

Passing the Baton 2021: Securing America's Future Together

United States Institute of Peace

Friday, January 29, 2021

Stephen Hadley: Good morning everyone. My name is Steve Hadley. I chair the board of the United States Institute of Peace, and I'm delighted to welcome you to *Passing the Baton: Securing America's Future Together*. USIP has hosted the *Passing the Baton* event after every change in administration for the last 20 years, starting in 2001, when President Clinton's National Security Advisor Sandy Berger, passed the baton to his successor, Condoleezza Rice, who we are honored to have with us again today. This year, we gather in the wake of a violent insurrection against our Capitol, the symbol and foundation of our democracy. The insurrection was marked by hateful expressions of white supremacy and anti-Semitism. These never are, and never can, be tolerated. There is no question that January 6 was one of the greatest tests of American democracy in recent memory. But as lawmakers gathered that same night to fulfill their constitutional duty, it was also the greatest measure of our democracy's resilience. Ultimately, the events of January 6 underscore that despite the challenges and the fault lines, our democratic system remains the strongest, most powerful form of governance on earth, and the most effective vehicle for driving sustainable peace. Today, as we consider the formidable foreign policy and national security challenges facing the nation, we must recommit to navigating the road ahead together in the spirit, tradition, and principles of liberty and union that have been the bedrock of our republic. Since its founding, we have an important dynamic set of discussions focused on exactly this issue today. And here to tell you more about this morning's event is the new president and CEO of the United States Institute of Peace, Lise Grande.

Lise Grande: Good morning, allow us to begin by extending our sincere appreciation to the American Enterprise Institute, the Atlantic Council, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Center for American Progress, the Heritage Foundation, and Hudson Institute for their leadership and partnership in this year's *Passing the Baton*. Their guidance and insights have been an invaluable part of this process, and we are proud to partner with them on this event. We are honored to extend our respects and warmest welcome to our distinguished speakers and panelists. To Mr. Jake Sullivan, national security advisor to President Biden, to Ambassador Robert O'Brian, former national security advisor to President Trump, to Secretary Condoleezza Rice, the 66th Secretary of State and former national security advisor to President George W. Bush, and a special welcome to Admiral Michelle Howard, the U.S. Navy's four-star Admiral, now retired. As an institute founded 36 years ago by Congress, we believe and know that good governance, tolerance, inclusion, justice, equality, equity in all of its forms, and above all, democratic principles are the essential building blocks of sustainable peace. We also know deep in our hearts, that promoting peace abroad begins with peace at home. Our work and that of our partners shows that the complex, multifaceted challenges to peace and security cannot be solved by a single party or single administration. They require the best ideas, the best thinking and collaboration from all sides of the aisle. *Passing the Baton*, an event we have hosted for the last 20 years is an opportunity for us to reaffirm the transfer of power and the importance of bipartisanship in U.S. foreign policy. The insurrection at the Capitol, and the expressions of racism, white supremacy and anti-Semitism have made this event more important now than ever before. We are deeply honored that the nation's preeminent national security leaders are with us today to reflect frankly, and with the

humility that comes from being tested at this critical moment in U.S. history, on the main national security and foreign policy challenges facing America. We encourage everyone to engage with us on Twitter throughout the morning, using the hashtag #PassingTheBaton. Before our keynote discussion with Secretary Rice, National Security Advisor Sullivan and former National Security Advisor O'Brien, we're very pleased to share a video message from Admiral Howard, the first woman to achieve the rank of four-star Admiral, and the first woman to be appointed to the position of vice chief of naval operations and the first African American woman to reach the rank of three- and four-stars in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, to help us frame this important conversation.

Admiral Michelle Howard: Good morning. I'm Admiral Michelle J. Howard, and I retired from the United States Navy about three years ago as a four-star. I support the U.S. Institute of Peace in a couple of areas, in a defense military advisory group and the Women Building Peace Council. And I am delighted and honored to help greet you, our national security experts, in forming up and setting up a dialogue and getting an idea of the continuity of issues that faces the United States. And I just wanted to share a few thoughts with you. I think of myself as a defender of the Constitution, and I'm one of those people that rereads the Federalist Papers all the time. In this one article, John Adams talks about how you can be a peace-loving nation, and you can be going after prosperity. And in his mind, trade and commerce were essential to the prosperity of a country. But he reminded us that no matter what the motivations are of your nation, the world is full of capricious tyrants. There are those that will attack you to take your power, to take your territory, to take your goods in search of power. He was a wise man who grew up to be president, but in the framing of the Constitution and the need for defense, and this idea of defense in support of national security, it's a reminder that, in many ways, the globe hasn't changed. We still pursue prosperity as a nation, but we still live among capricious tyrants. Since my time in defense, the top five really hasn't changed. Secretary Gates identified Russia, China, Iran, North Korea and terrorist groups. Now the ruling among the top five probably changes sometimes on a daily basis, depending on what the leaders of these nations do. There's something significant about that top five though. Russia and China have nuclear weapons. Iran and North Korea are in pursuit of nuclear weapons, and with Iran and North Korea, with malice towards the United States, developing long range missile systems with the idea of using these nuclear weapons against us. And so, the capricious tyrants still exist. What has this got to do with peace? Well, I will tell you from my experience with a top five like that, it is overwhelming in terms of expertise needed, policymaking, it can consume a government. And then there's the rest of the world that isn't necessarily stable. So, to me, an investment in peace and keeping the rest of the world stable, allows the United States to focus on the immediate national security threats. And in the end, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, stabilization is far less costly than defense. Not just the monetary cost, but the cost of lives. And so, thank you for investing in the U.S. Institute of Peace and being willing to have a dialogue about national security, the continuum of capricious tyrants, and what's most important for our nation. It's important for our citizens, and it's important for the prosperity of America. Thank you.

