North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Transatlantic (In)Security

Panel discussion at the Brussels Forum organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States with NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller
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UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Ladies and gentlemen please welcome anchor for CGTN America Ms. Asieh Namdar.

[Applause]

ASIEH NAMDAR (Moderator, Anchor CGTN): Hello everyone. We are here today to talk about insecurity along, between the continents. Transatlantic insecurity and we have a panel of distinguished guests which I would like to introduce. We have Rose Gottemoeller, Deputy Secretary General of NATO. Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin. Henri Schricke, Special Advisor International Relations Ministry of France. Last but not lease Soli Ozel, Professor at Kadir Has University in Istanbul. I believe as a moderator I should do minimal talking so I'm not going to talk a whole lot. I will ask questions, I would love to get you the audience engaged as much as I can. I see familiar faces, so nice to have you all here with us. My first question is: U.S. President Donald Trump, when he was campaigning he called NATO obsolete. Is NATO obsolete? Is NATO capable of meeting the threats of 21st century, especially in regards to terrorism? Rose I'm going to begin with you.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER (NATO Deputy Secretary General): Well it won't surprise anyone that I can going to say, yes of course NATO can tackle the threats of the 21st century and has been doing so already. I actually wanted to start out by quoting George Robertson: After the very, very first time that Article Five was invoked by the alliance, this was after the 9/11 attacks when George Robertson said: yet again today the United States of America can depend on its NATO allies in the fight against international terrorism. This was in 2001, so NATO has been fighting terrorism and fighting it hard in Afghanistan, in Iraq by training the Iraqi Security Forces. It has been tackling this problem hard. In addition to which, you know that 2014 was a watershed year, that was the year not only that we saw the rise of ISIL and their takeover of Mosul, but we also saw the seizure of Crimean territory by the Russian Federation. And so we've also been responding quickly to that threat by bringing deterrents and defence to bear in Europe once again. The quintessential mission of the NATO alliance, cooperative defence, once again for the first time since the Cold War being brought to bear in Eastern Europe rather quickly. So we voted among the allies in Warsaw this past summer to step forward and bring four battalions, four battle groups to Eastern Europe to the Baltic States and to Poland and within the year they are there, they will be arriving, they are arriving

there even today and will be in place by mid-summer. So I would say that NATO has been not only responding to the threats of the 21st century but also when it needs to casting its eye backward to the 20th century and responding to threats in a very concerted way. So that would be my answer.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Thank you Rose. Senator I have to ask you to respond to that. Is NATO obsolete?

RON JOHNSON (United States Senator, Wisconsin): Oh absolutely not and of course General Mattis now our Secretary of Defence said if NATO didn't exist we'd have to create it. 9/11 obviously was a seminal moment in America, it shocked I think the world, it certainly shocked Americans and of course what did NATO do? For the first time it invoked Article Five and said that we were all under attack and they responded. Now there's no doubt about it, in America foreign aid is probably the most unpopular form of spending, defence spending is not all that popular either. I mean we'd rather spend it on ourselves, not having to defend things but it's absolutely necessary. And so when Americans see repeated reports for example that NATO members don't hit their 2 % that kind of concerns them. It creates the kind of public pressure maybe not to support NATO but nothing could be of greater folly. One thing that I think Senator John McCain pointed out quite nicely yesterday is, NATO of course has shown its participation, its support far more in just what it spends on defence. Because its sons and daughters have also sacrificed in the defence of our freedoms, of our liberty, of national, of world security and safety and stability. So it's extremely important to understand the whole equation but I think one of the messages obviously Senator McCain and I brought here, just coming here was the support, certainly in Congress and I believe in America for NATO, for the European Union. We are the western democracies, we are the bulwark that will provide peace and security and safety throughout the world and we have got to hang together because this is the most successful alliance in human history. It has produced a stable and peaceful, a whole Europe and really, really will help provide peace and stability throughout the world. So no, absolutely NATO is fully relevant and incredibly important.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Thank you Senator. Professor I'd like to turn to you. Turkey of course is a member of NATO; it also wants to be part of the European Union. Where do things stand as far as those negotiations go at this point?

SOLI OZEL (Professor of International Relations, Kadir Has University, Istanbul): Turkey and the European Union.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Yes sir.

[Laughter]

SOLI OZEL: Well, first of all today is the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and I guess the hopes that were invested in that treaty were realized and then it seems to have gone downhill since then and I'm heartened by the Senator's affirmation that the United States still

or at least the administration still cares about the European Union since it really doesn't sound like they do. But I guess the European Union will also have to rise to that challenge.

ASIEH NAMDAR: I'm going to move out of the way in case.

SOLI OZEL: No, no, no, it's not, it's…

SOLI OZEL: Look, look my view is when NATO was founded or when the Cold War began we were at a genesis moment. Turkey has played an important part in that genesis moment in how the new world was going to be shaped. We are again in a genesis moment and there are things that NATO can do as it does and there are certain things that I think NATO is not really equipped to do unless it changes the way it looks at things, the way it organizes itself and what have you. And whether or not the European Union is going to be a partner in those challenges, is going to be an important matter. Turkey's relations with NATO have always been far more intimate I guess than the relations with the European Union which is a long history of a lot of bickering, a lot of double talk, but quite frankly at the end of the day those relations prove to be very resilient. You asked me about where the negotiations stood, they stand, they have been standing in a coma for some time. The good thing about the coma, you can always get out of them, the bad thing about comas is that…

ASIEH NAMDAR: You may never wake up.

