. I was – I invited Prosecutor Khan to a meeting with the European Foreign Ministers last Monday. And he was very explicit to the whole group that actually under normal circumstances, whatever they may be, when you are investigating these types of crimes, he said, this will take years. Years. And in this situation, it will probably be even longer. It will be also very difficult to make sure you actually bring these people to The Hague.

On the other hand, we are already collecting evidence. That is one of the beauties of the 21st century. Everyone has a cellphone. We're seeing evidence. Evidence is being distributed. Individual countries, individual citizens, hold bits and pieces of information that could be used –

Dr. Jones We see the satellite imagery, too.

FM Hoekstra That is extremely helpful. And you're fully right, we are a long way from having those responsible in The Hague. But you know what? The same was said until the very end about Mladić, about Karadžić, and about many of the others in former Yugoslavia. So success is not guaranteed, but we do have the obligation to make sure we get as far as we can in making sure that justice will be done.

Dr. Jones And I think that will be important. One of the aspects of the brutality that has been committed in this war is also the movement of individuals internally, internally displaced persons, but also the refugees. So how – the numbers I've seen in the Netherlands have been – or, that the Dutch expect to see up to 150,000 to seek shelter in the Netherlands. I've talked to some already there. How are you planning to manage the increase in the number of refugees coming in from Ukraine? And, as part of that, manage the population not just there but also in Europe. The Syrian experience did – we saw a nationalist pushback on some immigrants allowed. So how are you thinking through how to deal with what may continue to be a rise in refugees?

FM Hoekstra It starts with the notion that not only politicians see, but that also our populations express, that, you know, we have always said that, of course, there is the obligation to help out refugees, but there is a very specific obligation to harbor those who live in your own region. And that is something that many European countries, including the Netherlands, has

always – have always put front and center. This is our region. This is our region. And therefore it makes all the sense in the world that in Poland, and I really have to commend them for it, in Slovakia, in the Czech Republic, in Romania, in Moldova, and in many other places people are really, with open arms, trying to help out particularly many young women and children, because many of the men are actually staying there to fight.

We, as Netherlands, absolutely want to do our fair share. My sense is the numbers will also increase in Northwestern Europe. Many Ukrainians have first fled to families – family members and relatives who mostly live in Eastern Europe. But there will be – there will be more to come, because the war is – this war is so horrible, and there are so many people on the move. And I think we do have to make sure we provide these people with shelter and with a living also in the Netherlands. But you are right, there are also – this will also have repercussions for how we deal with migration in the future in Europe. And it is – it is hard to draw, you know, the final lessons of this crisis and future crises, but my sense is that Europe truly has to work also on a European solution when facing another refugee crisis.

Dr. Jones So one – actually, if I can encourage anyone that has any questions to – we have a microphone here. Please come up to the microphone and then I'm happy to go to you. But let me just ask one question beforehand. And that is, how does the Netherlands view its evolving relationship – you touched a little bit on this in your remarks – between both NATO, which there is a critical component to that, as well as the EU and the common foreign and security policy, and then the defense side as well? So how do you see the invasion impacting how you think about both NATO and the European Union?

FM Hoekstra The interesting thing – and, again, that is something that was clearly not on Putin's wish list, is that these two institutions worked together much better than actually anyone anticipated. I have now had a number of meetings of the European Union where actually NATO partners, including the U.S., including Secretary Blinken, were present. And we have also seen a number of NATO meetings where all the NATO foreign ministers were. And they were then accompanied by my colleague from Sweden, my colleague from Finland, and in some cases also our colleagues from Japan, from South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. And sometimes in one week we first had a European meeting, but then with many of the NATO allies, and then we had a NATO meeting with a number of the EU allies, including always or in many cases the high representative of the EU in the NATO meeting and the secretary general of NATO in the EU meeting. And that signals that we have to make sure that these two institutions seamlessly work together.

They both have a different role in life. NATO – it is crystal clear what NATO is all about. It is also clear that the European Union is there for other purposes.

But we – what we do need to make sure is that the European Union grows up in geopolitical terms, so that Europe actually has two feet to stand on. NATO is one, and that is about, you know, the pure defense side of things. The geopolitical leg that is also about the economy, that is also about espionage, that is also about the challenges that we face from Russia that are not strictly militarily but also from China and other places. Those are the two legs we will need to stand on.

And other than sometimes some people in Europe think the Americans, in my view, have – are encouraging this. The Americans are encouraging us to take responsibility for geopolitics, for defense, and all the other difficult things in the safety and security domain.

Dr. Jones Yeah. You noted espionage, and we have got a question from the audience but I do note that the Netherlands expelled 17 Russian diplomats recently, accusing them of espionage. So that is clearly an issue to deal with as well.

But why don't we go to the question here for –

Q Hi, Minister. Thanks for coming and for your remarks.

So you talked about this quite a bit in your speech and also in the Q&A, the importance of transatlantic unity on this. So if we're talking about a protracted war in Ukraine, we have to be sure that we keep up on both sides of the Atlantic the political will to sustain the strong response that we've seen so far. So I was hoping you could tell us a little bit about what aspects of U.S.-European collaboration going forward the next year or so you think need to be strengthened or reinforced to ensure that we keep up this response and do it coherently.

FM Hoekstra It's a very good question because the – now that the war is hot, there is a clear imperative for everyone to work together and to do – and do the right thing. Our obligation is to make sure that we continue with this; that we not only use this momentum, but also follow up on this. And what helps there, by the way, is that many countries in various domains make longer-term commitments – these commitments on defense are not one-offs, they are for years to come; the commitments on sanctions are there until we all agree that they shouldn't be there anymore, and then they are not over when the conflict, the war might potentially be frozen; the whole collaboration between the EU and NATO will continue; the whole collaborative approach also with our friends in the Indo-Pacific will continue. So that is the – that is one of the good aspects, I think, for the cooperation between the friends in North America and in – and in Europe. Many of the – of the effects of this specific war and this specific crisis will be longer term, will shape our joint destiny, will shape our joint future.

Dr. Jones Thanks for the question.

And it's a good segue to conclude. We're out of time. But I just want to reinforce a thank you for coming here to talk about what is a critical subject. I think one of the things that has been a pleasant surprise – not a surprise, but a pleasant development over the last year or so is a improvement, an increase in the ties between the Netherlands and the United States, and the U.S. more broadly with its European allies and partners. And I noted with your pin that you are wearing that on your - wearing that on your jacket to –

FM Hoekstra Proudly wearing it on my jacket.

Dr. Jones Proudly wearing that, the Netherlands-U.S. joint support.

So thank you very much for coming. We really appreciate the time here, and thanks for everything you're doing for Netherlands, U.S., and more broadly European relations.

FM Hoekstra Thank you very much. And indeed, I'm very proud of the pin. I got it from the chargé d'affaires in The Hague.

For the Netherlands but also for me personally, it means a lot to be here and it means a lot to have this excellent friendship with the United States, which has been such a great friend and ally throughout the centuries. And let's make sure we keep adding to that – to that friendship, to that collaboration, and to that alliance. That is – that is very important to us, I think also to the U.S., and we only make the world a better place if we do so. So thank you.

Dr. Jones Great. Thank you. (Applause.)