Lise Grande: We are honored to welcome three national security advisors to three different presidents. Before his current position, Jake Sullivan served as the deputy assistant to the president and national security advisor to then-Vice President Biden. Mr. Sullivan has been the director of policy planning at the

State Department and deputy chief of staff to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Before Ambassador Robert O'Brien was named President Trump's national security advisor in 2019, he served as the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs at the State Department, and as co-chairman of the Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan, under both secretaries Rice and Clinton. Secretary Condoleezza Rice, currently the director of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, served as national security advisor to President Bush during his first term in office, the first woman to hold the position, and as the secretary of state during his second term, the second woman and first African American woman to serve in that capacity. Secretary Rice, we are pleased to pass the floor to you.

Secretary Condoleezza Rice: Hello. I want to begin by thanking the U.S. Institute of Peace for arranging this opportunity to talk about the world, to talk about the challenges facing American foreign policy, and I'm so pleased to be joined by Robert O'Brien, former national security advisor to President Trump, and by Jake Sullivan, the now national security advisor to President Biden. And I just want to say, especially Jake, I am so grateful for you being here, because the one thing about being National Security Advisor, that Robert and I both know, there is no such thing as a schedule. And so, we're delighted that you can be with us. In fact, I'd like to start by asking a question about the role, the position. I was also Secretary of State, and your predecessor is Thomas Jefferson and there are certain things that go with that, and people understand that, but the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, commonly known as the National Security Advisor, has had many different iterations and has many different duties. And maybe we could just start with how you thought about it, Robert, and how it ended up. And then Jake, over to you, as to how you're thinking about it going in. Robert, could you start on that?

Ambassador Robert O'Brien: Sure. Thank you, Condi. You said that about sitting in Thomas Jefferson's seat, I think about sitting in Condi Rice's seat, and I'm sure Jake does as well. And it was a privilege to work with you back in the Bush administration on Afghanistan, and I appreciate your guidance and wisdom in the new position. And as you remember, one of the first questions I asked you, I think the first week I was in office, I think the great thing about being a national security advisor is that you're staffing the President of the United States, and it's your job to make sure, in my view, that he gets the best options, the best advice, the best counsel to face all the myriad of crises and long term policy issues. He has to decide, only he or she can decide those issues as the president, but as national security advisor, you can frame those issues, you can you can pull up the entire government together and have a whole of government discussion of where we should go and how we should address whatever the matter is that's facing the president that day and then, you know, it is your job to make sure that he gets the best options or the other best policy advice. Sometimes, as you know, there's a split on that advice, and I always tried to make sure that, as national security advisor, that the different parties had their day in court and could get in front of the president, and I give President Trump, and in my case, the various options he had to decide on a matter. I felt that was the one of the great things about the job. You can see everything. You saw the intelligence, you know, you can help the president get to his decision and then ultimately implement his policies, once you've made that decision.

Secretary Condoleezza Rice: And Jake, I think one of the things about being national security advisor is you actually never know what the world is gonna look like. I don't think my years would be dominated by September 11 and terrorism, and I don't think that Robert probably expected his last year to be dominated by COVID. So, given that you'll be surprised and are now strapping in your seat belt to be national security advisor, how do you see the role going in? How have you and the president talked about that role?

Jake Sullivan: Well, first of all, Condi, thank you for giving us the opportunity to have this conversation. And I want to just start by thanking Robert for the really great partnership he provided through the transition process. It was a strange and, in some ways, turbulent transition. But, for his partner, and Robert, thank you just for everything that you did, to help pave the way for me to come into this sea, for our team to get onboard, and for us to get up and running at a moment when we face considerable challenges around the world of great power competitors, and of course, a range of transnational threats as well. You know, it's interesting. I'm humble about answering the question about what being the assistant to the president for national security affairs, or national security advisor, means because I'm now eight days into the job. Although as you two both know, that feels like eight years into the job, because there's so much coming at you all the time. And it is certainly the case that a big part of the role is to manage the inboxes, to take the incoming, and be able to keep the president updated on the threats and the opportunities the United States faces as events unfold around the world, to be able to take requests in from cabinet secretaries who are looking for the president's guidance on issues. But it's got to be much more than the inbox. We also have to be thinking about shaping and driving a strategy that reflects the president's vision and priorities. And so, I see the role of national security advisor, on the one hand, as the honest broker who is coordinating the processes, as Robert said, teeing up effective options for the president to be able to make the decisions as commander in chief, but on the other hand, actually being a communicator to the interagency process, to cabinet secretaries, letting them know what the president is looking for, and what he expects of them, and how his values and his vision ultimately should shape the affirmative agenda that the United States approaches the world with. And I think that does require the kind of flexibility of recognizing that the threats that are at the top of your mind on the day that you walk into the job may be different than the threats at the top of your mind on the day you walk out of the job. But, you can never forget the big things, the things that really root the president in what he is trying to accomplish. And a big part of this job, in my view, is making sure to reflect and redeem that through the process.

Secretary Condoleezza Rice: And in fact, this is called *Passing the Baton*.

And so, following on Jake's point about the big things out there. Robert, what baton are you, or have you passed to Jake, in terms of the biggest challenges that the United States faces going forward?

Ambassador Robert O'Brien: And we've been passing the baton for about two months now. I think I was relatively early in the process in talking about a professional transition, and our transition started even before the election, speaking with our colleague, Stephen Hadley, and asking how he managed the transition back in 2008, 2009 between George W. Bush and Barack Obama. So we started