SOLI OZEL: Is that you may never wake up, exactly. And right now there is a lot of uncertainty and the title of this, of this panel is of course the, a world of insecurities, and in that sense I think we will have to see whether or not 60 years on the European Union will be able to actually reshape itself and I guess we'll have to wait for the French and the German elections and then what kind of relation they will want to have with Turkey as well as what kind of relation with the European Union Turkey will want to have. Increasingly a lot of people think that rather than looking at the accession process which itself doesn't seem to be going anywhere we have to look at other venues where Turkey and the European Union can actually cooperate. That already happened despite all the criticism on legal grounds and on ethical grounds. I think the refugee deal has stuck and there may be other issues on which Turkey and the European Union can work but both with the EU and NATO the Turkish complaint is that allies or "would be allies" do not necessarily appreciate the kind of threats that Turkey actually faces. And the others claim that Turkey is not sensitive to their concerns. So my view has been for a long time now both within NATO and with relations with the European Union, Turkey and the allies will have to figure out a new language with which to communicate because the old language in my judgement doesn't really work now.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Henri let me move on to you. A lot of talk in Europe, around the world, whether immigration policy has created a sense of insecurity in Europe. Does there need to be more restrictions of refugees and immigrants? And I know this is a very volatile, sensitive issue, people either feel strongly one way or another.

HENRI SCHRICKE (Rear Admiral, Special Advisor International Relations Ministry of Defence, France): Okay I have to admit I was not prepared at all for that kind of question.

ASIEH NAMDAR: I like to surprise my guests.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You sure do.

HENRI SCHRICKE: I know, you told me before.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Yes.

HENRI SCHRICKE: So thanks a lot for that.

ASIEH NAMDAR: You're welcome.

HENRI SCHRICKE: Do you mind if I don't really answer your question?

ASIEH NAMDAR: No you have to answer; you have to answer to some capacity. I'm counting on you.

HENRI SCHRICKE: Okay thank you. Now, now first of all I would just would like to throw some thoughts on maybe defence and security subjects because what you told us, help me introduce that. First of all let's discuss a little bit about Russia. I know it's not immigration.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Okay as long as you answer my question, so.

HENRI SCHRICKE: One day, one day.

ASIEH NAMDAR: No it has to be today.

HENRI SCHRICKE: Okay, so, what about Russia. Russia, is it a [inaudible] partner, [inaudible] at least that's what one of the more controversial speaking subjects is between Paris agreement, it's the same in the U.S., it's the same in many countries. So let's go back to 2014, not the Middle East but in Ukraine and Crimea. That was a shocking surprise more or less for all of us, that was a wakeup call for sure for Europe, for NATO. Why? Because at the tactical level at least we didn't see it coming and what a mistake I would say, no one, no one signal, poor situational awareness. But more important, at a strategic level that just demonstrated the fact that we have been sleep walking more or less into the 21st century. At least in the defence domain, for sure in more, in other secondary domain like immigration and things like that. We didn't see anything coming. And back to defence I think that until 2014 in most of countries defence, defence procurement were type of words, these subjects we have not discussed in general elections. If I take the example of France, I'm pretty sure that five years ago we never, I mean defence matters we never have been discussed in a primary elections. Why? It was in [inaudible], via socialist or left wing primary debate. So since then, since then my concern is that NATO and most of its [inaudible] organization have been a default mode which is mostly reaction or reactive mode and we have to change that. We are

trying to demonstration a cohesion, we are trying to demonstrate our capability to deter and that's the work of NATO but maybe if I want to be a little bit provocative and I've been, that first day with some of you already, maybe the only thing we have been demonstrating so far is our fear. Our fear because we do not trust our capabilities yet or still. We do not think we are up to the challenges of the 21st century and our cohesion as a result is quite fragile. The same applies for immigration by the way. So that was the dark side of what happened since 2014, what is the light side of it? First of all defence, procurement, military operations are not anymore taboo words. It's amazing to see all these political leaders being a war leaders, or ready to become war leaders. The other thing I see is any new government feels the need to publish, to advertise its ambitions with respect to defence and security. That means to publish a white book, to publish a strategic review and so on and so forth. Even the German narrative has changed a lot with respect to military operations. Tomorrow for example, or tomorrow, the day after tomorrow German forces or Germany will be the first contributing nation in Mali. I come to a close, so I think that the first thing that we have to do and that applies to defence, that applies to immigration, we have to trust much more what we are able to do, we have to regain confidence and keep in mind that NATO and EU are just tools once we have regained confidence.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Thank you and my apologies if that question caught you off guard. Your English is excellent so please don't worry about your English. I would like to get the audience involved in our next question. Let me ask the question first and you need to go on your gadget, on your iPad and based on what you say we'll get the reaction of our distinguished panel. And the question is, who or what do you see as the biggest threat to transatlantic security? Number one, Putin, number two, terrorism, immigration or Donald Trump?

It's technology.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Well those are some very interesting statistics up there. Senator I'm going to start with you on this one.

RON JOHNSON: Happy to. First of all let me go back because you've got immigration listed on there, I would put that as the lowest.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Well it came as the lowest.

RON JOHNSON: I know and so I would agree with that.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Yeah, yeah, okay.

RON JOHNSON: You know…

ASIEH NAMDAR: I know what you're not gonna agree with.

RON JOHNSON: So I'm chairman of Homeland Security Government Affairs. We have four top goals, priorities in my committee. Border security, cyber security, protecting our critical

infrastructure, of course that has a cyber security component, and combatting violent extremists no matter what the cause. So if you take a look at the border obviously I would put terrorism number one, I'd put Putin number two and the, immigration in terms of the migrant flow in Europe is a result of the terrorism and let's face it Putin's aggression together with Iran totally destroying Syria. So I think you have to look at the root cause of this issue and rather than and I think this has been the reaction, the first reaction of Europe is you know listen we are all compassionate, we all have humanitarian goals but rather than saying: Lets welcome all the migrants in here why don't we address the root cause and solve the problem in Syria. Let's try and reduce the flow of immigrants trying to escape that slaughter, that genocide.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Senator I don't mean to interrupt you.

RON JOHNSON: Oh I'm sorry.

ASIEH NAMDAR: But these, these numbers don't reflect what you're saying, at least not in this crowd.

RON JOHNSON: Well…

ASIEH NAMDAR: I mean Donald Trump and Putin…

RON JOHNSON: Donald Trump, that has been whipped up by the press.

ASIEH NAMDAR: That's what I want you to address. Explain that to me.

RON JOHNSON: Well I, I guess you can explain it in one word, tweets. Okay, but…

RON JOHNSON: But, but if you want to have, again if you want to have some comfort, okay understand, take a look at who Donald Trump has appointed as Secretary of Defence, as Secretary of Homeland Security, I would argue Secretary of State. He's surrounded himself with people of accomplishment. Secretary Mattis is the one who said if NATO didn't exist we would have to create it. So kind of, I know it's hard but ignore the tweets, take a look at the substance, take a look at the substance of Senator McCain and myself coming here. Take a look at the substance for example of congress, two congresses ago voting unanimously, I mean unanimously for lethal defensive weaponry for the courageous people of Ukraine and then reaffirming that with a resolution in the last congress. So we have multiple branches of government, it's not just the presidency, it's also congress, it's also the leadership of people like Senator McCain but it's also the leadership of the American people who like so many of our partners here in NATO have sent their sons and daughters halfway around the world to not only defend our freedom, but let's face it to defence the freedom, the peace and stability of people whose cultures have given rise to our enemies. Now that's what the United States has done, that's what NATO does, that's what our European partners do. So again, what gives me hope are the people of our countries who have big hearts, who have great compassion, who have sacrificed their sons and daughters and their treasures for peace and

stability. Leaders come and go, but what remains constant is the big hearts and the service and the sacrifice of the world population quite honestly, particularly western democracies.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Rose are you surprised by what you see on the screen?

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: Well I wanted to give a kind of nerdy answer to this.

ASIEH NAMDAR: [Laughs], you're allowed.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: I'm, I'm not what you would call an expert on writing surveys but I do know that a lot in a survey depends on how the question is asked, right? And it's too delicious to put Mr. Trump on the same list with Mr. Putin, terrorism and immigration and I'm sure the audience had great fun with that. So I'm just calling into question, you know the Brussels Forum and methodology in this case.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: I think I would have done the question a little different, thank you very much. But I did also want to agree with Senator Johnson. Again you won't be surprised probably but I think it is really important and we've seen this at NATO, the strength of the national security team in this administration is admirable. Within a very short time of their coming into office they sent Secretary of Defence Mattis to NATO with, and this has been in the press a lot so you've heard, yes he had a very reassuring message. But more than that he engaged very seriously and intently with the NATO allies showing that he has roots in NATO. He himself was one of the commanders at NATO for the transformation command, so he knows the alliance inside and out and showed it in the way he engaged the substance early on in January and within three days we had Vice President Pence coming who also from his time on Capitol Hill had worked a lot of these issues and was totally engaged with the kind of agenda the alliance and what we need to accomplish. So I think that's how I'm going to answer this question, that I think you need to check your methodology.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Okay, alright.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: A biased poll.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Okay. Professor I'm going to turn to you. Turkey has a referendum coming up next month. Should the world be worried? Should NATO be worried about the potential results of this election, which many say could make President Recep Tayyip Erdogan more powerful than ever before?

SOLI OZEL: If the, if the result of the referendum is a yes, yes he will be more powerful than ever.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Is that a source of concern for NATO, for European allies?