working with Jake and his team early on, we had binders prepared, we had papers prepared. And all that's well and good, but what made it particularly effective, is that Jake came in with a very professional team. He's a great American. He's got a terrific background. There are very few people that are probably as well prepared to serve in the role as Jake, and so he was able to, it was an easy baton to pass if you think about a relay race on the track. He knew what he was doing, and it was it was great to be able to hand it off to him. What we handed it off though, on the on the big issues, are number one, China. We have a very assertive rising China that has become the number one geopolitical challenge to the United States and will be for a generation. China's more assertive. And we see that in Taiwan. We see it in India. We see it in the South China Sea. We see it in Hong Kong. It's increasingly nationalistic, and we see the oppression of the Uyghurs and what Secretary Pompeo has labeled a genocide there. We see an unrelenting global ambition with their wolf warrior diplomacy and mass diplomacy, and it's really global in reach. We see the Chinese becoming very assertive in Antarctica and in the Arctic, in places where they haven't been before, like the South Atlantic. So, it's a major issue, and I think we've developed a bipartisan consensus there. So that's one of the big issues. Iran of course, on a day-to-day basis, is a state sponsored terrorism. It's involved in Yemen and Syria and Iraq and Lebanon, in Gaza, supporting Jihadis, including Al Qaeda out of Tehran. They've got an unquenched nuclear ambition, which was exposed in part by the Israeli seizure of the records. And they continued to operate all of their facilities, notwithstanding the JCPOA. In Russia, you have a country with not a great economy and a declining demographic situation, yet they're compensating for it with extremely advanced weapons systems, especially in the nuclear and space and cyber realms where they're compensating for their lack of size, in both population and economy, vis a vis with China and the United States, although they are very close with China, now. And we're seeing a boutique approach to getting involved in conflicts in places like Syria, using the partner group, a little bit and that sort of thing. And then finally, there are plenty of challenges out there, and I know Jake is, I'm glad that he is in the seat now and has day-to-day responsibility for these things, but there are things like the cartels, and that's not something that's been on the high end of folks' list, but transnational organized crime is something that I wasn't expecting to see as much of, and I think in some ways, it was exacerbated by COVID. If you take a look at the PCC cartel in Brazil, which is a major democracy and important partner of the United States. The PCC is taking over territory within Brazil. We're seeing a similar cartel and others in Mexico. The cartels are making a comeback in Colombia. So, I think that's an issue that may not be on everyone's radar. But it is a very significant problem that affects Americans because of the drug trafficking and because of the violence on a day-to-day basis. So, those are just a few of the big issues that are on Jake's plate that we passed off to him, and some of those were passed on to the Trump administration by the last administration. They haven't changed—China, Russia, Iran. It's a full plate for him and his team. But, he's a great American, and he's got a very solid front office team that I got to know, and I know they will do a solid job.

Secretary Condoleezza Rice: Jake, do you want to talk a little bit about some of those challenges? Both how you see them now, and perhaps how you're thinking about ways to not address them in terms of policy, but to start to get together strategically how the United States might take these challenges.

Jake Sullivan: Well first, listening to Robert, I'm sort of wondering if either of you want your old job back, because, yeah, that's a full plate and that was only an illustrative list. Robert probably could have gone on for another 5-10 minutes about the sheer range of threats and the turbulence facing us in many different quarters and on many different issues around the globe. You know, when I think about the really foundational question of what is the most important national security priority facing the United States? It occurs to me something that Joe Biden has really reinforced for us, which is that foreign policy is domestic policy and domestic policy is foreign policy. And at the end of the day, right now, the most profound national security challenge facing the United States is getting our own house in order, is domestic renewal. We are facing a COVID-19 pandemic that continues to ravage our population.

We are facing an economic crisis that has devastated mainstream small businesses and working families. We're obviously facing the effects in every part of our country on the climate crisis. And of course, there have been the acute threats to our basic constitutional republic, and the deep divisions that have only been reinforced by that. And so, when you asked a question about the question of priority, and the question of strategy, it sort of comes together for me in the proposition that we have to put ourselves in a position of strength to be able to deal with the challenges we face around the world. And establishing that position of strength has to be the kind of fundamental early work of this administration. And it goes both for the great power competition questions, particularly as it respects China, and in position of strength to deal with the significant transnational threats that could impact Americans' way of life—the climate crisis, nuclear proliferation, cyber-attacks, continuing economic devastation that is growing, not just here, but around the world, and more. And so, really what we are investing in, is thinking about what are the core components of the strength that we need to be able to effectively manage this set of threats and challenges. The first is what I just said, domestic renewal. Then, there is the investment in allies, and really trying to reinvigorate our alliances, but not return them to the way they were before, but rather think about how we modernize those alliances to deal with the threats of the future. It's reestablishing our place in critical international institutions from the Paris Climate Accord to the World Health Organization and beyond. And then it's speaking clearly and consistently about our values, but in a way that actually is consistent with living out our values here at home, as well. And so, I think what you will see, in terms of the work that we were doing out of the gate, a huge amount of it is about shaping the overall environment within which we are going to have to grapple with these threats and challenges, trying to establish that position of strength on those pillars I just described. And from there, be able to carry forward effective strategies to deal with the China challenge, to deal with the climate crisis, to deal with not just this pandemic but future pandemics, and so much else.

Secretary Condoleezza Rice: Let me go back to you, Jake, and then I'll come back to Robert, but I just want to pour in on something that you said. You mentioned in there, "consistent with our values." And, one of the hardest challenges, really, for American foreign policy now for many, many decades has been not that our interests, our values are at war with one another, not by any means. But that sometimes, one or the other seems to have to lead. When we talk about, for instance, China. Robert mentioned the genocide against the Uyghurs. Robert mentioned Hong Kong and human rights and the attitude toward Taiwan, one could even talk about China's use of the internet and of AI technologies for actually social control, making it very hard to think about a single internet. So, in many

ways, these, this problem of values and interests comes together when you have a great power competitor, who doesn't share your values, who in fact, challenges your interests. I often say you know, with the Soviet Union, we were dealing with a country that was a military giant, but a technological midget. That's not China. So, can you talk a little bit about interests, values, and maybe in the context of China, or more broadly, if you wish?