SOLI OZEL: Well, I think the European Union is on record and it has expressed itself that after a yes vote they will have to reconsider Turkey's accession negotiations and if, if the

Europeans in their usual lethargic complacent manner don't do it. I think their publics will put a lot of pressure and I can see the newspapers, [laughing], doing, doing just that. But I guess recalibrating that relation is not going to be an easy one. As far as NATO is concerned, well, Turkey had three military coups, in 1960, in 1971 kind of semi military coup and in 1980 which was pretty brutal. I didn't hear much of a peep from NATO. NATO actually lived very happily with a dictatorial Portugal, a dictatorial Greece and militarily ruled Turkey before. I don't see that this would change. It would only change if Turkey did things that NATO as a collectivity did not really like and that is going to show itself possibly in Syria. Turkey does have a security concern there, it does not want the organization PYD and its militia, which is affiliated with the PKK against which the Turkish Government has been fighting since 1984, to actually create a corridor controlled by it to the south of the border. That is not how the allies see it, it's a legitimate concern independent of the rightness or wrongness of the Turkish policy vis a vis Syria's Kurds, how we handled it and stuff. And those are all generating problems in terms of how reliable the Turks see NATO to be and my understanding is a lot of people in Washington and maybe in other capitals are wondering how reliable Turkey is for NATO. That is not a good way of being in an alliance so I will end with what I said in the previous question, that is we really have to sit down and figure out what it is that actually brings us together and obviously we have very, we have differences of opinion on many matters, how can we reconcile those differences. You raised your question, the first thing you said should the world be concerned?

ASIEH NAMDAR: I wasn't, it wasn't trying to be a leading question by the way, it was just a very honest question. Rose didn't like my other question, now you don't like this question.

SOLI OZEL: I didn't say I didn't like it, I was just going to…

ASIEH NAMDAR: You were getting ready to say it.

SOLI OZEL: I think a turkey which is a mediating nation where, you know Turkey's qualities, what made her very valuable in the first decade of the 21st century, were, that it was a secular democratic capitalist country with a Muslim population that is a member of NATO and seeking membership in the European Union. It, that combination doesn't exist anywhere and that's what made Turkey precious and in that decade Turkey appeared to be actually using all those components in a rather agile manner, put it all together. And if Turkey moves away from that, I think it's going to harm its own interests and I think it is also going to be a problem for the rest of the world yes, if not the rest of the world then certainly the alliance.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Thank you professor. Before I, Henri I want to ask a question about Brexit but once again we have one of those polls. So let's put our Brexit poll on the screen. Very easy one, is Brexit just the beginning? Are we going to see this? Yes. Yes, no and of course I don't know. And then I would like Henri for you to start, depending on what the answer is. Is Brexit just the beginning, will other EU countries follow?

Wow. Yes 21 %, nearly 61 % no, 17 % don't know. So Henri I have to ask you your reaction first but I also want you to talk about this wave of anti-establishment populous movement we've seen across Europe. The vote failed in the Netherlands, but what about the rest of Europe? And of course in your country you have elections coming up and the world will be watching. [Laughs].

HENRI SCHRICKE: Thanks. Pressure, I feel the pressure. Okay, was it no, I think that the other EU country may not follow as long as it doesn't seem too easy for the UK to negotiate. The real issue is, as I understand it, is that we'll have to wait until the end of 2017, I mean the end of the German elections to know exactly what the discussion is between the UK and the EU. What I fear is this period, you know let's say six month period when populism may use that because yeah, it looks too easy. Discussing with some friends that's in the banking sector, there's another risk there, which is, everyone told us if Trump is elected this is the end of it, you know the market will fall, everything like that. Then oh sorry first it was Brexit, so with the Brexit market may fall, this is the end of Europe, this is the end of London [inaudible]. Ten months later nothing has happened, more or less, so the same applied for Trump, if Trump is elected then people will not trust the U.S., markets will stumble, nothing has happened. So what we can fear today is that people may dare to vote for a populist party because nothing happened, there is no worst case scenario happening anymore, or it looks like there's no worst case scenario. What I understand nevertheless is that markets for example are well disconnected from real life and one day we may have a very bad surprise, the day everyone is waking up. So that's one aspect of it. I think populism is totally different today than it even was maybe 10, 15 years ago so Marie Le Pen…

ASIEH NAMDAR: Is she going to win?

HENRI SCHRICKE: I would say depends who is in the second run.

ASIEH NAMDAR: [Laughs].

HENRI SCHRICKE: No it's a tricky question. It's a tricky question because more than 40 % of French population doesn't know yet for who they, for one votes, that's first thing. Second thing…

ASIEH NAMDAR: You mean they're undecided is what you're trying to say.

HENRI SCHRICKE: Yeah undecided. Second thing is, looks like many, many young people are ready to vote for Marie Le Pen, which is brand new, that is what my [inaudible] tell me, they tell me that you are underestimated, much on social network young people are supportive of Marie Le Pen. Not sure I like that but that's the case. So maybe the question is, who will show up on the poll, on the day of the poll. That's really the question, so who will show up for the very first round because after that it's too late anyway. So pending who is on the second round Marie Le Pen will be elected or not. I try to answer your question, so the future is within the hands of the young ones.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Thank you Henri. I have one or two more questions and I'd like to open up for the audience to ask whatever they like, but I'd like to move on to Syria. Very, very complicated issue, some might argue there are simply too many cooks in the kitchen. Can at this point Turkey, Iran and Russia with the peace talks in Astana offer the best chance for peace in Syria? Rose I'm going to begin with you.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: No, many of you around the room know that I worked for President Obama, I worked for the previous administration, my boss at the time, John Kerry, made a huge run at this issue with Minister Lavrov, worked very, very hard at the diplomacy. I am American enough to believe that there cannot be a serious and abiding solution to conflict frankly around the world unless the United States is involved and using its influence for the good. So I think it will be important and what has disturbed me about the procedure and processes going on lately is that not all parties are coming to the table. It's always been difficult to convene all of the many groups that are involved because many of them are terrorist organizations, some of them are terrorist organizations, some of them have not been able themselves to get together and agree to join in the discussions and some are at such opposite sides of the issue that there could be no consensus about their joining the process. So it's been extraordinarily difficult to put forward and carry out a process that I think would hold weight and hold water over time to address the crisis that has ripped Syria apart, the civil war that has ripped Syria apart over the last several years. So I think really we need to, you know look forward at this point. I know the Trump administration is still reviewing its policy and trying to you know figure out how they want to jump in on these difficult crises and Syria is only one of a number of difficult crises, we could talk about North Korea for example, that's another very difficult crisis, but that of course is far from Europe so. But I would say that the mix isn't right at the negotiating table now and for that reason I see no hope of it succeeding.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Senator does the Trump administration have a policy when it comes to Syria?

RON JOHNSON: Well, again the Trump administration is just standing itself up, we've confirmed some secretaries and we need to staff the administration. Syria is a mess. It's almost hard, again, I don't want to be partisan, I don't want to look back on history but in order to solve a problem you actually have to look at the root cause and you know the fact is however many years ago, about six years ago, there were, a few hundred Syrians had been slaughtered, red lines were drawn, we bugged out of Iraq, we didn't leave a stabilizing force behind in that region, which I think would have prevented it from spinning out of control. Now we see a full-fledged genocide, half a million people slaughtered by the Syrian Regime and to think that you could solve that problem by negotiation, I wish you could but I think that's a fantasy, I think it's always been a fantasy. Diplomacy follows facts on the ground and the facts on the ground are such that Russia and Iran, Hezbollah and Assad have certainly won the engagement in Aleppo, Russia secured its seaport; ISIS is still in Raqqa, you know, Turkey's problematic. So what's, so the bottom line is you're not going to solve this with diplomacy, something's going to have to change facts on the ground, we've got to defeat ISIS in Raqqa,

the problem is, who is going to take out ISIS in Raqqa? Who's going to hold Raqqa afterwards? And that is a vexing, vexing problem. But again this is just, you know the problem has degraded, the solutions have gotten worse as we go forward. So no, it's a big mess and I don't envy the next president or President Trump trying to figure out how to handle it.

ASIEH NAMDAR: So if I could just, if I may start to follow up, if diplomacy is not the answer here, what is?

RON JOHNSON: Well, listen eventually diplomacy will follow the facts on the ground but right now I don't find, we don't, let's put it this way, we don't have a satisfactory diplomatic answer from our perspective. You know from Russia, from Assad, from Iran's perspective, they're happy to have a diplomatic solution right now, freeze it in place. Because again they've won the battle of Aleppo and from basically Damascus so they're in a pretty good position right now.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Professor? I'll let you respond.

SOLI OZEL: And I can be very honest.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Yes absolutely.

SOLI OZEL: What were the United States doing in Iraq in 2003? You made, or the United States made Iran the most powerful country in the region. What goes on in Syria today is at least an indirect outcome of what had happened then. So if we're going to blame the Obama administration we can also blame the Bush administration for having signed the agreement with the Iraqi Government to actually withdraw the troops into 2011. I don't think the Obama administration did the right thing but you are right, they did withdraw and they created a vacuum and then Syria exploded. By the way if we're going to look at things on the ground: The Americans and the Russians on the ground seem to have come to a balance, the United States controls what goes on to the west of the Euphrates River, the Russians control what goes on to the east of the Euphrates River. To the north Turkey contests certain things and both the United States and Russia are trying to limit what, what Turkey can do in the north. The Assad Government cannot rule the entire territory, it's still too weak and so long as you do not have an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran as to how this mess ought to be settled, I don't believe the global powers by themselves can actually impose a solution. That's why it is going to continue to be a mess but in that sense in terms of to the east and the west of Euphrates I think there is kind of an understanding between the United States and Russia and that's why, that's how, what the Kurds benefit from obviously and they're going to be so it looks, they're going to be asked to help the United States to actually take, take Raqqa on. But will that end the conflict, will that end the bloodshed? It may reduce the amount of bloodshed but I doubt that you can actually have a resolution of the problem. And I guess you also have to take into account all these local forces. You have basically a Syria warlords, some of those warlords are nominally on the side of the central government but they really probably are not and I suppose any political solution will have to have Mr. Assad

out, dead or alive, and somebody else will have to replace them with some kind of [inaudible] or shall I say belief that it's going to be a reasonably decent government. This is really a very tall order and I guess it will take a while before everything is falling into place.

ASIEH NAMDAR: I have a few more questions but at this point I'm going to zip it and let the audience ask questions. Sir? We need the microphone I think, thank you. There we go, and please introduce yourself.