Jake Sullivan: Sure. I think talking about it in the context of China gives us a concrete way to get into an issue, and as you say, has been dealt with in foreign policy in many different contexts across many continents, across many decades, but just to take the China case, and I think the way you framed it up was really effective. Look, I think there are four major steps that the United States needs to take to contend with the challenges you just outlined. The first is to recognize that China is essentially making the case that the Chinese model is better than the American model. And they're pointing to dysfunction and division in the United States and saying, "take a look at that, their system doesn't work, our system does." And increasingly over the last few years, you've heard their leaders right from the top speak more explicitly in these terms. This is not any one or some kind of implied contrast, it is an explicit statement that there is an alternative model to the democratic market economy model that these United States has been advancing over the course of decades. So, step one, is, to go back to this point about domestic renewal, is to refurbish the fundamental foundations of our democracy. And that goes for everything from our democratic system itself, to issues of racial inequity, to issues of economic inequality, all of the things that have contributed to the shine coming off the American model over the course of time. So that's step one. Step two is to recognize that we are going to be most effective in advancing our vision for what a free, prosperous, equitable society looks like if we are doing so in lockstep with democratic allies and partners. By ourselves, we represent about a quarter of the world's economy. With our allies and partners in both Europe and Asia, we represent more than half of the world's economy, and that provides us not just the kind of leverage we need to be able to produce outcomes, but it provides us a chorus of voices that can drive the argument that says, we are going to stand up for a certain set of principles in the face of aggression and the kinds of steps that China has taken. The third is to recognize something you said, which is, all of this really comes home to roost with technology, and who ultimately is going to be leading the world on key emerging technologies in the future—artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, clean energy, and so much else. And so that requires a combination of working closely with allies and partners and making an aggressive, ambitious public investment here in the United States so that we stay on the cutting edge. It used to be that there were big debates about that between Democrats and Republicans. But you know, I just talked yesterday to a leading republican senator, who is making the case for more spending in these areas, in part so that we could prevail in this competition over time. And then the last piece is speaking with clarity and consistency on these issues. And being prepared to act as well to impose costs for what China is doing in Xinjiang, what it's doing in Hong Kong, for the bellicosity of threats that it is projecting towards Taiwan. And this administration is intent, at every level, from the president, across the State Department, the Defense Department, every embassy around the world, to speaking with that clarity and consistency and voice, and that will be an important part of our strategy as well. So that's obviously not a complete picture of either complex challenge, but gives you some sense of the way that we're thinking about this, in the context of China specifically.

Secretary Condoleezza Rice: You mentioned friends and allies, and one ally, I think with whom, Robert, you worked very closely, is with Israel. And in fact, I used to say that nothing ever changes in the Middle East. But in fact, things have changed in the Middle East. And I'd like you to talk a little bit about how you see the changing nature of the Middle East, of the Abraham Accords, the potential for an end to the state of war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. That's a pretty dramatic change, I think when you decided to move the embassy to Jerusalem, there was a lot of heartburn around that among specialists and foreign policy types. But it turns out that the Arab countries were perhaps looking, particularly the modernizing ones, were looking for a different kind of Middle East. Can you talk a little bit about the promise of the Abraham Accords? And then, Jake, perhaps you can comment about that.

Ambassador Robert O'Brien: Thank you Condi, and look, I think Jake and his team and President Biden are off to a great start on China. We have to confront China using all the means of national power, and, certainly, allies and friends are going to be part of that. And democracies are messy. Democracies, are never going to be, whether it's India or Brazil or the UK with Brexit, or the challenges that we've been through as of late, it's never going to be as clean or as crisp as an authoritarian model which, at least on the surface, look like they're going along smoothly, even though there may be icebergs and rocks and things happening below the surface that we don't see. So, I'm glad to see that I think as we work together with our allies, especially with the Quad, Japan, Australia and India, and the United States, which may be the most important relationship we've established since NATO, at a high level, I think we're going to be able to confront that challenge. And we were able to put together the Quad the same way we were able to put together the Abraham Accords. And that was looking at a strategic challenge in the Middle East, which was Iran. And we had close partners and allies, whether it was UAE or Bahrain, where we have large numbers of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines stationed. Our close democratic and enduring ally, Israel, and we have these partners who were all confronting a very aggressive Iran in the region that was attempting to extended ceremony over the entire Middle East. And we thought to ourselves, why aren't our friends who have the same common national security interest, aligning more closely, let's bring them together from a diplomatic standpoint. Let's bring them together from an economic standpoint. And let's bring them together from a, eventually, a defense standpoint so that they can stand together with us against a common threat that we have from Iran, as well as extremism and Jihadism. So, we did something that was a little unusual, we went around, everybody thought we had to solve the Palestinian problem first. And President Trump wanted to solve Palestinian problem, I did, and the Israelis do, but we couldn't allow the Palestinians to stand as a roadblock to a broader Middle East peace that was so important to us for a number of strategic reasons. And so, we went to our friends and partners and allies, we built political capital. And one way we build political capital in Israel was by moving the embassy to Jerusalem. One way we did it was by recognizing the Golan Heights as Israeli territory. And these were facts that were never going to change on the ground. Jerusalem was never going to change being the capital of Israel. Israel was never going to get the Golan Heights back to Assad or any other regime in Syria. So, we recognize those facts and the ground. We did the same thing. We built political capital in Bahrain, Morocco, with the UAE by letting them know that we would stand with them by getting out of the JCPOA, which was a serious threat to the region because it was providing the Iranian regime with so many funds to export their revolutionary ideology. We then took that capital and used it to bring the parties together and to see if we can bring them to some sort of a court, which we

did. And I think it's a foundation that I think Jake and his team and the Biden administration will be able to build on. I think there are other Arab countries that are going to look at the progress, the economic benefits that those countries enjoy, and would want to join Abraham Accord. So, I think that allows us to do a couple things. One, it's going to allow us to draw down number of troops that we have in the Middle East as our partners come together and are more capable together, because we need those troops in other places, we need them potentially in Eastern Europe, we certainly need them in the Pacific. It also boxes China out of Israel's tech sector to some extent, which is something that I look at very carefully. Israel, the second hole into Silicon Valley, where you're sitting right now Condi, with their startup companies, and their tech solutions. And as we tighten up on what we're willing to export to the Chinese, in the high-tech realm, they're going to look for other places to buy, whether it's Europe or Israel. And as Israeli entrepreneurs were looking for money, China was an easy place to get it, because China wanted to invest in Israel to obtain the tech. With these Arab sovereign wealth funds now having access to the Israeli market, that Arab money, the Gulf money, is now pushing the Chinese out of Israel. So, there are all kinds of ancillary benefits that are coming from the Abraham Accords, and we were proud to be involved in them, and I think it's an area that the Biden/Harrison Administration will be able to build on and hope they do it. Hopefully, we will have left the foundation for some more success, which we'll certainly applaud if they can bring some more, maybe more conservative, Arab governments in line. And then the last point is, we still have to deal with the Palestinian issue. We need peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. And that has to be part of the agenda of the overall Abraham Accords, and we weren't able to get the Palestinians to the table. I wish we had been. But I think there are a number of carrots and sticks that'll bring them to the table, and I think our European partners, seeing the success that the Abraham Accords will help us on that front.