Q: Of course. Thank you, thank you very much. NATO DSG and the Senator both started their remarks by recalling 9/11 and the fact that NATO invoked Article Five at that moment. My name is Karel Kovanda and at that time I was sitting at that table as the Czech Ambassador. Two questions, I think both of them for the NATO DSG. Number one, at the time we had difficulties in getting to the point of invoking Article Five, that's a different story, but once we did the U.S. had great difficulties in figuring out what best use they could do of this step that the NATO ambassadors took. So my first question is if heaven forbid there were a need to invoke Article Five today anywhere, is NATO better prepared to react to that kind of an invocation? And my second question DSG has to do with the role of the military in combating terrorism. There are many who would argue that terrorism is in essence a police issue rather than a military issue and apart from the considerable point but still a limited one of depriving terrorists of territory, what role is there for the military as opposed to police forces in combatting terrorism? Thank you very much.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: Thank you very much Ambassador for those questions. First of all I don't think he would mind me saying but I did have a chance to talk with Lord Robertson this morning before I came here because I wanted precisely to recollect that day with him. And he cast back in his memory and he talked about it and indeed I think it did take the United States a few days to decide exactly how it wanted essentially to use the alliance in that case. You have to, if you lived through those days you will never forget them. I was at the Carnegie Endowment at that time in Washington D.C. and I remember how Washington was gripped at that moment. So it was the United States adjusting to a profound attack on our national territory that killed over 3000 people. The first time since Pearl Harbour had been attacked during World War Two. So it does, in some ways it's understandable to me that the decision making processes in Washington took some time and so, but I don't think that's the problem for the alliance, because Article Five was invoked, the questions went out to Washington how can we help. Within a couple of days of when Washington said okay we want your help in this way and that way and this way AWACS planes of NATO were flying over U.S. airspace and helping to protect U.S. airspace. So once the alliance basically, you know, learned what Washington wanted it to do to help with this profound attack on U.S. territory the NATO alliance responded quickly. Can we do better? We must do better because nowadays the threats are more unpredictable, the pace is faster, the threats come at us from directions we can't predict. We haven't talked about cyber warfare, we haven't talked about the hybrid phenomenon yet today but we really must be prepared to respond more quickly and for that reason NATO is at the present moment undergoing a review of our command and control

systems and how we look at these very sensitive decision making problems. And it will be a very active discussion over the next several months. I don't know exactly where we're come out but it's with this set of issues in mind.

ASIEH NAMDAR: And Rose before we go to the next question I want to ask you a question about NATO enlargement. Your thoughts on that? There's a critical vote coming up in congress next week. Talk to us about that and then we want to get the Senator involved in that conversation as well.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: Yes. The alliance is committed to NATO enlargement. We have been continually working the problem over a number of years at this point and Montenegro is next up. By the way I think it is important that NATO will be focusing its attention in this arena in the Western Balkans because there are many, many issues affecting the security and stability of the Western Balkans at this moment. So it's a very good thing that Montenegro is next up. 25 NATO countries have already completed their ratification processes and I've been very, very glad to hear just in recent days that the U.S. Senate is about ready to move out on this. But if I may I'll turn to Senator Johnston because he's much better equipped to talk about this issue than I am. So Senator.

RON JOHNSON: Well, yeah Rose I was actually fortunate to chair the ascension hearing on Montenegro and we did that in the last congress, hoping to get that passed by unanimous consent, we had a couple of senators who didn't want that but I really don't see any problem. We're going to hold the culture vote followed by the final vote probably either Monday or Tuesday to get that done and it's crucial we do it. We know that Russia basically tried to insight a coup inside Montenegro and again that fledgling democracy stood up to that. Obviously Russia has tried to influence the American elections, their influence, their propaganda, their disinformation campaigns are pervasive and we can't reward that by not voting to make sure that Montenegro becomes part of NATO.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Senator thank you, Rose thank you so much. Question?

Q: My name is Mary Fitzgerald. I'm a researcher specializing in Libya and yesterday we had the head of Africom saying that they were watching with great concern Russia's growing engagement with Libya and specific Libyan factions that are opposed to the UN backed Government of National Accord in Tripoli. Last month we saw the British Defence Secretary trade barbs with his Russian counterpart on this issue. Michael Fallon said he believes that Putin was trying to test the NATO alliance in Libya. This is a question specifically for Rose and Henri. How worried are you about Russia's growing role in Libya, growing assertiveness in Libya? And what do you think are Russia's intentions in Libya in the short and long term?

ASIEH NAMDAR: Henri, you go first.

HENRI SCHRICKE: I make a very short answer. I think, I'm not afraid at all. I think that we are just, we tend to forget that Russia used to be in the area. What I remember from my very

first days in the navy is that Russia was everywhere, I mean not, I mean Soviet Units were everywhere and then the Russian ones. We tend to forget that, that they are just back, they are just back where they were before trying to gain the same harbours, bases and that's it. So it's really up to us, up to us to keep or to regain control of the approaches, you know, land my time, approaches, it's up to us to make sure that these neighbouring countries still want to work with us. But I mean we are just back 30 years or something like that.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Rose?