Secretary Condoleezza Rice: Alright, I'm going to turn to Jake. If I could just mention on the Palestinians: of course, one problem is that the Palestinians actually need internal reform themselves. They need a leadership reform. They haven't had an election in a couple of decades. So, it's a bit of a challenge to figure out how to move the Palestinian portfolio forward. Even under the current, I think better circumstances in the Middle East. Jake, can you talk a little bit? This is a baton from the Middle East. It's rare that you're actually passed a positive baton from the Middle East, I think the Abraham Accords is one.

Jake Sullivan: Yeah, and in fact, when the first Accords with UAE Bahrain were announced, it was in the heat of a political campaign, a presidential campaign, and then candidate Biden made no bones about coming out saying: "I think this is a good thing. I think this is a positive thing." He said consistently over the course of the last several months that he would like to: carry forward this initiative; deepen the cooperation between the countries that have signed the Accords; make real mineralization that has taken root; as well, as Robert referenced, add in additional countries as well. He sees that as being positive for security in the region, positive for economic development, in the region, and positive for America's national interest for many of the reasons that Robert laid out. So, one of the things that we will be doing in the coming weeks and months is thinking about how we make sure that the seeds that have now been planted actually grow into the full kind of cooperation across multiple dimensions and

these relationships can move forward and how that can, to Robert's point, really help us really help the United States advance our interests. And then I just, I would briefly mention, because one very positive thing we will be building on, Robert mentioned the Quad, which for those watching who don't know is United States, Japan, Australia, and India. There too I think we really want to carry forward and build on that format, that mechanism which we see as fundamental a foundation upon which to build substantial American policy in the Indo Pacific region. So those are, you know, in two different theaters in the world and two initiatives that I think you will see continuity and an effort to reinforce and carry forward steps that have been taken by the previous Administration.

Condoleezza Rice: Let me, Jake, ask you about Iran in that context. Because, of course, one of the problems for the the Sunni Arab states is Iran, and particularly its advanced missile capability now, which has improved significantly over the last few years. How do you think, I know that there's that desire to to continue to work to get back to doing something about the Iranian nuclear program, but how do you think about Iran in the context of a changing Middle East?

Jake Sullivan: Well, the first thing that I would say is, while there are areas of real agreement that I just laid out, both on the Abraham Accords and the Quad, when it comes to the question of how to approach Iran and threat it imposes, there are real differences between the approach the Trump administration took and the approach the Biden administration will take. It starts from a sober analysis of the state of affairs, which is that Iran's nuclear program has advanced dramatically over the course of the past couple of years, they are significantly closer to a nuclear weapon than they were when the previous administration withdrew from the JCPOA. Their ballistic missile capability has also advanced dramatically; to be fair, it advanced under the Obama administration, but it is accelerated over the course the past four years.

Their recklessness, and sponsorship of terrorism in the region has not abated and in some areas has accelerated as well. Their direct attacks on partners in the region, their support for proxies who are getting more audacious both in attacks on U.S. forces and our partners in the region—all of this is the inheritance that we take, and our view is that if we can get back to diplomacy, and put Iran's nuclear program in a box that will create a platform upon which to build a global effort, including partners and allies in the region and in Europe and elsewhere, to take on the other significant threats Iran poses, including on the ballistic missile issue. I've said before publicly, and will reiterate, that we are going to have to address this considerable threat, we're going to have to address Iran's other bad behavior, malign behavior across the region. But from our perspective, a critical early priority has to be to deal with what is a escalating nuclear crisis as they move closer and closer to having enough fissile material for a weapon and we would like to make sure that we reestablish some of the parameters and constraints around the program that have fallen away over the course of the past few years.

Condoleezza Rice: Thank you. I'm going to try a little bit here of a lightning round, I'm going to give you a country or a set of countries and ask the Robert, where did you leave it and Jake, where to do you want to take it. So, Iraq and Afghanistan, Robert.

Robert O'Brien: So drawdown, starting to end those forever wars but leaving a significant capability there for counterterrorism to to protect our other government agencies that are doing important work, but also, importantly, something that's been overlooked: a very significant NATO commitment to both

Afghanistan and Iraq. We now have more NATO troops in Afghanistan than U.S. troops, and we're getting close to parity in Iraq. And so, we're seeing Britain sharing with our allies, NATO, and we're drawing down American troops will free up those those troops either to come home or to be redeployed in other places. Hopefully, the peace treaty, the peace agreement with the Taliban will hold. We just don't want to see any I spent a lot of time going to Dover for dignified transfers. I know you did some fair, right, Condi, over your years, and fortunately, since February, we haven't had to do those trips for at least combat deaths, coming out of Afghanistan, and that was something we were very pleased to see. But again, that's a fragile agreement, we'll have to hope that it holds and support the Afghans if they struggle and then again in a similar situation supporting a fragile Iraqi government, especially given the Shiite militia groups and Iranian intervention in Iraq. But I think drawing down on those areas is a legacy of the Trump administration that we're all proud of.

Condoleezza Rice: Jake?