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: Let me mention that we have received a request from, from the Prime Minister in Libya to go there and to begin NATO training. So I think NATO is looking for ways to help in Libya and we will look to develop capacity there, we will look to, in responsible ways, build up the national institutions there. That's what NATO can do and can do very well. We've been training, we've been training the Afghan National Army for example and doing a great deal to develop the capacity in countries such as this that have experienced great instability and need to have that national capacity. Libya needs it. The trouble that I have with what's going on with Russia right now in Libya. I am very concerned about, about Russian forces seemingly gathering to influence the situation there, it troubles me very, very much. But to me the core of the issue is a rule of law problem. Because NATO is a long standing and respected member of the UN Security Council, Russia voted on a UN Security Council resolution to set up certain processes in Libya to move again toward a Government of National Unity and to build those institutions and to get Libya again in a very difficult circumstance, but moving in the right direction. And it seems to me looking in from the outside that there was a decision made in the Kremlin to simply toss out that UN Security Council resolution and proceed forward in a way that is unpredictable. So it's a rule of law problem from my perspective and it worries me very much. But NATO's got to be ready I think to go in and help in whatever way we can and assuming we find the right partners of course to build up Libya's institutions again.

RON JOHNSON: Can I, can I quickly just chime in?

ASIEH NAMDAR: Sure.

RON JOHNSON: Yeah I think Libya is just another example of what happens when you know if you break it, you own it and if you topple a regime you better, you better be prepared to go in and stabilize the situation and be there for the long haul. And that's what we didn't do in Libya and to your answer in terms of what role the military plays? Well we cannot allow these failed states to be safe havens for terrorism. That's why we had to destroy ISIS, deny them that caliphate because every day that caliphate continues to exist ISIS is perceived as a winner, they'll continue to inspire the types of home grown terrorism that we've seen in America, in Britain, in France, in Brussels. You know I don't like the reality, I wish, I wish Islamisist terror didn't exist but it does and it's going to of course require a military response but again if we're seeking to topple a regime we better be prepared to stabilize it afterwards.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Alright we have a question. Go ahead sir, introduce yourself please.

Q: Christopher Marschal from Berlin Germany, Journalist. And I want to get back to Turkey and I'm very thankful to Professor that you already said what would be the consequences of a yes vote for the Turkey EU relationship at least if the EU takes itself and its criteria seriously. I mean if this referendum ends with a yes that means that Turkey is no longer a state of law with a division of power, an independent judiciary and so on and so on which is a criteria for accession talks. So if we take ourselves seriously in the EU, then that would be the end. Shouldn't the Turkish public know in advance that this is also a vote whether the talks with the EU can go on or have to stop? And of course we have the fall back situation that NATO, that Turkey stays in NATO a member but and we have to, before Turkey is a reliable NATO member, has military rule or whatever and…

ASIEH NAMDAR: I think…

Q: But on a broader note, Senator, you talked about Montenegro. Is it such a good idea with no side effects if an instable country which could have been almost overthrown the government will be inside NATO and might block NATO conversations when it's inside and not longer outside?

ASIEH NAMDAR: Those are tough questions, whoa.

Sit down, it's not your turn yet, no, no, no, sit down, they have to answer the question.

RON JOHNSON: Where are we starting?

ASIEH NAMDAR: No, no, no, please go ahead, you go ahead, please Professor.

SOLI OZEL: Well first of all, the referendum has not yet taken place. So don't pre-judge it. There may be a no vote. In fact the polls are really in dead heat, yes and no. And if there is a yes vote the Venice commissioned report suggests that this is not, this is not really again up to the criteria of a democracy that the EU would accept. Whether or not the Turkish public ought to know, there are people who write about this, I don't know how many of us are read by the public. But if the Europeans are going to make a point of that I'm sure, I think they would also have to reconsider the attitude, the tone and the language that they use in order to warn the Turkish public about this. So often I think the Europeans mix or allow their sentiments about the Turkish Government to get in the way of their desire to communicate with the Turkish public and when that happens the Turkish public also turns deaf, I think. And I don't know how to solve that problem, honestly. But that does, that does generate a problem. My hope is that whatever the result of the referendum and the heat of the moment is gone, both sides will be able to actually sit down and reconsider, as I said I think let's just be realistic, accession….

ASIEH NAMDAR: Come on say it.

SOLI OZEL: If I live long enough maybe I'll see it revitalized, okay. Maybe, so that's not, but there are other ways, I don't think it is an option for the European Union to behave as if Turkey did not exist. I also happen to think that it is unimaginable for Turkey to behave as if the EU didn't exist. So how do we recognize the mutually, our existence is going to be the issue in my judgement.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Rose, Senator? I don't know you may want to respond to this gentleman.

RON JOHNSON: I wasn't quite sure, exactly what, the point you're getting at. I will say from my standpoint, NATO is a defensive alliance, it really threatens no one and in order to join NATO you have to go through a membership action plan, you have to do an awful lot of things just proving yourself that you're going to be valuable to NATO. And from my standpoint the more, the merrier in NATO because we really threaten no one. And so, no I'm totally supportive of Montenegro's ascension.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: If I could just add one word on that.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: I just wanted to express my admiration for the way that Montenegro has handled the aftermath of the coup. They have, they have again used every instrument of their judiciary and legal system in order to properly investigate this matter. That's why I think the international community has some confidence already in the outcome of their investigation. So just a quick point on that.

ASIEH NAMDAR: We have a quick question right here.

Q: Thank you very much. My name is [inaudible], I am Turkish Business and Industrial Association, [inaudible]. Well there is a smaller problem in terms of people involved and territory involved and violence that is not even involved but in the same area and involving people of different languages, ethnic and religious backgrounds and it's a long standing problem, Cyprus. And the west, in a nut shell, basically needs a good success story and the Nobel Prize Committee needs a tangible achievement, at least this year maybe. So what about Cyprus? Can it be really, can it have a game changing effect on all the things that we are talking about? At least a success story for the west, for democracy to overcome finally a struggle between two people of different backgrounds and if the question is yes, what can we all do, what can you all do? Thank you.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Who would you, who are directing your?