Jake Sullivan: So, on Iraq, I actually think Iraq is a really interesting story of continuity from the Obama administration to the Trump administration to the Biden administration. The Trump administration picked up a counter-ISIS campaign that was really driven by local partners with relatively modest direct American military involvement, carried that forward to remove territorial control from ISIS, but the challenge still remains and our presence in Iraq, focused on that counterterrorism mission and focused on helping our partners in the Iraqi security forces, is something that we are reviewing right now. And we welcome, also, what Robert just said about the fact that not only are there NATO trainers on the ground, the NATO mission may grow here over time, in terms of its capacity to train Iraqi security forces. In Afghanistan, there is an agreement between the United States and the Taliban that we inherit. That agreement has a May 1 deadline for the withdrawal of the remaining 2,500 American forces in Afghanistan.

That agreement also imposes a set of considerable conditions on the Taliban. Three, in particular, stand out to us: The first is that they, in a bonafide and sustainable way, cut ties with terrorist groups, including al Qaeda. The second is that they meaningfully reduce levels of violence and contribute towards ceasefires. And the third is that they participate in a real way, not a fake way, in negotiations with the Afghan government. So, what we're doing right now is taking a hard look at the extent to which the Taliban are, in fact, complying with those three conditions and in that context, we will make decisions about our force posture and our diplomatic strategy going forward.

Condoleezza Rice: Robert, Russia, where did you leave it? Jake, where do you want to take it? Actually quite a bit of ferment right now in Russia around Navalny's return.

Robert O'Brien: Well, first of all, Navalny is an incredibly courageous man, and for him to return to Russia after what happened to him is an inspiration to all of us. And again, it's great to see Russians, look, we've never had a problem with the Russian people, we've never had a problem with the Chinese people, we've always had a problem with their governments. And it's wonderful to see the Russian people maybe taking some sort of a stand, although they're doing it at a high price, and that's something we've got to be cognizant of, and do what we can to support them in a way that doesn't lead to more unrest and death and imprisonment of folks that want democracy in Russia. Number two is arms control. We were trying to find a way to advance the New START agreement and negotiations with General Patrushev and I think we've laid the foundation for some further strong negotiating positions for the U.S. as the New START is looked at, but we've got to somehow corral the Russian warheads that

are outside of the New START agreement. That's an arms control priority, I know, for the new administration as it was for us as well. And then third, we have some Americans wrongfully detained in Russia, we'd like to get them home. And finally, we have to support our allies and partners in Eastern Europe, bring in democracies: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, all the things that you worked on earlier in your career as the director of the NSC bringing about the rise of democracy in Eastern Europe we need to protect our allies against a revanchist Russia.... inaudible

Condoleezza Rice: Jake, reportedly the President had a phone call with Vladimir Putin, which is always a joy for an American president, I might say. Jake, where do you want to take Russia?

Jake Sullivan: Well, I want to say one final word on Afghanistan. I'm so focused on the U.S.-Taliban agreement, I neglected, on Afghanistan, to add the point that what the previous administration did in terms of setting up and supporting negotiations between the stakeholders in Afghanistan toward a just, durable political settlement to that conflict, that basic frame is something that we very much support, and we want to support negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban and others to get to that just and sustainable outcome in addition to looking at the U.S.-Taliban agreement and what it means for our forces going forward. On Russia, President Biden takes a clear-eyed, hard-headed practical approach to this relationship.

It is going to be challenging and difficult because Russia poses threats across multiple dimensions, and part of our inheritance, in fact, is having to deal with how to respond effectively to some of these threads and challenges. Whether it's on Solarwinds hack, or the poisoning, use of the chemical weapon, against Navalny, or the reports of bounties against on the heads of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, or for that matter, continuing interference in American democracy, including interference in the 2020 presidential election, and the United States will review those issues, will look to get to the bottom of the scope and scale of each of them, and then will make determinations for how we respond at a time at a time and manner of our choosing.

But, as Robert said, we also very much need to deal with the fundamental question of strategic stability between two significant nuclear powers. And here, early on, the Biden administration, reached out to Russia and said, we would like to do a full extension of the New START treatment by five years and get it done before the treaty expires on February 5. That was a 15-day period from when we took over to when it expires, and we believe that we will be able to achieve that. But that, to Robert's point, is not the end of the story, it is the beginning of the story on what is going to have to be serious, sustained negotiations around a whole set of nuclear challenges and threats that fall outside of the New start agreement, as well as other emerging security challenges as well. And so we will at once happened to be able to impose costs and consequences for Russia's aggressive behavior and threats to the United States and our allies, and at the same time, be able to have credible, serious, clear-eyed negotiations with them on hard strategic stability issues. That's the approach that this administration will take.

Condoleezza Rice: Our time is coming to an end, and actually, what I'd like to do is to actually close with a question about something that USIP sponsored yesterday, we had a session on German unification and that kind of great moment when Europe seemed to be whole free and at peace. And we were very close to our allies. If there is a region that is in a particular kind of turmoil. These days, it's actually Europe, some of our strongest and most enduring allies who share our values who have the reach to have an impact on relations with China, an impact, of course, on relations with Russia. As you said, Robert, are really pulling their weight now, in many ways in Afghanistan and Iraq. But it seems, in many ways, a

relationship that is in need of refreshing. So, Robert, can you just say a word about how you felt about the European relationship when you left, particularly, you over saw Brexit? And then, Jake, a little bit about how to think about relations with our oldest set of allies?

Robert O'Brien: Well, I think that's a great question and an interesting one related to Europe. Because as we talk about Europe as a whole, it's really a it's a number of different countries, I think it was Kissinger who said, when I want to call Europe, who do I call? We had very good, my closest relationships as national security advisor with my European counterparts. And I think that will be the same for Jake. And one of the things I spoke with many of them during the last couple of weeks of the administration, to reassure them as to the strength and resilience of United States.

And that we're going to continue to be there for them, and the strength and resilience of our institutions, but also that we're going to have a lot of continuity in American foreign policy. I think you've seen in our discussion here today, there are things we may differ on, whether it's Iran or some other issues, but there's a lot of continuity, and there's a lot of consistency in U.S. foreign policy, and that crosses over, Republican and Democratic administrations. As far as the Europeans themselves, the French were a tremendous ally for us and were highly capable and were often overlooked, but they were fighting with us all through the Sahel, they helped us secure a number of our hostages, we took out a number of al Qaeda leaders in Western Africa with our French colleagues. They've got 5-or-6,000 troops deployed in the region, we have less than 1,000. So, again, another great example of burden sharing. We have tremendous relationships with the Dutch, with the Danes, and the British on the security front, on the foreign policy front and addressing the questions of Huawei, the Germans are always a little bit difficult. And they they have stronger relations with China and Russia, perhaps more than perhaps we would, like the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, was an area where we had a lot of divergence with the Germans, they sell millions of cars, probably more cars in China now than they do in here the U.S.

So, so German interests do diverge from U.S. interests, from time to time, in big ways, and they have incredible sway over Europe. So, that's one of the challenges that Jake and President Biden might we'll have to work on. It was a challenge that we certainly had in the Trump administration is how do you bring Europe along when most of Europe, and most European countries will be with us on key issues. But Germany, which really dominates Brussels and dominates Europe, often takes a very different view from U.S. So, that's perhaps a bigger challenge than even Brexit. In my view, again, that Atlantic alliance is core to the United States, as Jake mentioned earlier, when you talk about the great democracies of Brazil and India and Europe, together with the United States, it's it's a team that can't be beat by the authoritarian countries by Iran, Russia, China, even in concert. So, we need to make sure that relationship is strong, and I think Jake can address this, but I think you're gonna see a real commitment to that transatlantic alliance in the Biden-Harris administration.

Condoleeza Rice: Jake, over to you for the last word.

Jake Sullivan: Yeah, you know, I'll pick up exactly where Robert left off. The foundation upon which we are going to effectively be able to prevail in geopolitical competition, and effectively prevail against these significant transnational challenges that threaten America's way of life. That foundation is going to be on the foundation of our alliances, and none are more critical than the transatlantic Alliance. You know, Dean Acheson, after the end of the Second World War, spoke about American strategy with this phrase, "situations of strength." He thought that the basic thrust and purpose of American foreign policy

had to be to create situations of strength, so that when we contended with an adversary, or we contended with any kind of significant challenge, we were at a point of maximum advantage in dealing with it.

And that's basically the mindset that I come to this job with, which is how do we create those situations of strength. And when it comes to Europe, getting on the same page with the Europeans, whether it's to do with China's trade and technology abuses, whether it's to do with the climate crisis, or it's to do with the common challenge we each face from domestic violent extremism, that's going to be a way in which we can create a situation of strength, but. As Robert also pointed out, it's not as simple as just picking up the phone and saying, hey, let's all get together and decide on a common approach we can do in a day or week, because we don't have entirely aligned perspectives on every one of these issues, we do have some challenges, even between us on trade issues and other things, it's going to take work. And it's going to take deep consultation and it's going to take persistence at trying to get to a common picture of the threats and challenges we face, and then a common picture of the actions we have to take jointly.

I think China is right at the top of the list of things that we've got to work together on and where there is work to do to get fully aligned. But there are many other issues as well. And so as Robert noted, it is going to be a major emphasis of this administration, not just to deal with the rest of the world with Europe, but also to work with Europe on the challenges Europe facing internally, and, frankly, the challenges the United States faces internally as well.

Condoleezza Rice: Well, thank you very much. Again, I want to thank Steve Hadley, another National Security Advisor in recovery. I would like to thank Lise Grande of course and the U.S. Institute for Peace. I especially want to thank Robert for your service over these years, and the excellent way in which you conducted yourself and the conduct of American foreign policy and, of course, for the smooth transition to Jake and to the Biden administration. I think there is no more important message delivered by this setting of the passing of the baton that American foreign policy—in fact, America—is at its best when it can find bipartisan consensus on our values, not always on our policy, but on our values, and a commitment to the American people that those of us who have been and those of us who are now charged with the conduct of American foreign policy, will do so in a bipartisan way, consistent with the view of the founders, that it takes sacrifice and constant contestation, but more than anything, it takes devotion and commitment to the American way. And with that, I will say to you, Jake, all the best. We're all there for you if you ever need a phone call, and we'll be cheering for you and Vice President, President Biden and for Vice President Harris. Thanks very much and back to you, Lise.

Lise Grande: I hope everyone joins us in expressing our deep gratitude to National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, to Ambassador Robert O'Brien, and to Secretary Condoleezza Rice, for their wisdom, their leadership, and their service to the United States of America. We are now pleased to share video reflections on this momentous time in our country's history from each of our partners - from Fred Kempe, president and CEO of the Atlantic Council; from Kenneth Weinstein, president emeritus and Walter P. Stern distinguished fellow at Hudson Institute; from Thomas Carothers, senior vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; from James Jay Carafano, vice president of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute at the Heritage Foundation; from Ambassador Gordon Gray, chief operating officer at the Center for American Progress; and from Kori Schake, the director of foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute. We're very pleased to begin with Atlantic Council President and CEO Fred Kempe.