Q: All.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Okay. Who would like to go first? Anyone?

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: Well I can start again. Cyprus is not a NATO member however they are a member of the EU. I wanted to mention that yesterday we had a meeting of the PSC and the NAC, the North Atlantic Council yesterday where we brought together members

of NATO and the EU and Cyprus was there obviously and intervened in the course of the discussion. But what was so great about the session for me was how rich the EU cooperation with NATO is, is turning out to be. After we had some decisions in the past year culminating in the Foreign Ministers Meeting in December and 42 projects were launched that are really making a big difference to European security. To come back to the Ambassador's question, he's left the floor, but we are, you know, using military force in cooperation, EU and NATO, to help out with the coast guards in the Mediterranean Sea to help deal with the migrant crisis. And so those are some very tangible and real ways NATO and the EU are already working together to tackle the migrant crisis. Not the only answer by any means, but it's an important way that military forces can be used in this, in this challenging arena. I would say that in answer to your question, my view is yes, if and the diplomacy has looked more hopeful over the last year and a half or so, if the issue of Cyprus can be resolved in the coming year I think it would be further beneficial to the cooperation between NATO and the EU.

ASIEH NAMDAR: We're running out of time so there's a gentleman here, who has a question?

Q: Here, may name is Alexander Grushko, I am Russian Ambassador to NATO, well. Two remarks first of all. I would like to say that of course we know that western world face today a lot of problems. But we see also that in place of trying to find solutions of the problem, a lot of people are trying to assign these problems to Russia, to certain conspiracy theories et cetera, et cetera. Point two is about Montenegro. If, we know that Montenegro society is very heavily divided on NATO membership, why not to have a referendum and to make the picture more clear for everybody? Third element and this is the most important one. On 9/11 President Putin was the first who called President Bush and saying that Russia is prepared to lend any assistance to United States, he was not referring to Article Five of the Washington Treaty by the way. And this, this support was provided, it was critical for U.S. operation in Afghanistan and this was a demonstration that in new security environment it will be not possible to build security, build stability on the basis of the concept of island of security. Today neither United States nor Russia nor NATO nor EU are not in a position to do it.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Ambassador your question please.

ALEXANDER GRUSHKO: Yes, yes my question will follow. [Inaudible] what NATO is doing today is, does not correlate with this vision of new security environment because with the placement of additional weapons and equipment systems on the eastern flank it will not increase security. In terms of cooperation NATO has frozen all practical cooperation with Russia that was absolutely critical for European and our global security and now we see that NATO is moving closer and closer to the formula of the first Secretary General Ismay, what is NATO, NATO is about to keep Russia out, United States in and Germany down. I will not talk about the third element of that formula but…

ALEXANDER GRUSHKO: But I think that does this new vision of NATO, do it really correspond with new security environment? How…

ASIEH NAMDAR: I think we've got a question there. Thank you.

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER: There was a pony in there somewhere, no, no I must say Ambassador Grushko is a greatly respected colleague and we work together really very, very regularly in the NATO context and that gets to the point that I wanted to make in answering his question but first I want to make a point about NATO being a defensive alliance. This is something that Senator Johnson already talked about earlier. The response that we have undertaken since the seizure of Ukrainian territory in 2014, we really underscore constantly is defensive and proportionate. So the four battle groups that are coming into the Baltic States and Poland are just that, they are based on battalions and it's not, you know, bringing an offensive combined armed force to face the Russian Federation, that is not the idea at all. It is to be defensive and proportionate in how we respond strongly to the challenges that we feel that Russia poses at the moment. But the other and very important point about what was decided at Warsaw, the summit last summer, was that we needed dialogue as well. That we must engage in order to try to look for ways to ensure that if we are going to get into a crisis emanating, for example, from an air incident or a sea incident around the Baltic Sea that that incident doesn't spiral into conflict. So it's a responsible thing to also be working in every way we can on dialogue with Russia.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Senator wants to respond and unfortunately we're out of time. So Senator…

RON JOHNSON: Sure. Mr. Ambassador, listen I appreciate the fact that Vladimir Putin called up President Bush on 9/11 but there's no conspiracy behind the fact that Russia invaded Crimea. They've invaded Ukraine. They're missile system blew down a commercial airliner. They have precision bombed hospitals and relief convoys in Syria. Now from my standpoint I wish Russia had accepted the outstretched hand of the west after the fall of the Soviet Union and got fully integrated and are not aggressively threatening their neighbours, destabilizing them, engaging in propaganda, disinformation, in America, in Montenegro, in Eastern Europe. So the facts, those, these aren't conspiracies, these are the actions. So I look forward to a day when Russia stops threatening its neighbours, stops its aggression and actually does accept that reached out hand and we can no longer be adversaries but at least friendly rivals. So the west is there, we'd like to do that but it's going first be preconditioned on Russian behaviour.

ASIEH NAMDAR: Thank you Senator. And thank you all for taking part in this lively discussion. Apologies we've run out of time. Thank you, thank you.

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