Frederick Kempe: Greetings, I am Fred Kempe, president and CEO of the Atlantic Council. Four decades ago, President Ronald Reagan began his first inaugural address with the following observation. And I quote, "To a few of us here today, this is a solemn and most momentous occasion, and yet, in the history of our nation, it is a commonplace occurrence." The orderly transfer of authority, as called for in the Constitution, routinely takes place, as it has for almost two centuries, and few of us stop to think how unique we really are. In the eyes of many in the world, this every four-year ceremony, we accept as normal, is nothing less than a miracle. In this year, where a mob threaten that miracle during the violence of January 6 on Capitol Hill, we confronted both the vulnerabilities and the resilience of our democracy. Resilience with the return of legislators, a few hours later, to perform their constitutional duty of certifying the electoral results. It is in that spirit, recognizing those vulnerabilities and celebrating that resilience, that I want to thank Lise Grande, president of the United States Institute of Peace, for gathering us virtually for this particularly significant edition of *Passing the Baton*. For the past 20 years, USIP has convened national security leaders after every change in administration to affirm the peaceful transfer of power and the bipartisan character of American foreign policy. A particular thanks goes to Steve Hadley, former national security advisor, USIP Board chair, and Atlantic Council Board executive vice chair. Lise and I are fortunate to share the benefits of Steve's wise counsel, judgment and leadership. Most importantly, thanks go to the baton passer and catcher, Robert O'Brien, the former national security advisor to President Trump, and Jake Sullivan, national security advisor to President Biden. We were fortunate that Condoleezza Rice, former secretary of state, and national security advisor herself, guided their conversation.

The dramatic events of January 6 led the United States and the democratic world to the edge of the abyss. We could glimpse what the national and global ramifications might be, if American democracy were to weaken, or even collapse. Though disaster was averted, we at the Atlantic Council believe a fuller recovery of our democracy can only come through studying the lessons of what brought us to this precipice. In politics, the reality is that the language and actions of our leaders alter the boundaries of what's viewed as permissible in public behavior. At about three in the morning on January 7, Senate Chaplain Barry Black said, and I quote, "These tragedies have reminded us that words matter. The power of life and death is in the tunnel." Through the three decades that I served as Wall Street Journal reporter and editor, before coming to the Atlantic Council, I saw that truth in action, in a positive sense, during the democratic changes in the Soviet Union, the Soviet Bloc, and elsewhere in the world. Now we see the power of language in a more negative way, through the authoritarian resurgence in places like China and Russia, through the rise of angry nationalism in weakening democracies around the world, and through a global recession of democratic rights over the past decade, as measured by Freedom House. It's in that context that we gather today to celebrate the resilience of democracy, the passing of the baton. It's in that context that we at the Atlantic Council have reflected on what the recent string of events mean to our values-driven, nonpartisan, international work.

First, it means we will advance that work with even greater resolve. Our mission of shaping the global future, constructively alongside partners and allies, will never be complete. The dangers will come in different forms and different times. We need to adapt our responses to those emerging challenges, whether it be an economic crisis, or the worst pandemic in a century. Second, it means that the job of principled international leadership and partnership begins at home. The United States has been a desired international partner because of our democratic ideals, the resilience of our democratic

institutions, the strength of our open markets, and our willingness to work with others in common cause for larger, shared interests. Finally, the challenges of our times make concerted action more urgent. We face a new era of great power competition, a sharpening systemic contest between authoritarianism and democracy, stresses on the international order of rules and institutions, and uncertainties about U.S. global leadership. This all amid unprecedented technological change and amid rising climate challenges. None of these tests can be met by a United States that is so divided, or by an international community that lacks common purpose.

The trauma of January 6 should prompt us to redouble our efforts within the United States, and among our allies and partners, to strengthen our principles and to strengthen our bonds. That is the purpose of the Atlantic Council. My German immigrant parents, who sacrificed so much to embrace the ideals of America for themselves and for their families, would have been alarmed at the violence at the Capitol. Yet, they would have had faith that the country of their dreams would rise to that challenge, and learn from it, and improve as that country always had. The criminal acts against our democracy failed. But it will be actions now that determine whether the problems we face can be a catalyst for American renewal and make us stronger as a country and as a global community, or not. In the 60th year of our existence, we at the Atlantic Council believe there is no better time to come together in our country and in our global community in common cause. Otherwise, we would have missed the lessons of our collective glimpse into the abyss. Thank you so much for your attention.

Kenneth Weinstein: Good afternoon. I applaud the U.S. Institute of Peace and the partners for pulling the *Passing the Baton* event together. The 2021 version of *Passing the Baton* is critical in the aftermath of the divisive election and the odious events of January 6 and the day of infamy at the U.S. Capitol. The perpetrators of violence who tried to disrupt the peaceful certification of the Electoral College should, and will, be held accountable. It is incumbent upon all of us to do all we can to build on the beautiful spirit of the next morning, the morning of January 7. Our institutions held that morning and an incumbent vice president, whose own life was threatened hours earlier by a violent mob, fulfilled his constitutional duty by certifying the victory of his electoral competitors. We need to build bridges to one another and restore the broad civic trust essential to a healthy and functioning democracy. A central pillar of that broad trust has been a common strategic vision in foreign and defense policy that transcends party lines.

In these troubled times, I would encourage the Biden administration to be magnanimous, and draw on key strategic frameworks that the Trump administration put in place because these policies, many of which have broad bipartisan support, are in America's interest and align with our democratic principles. First and foremost is to recognize the urgency of the cross-domain focus on China as a strategic competitor. The Trump administration ended five decades of strategic naivete, undertaking significant strategic realignment and restructuring our international financial instruments in order to meet the unprecedented economic, technological, and security challenge China poses. This was an incredible achievement, one done hand-in-hand with the Japanese, the Australians, and other allies and partners, most notably India. I applaud the Biden team for appointing a uniquely qualified Indo-Pacific coordinator at the National Security Council, Kurt M. Campbell, who is well placed to build on the importance of the

quad, another cornerstone of Trump administration policy that followed on the Bush and Obama administrations.

Moreover, by publicly reaffirming the importance of the defense of a democratic Taiwan, and raising the visibility of official ties in Taiwan, the Trump administration put China on warning that we were serious about defending the first island chain. I applaud the presence of Taiwan's formidable representative to the United States, Hsiao Bi-khim, at President Biden's inauguration and the strong language defending Taiwan we've seen out of the State Department in the opening days of the Biden administration. The Trump administration also deserves significant credit for transforming the Israeli-Arab relationship, facilitating Israel's peace agreements with Arab countries, and warmed diplomatic relations with the UAE and Bahrain, in particular, and a historic achievement that ends the narrative that the Arab world would never recognize Israel without an agreement with the Palestinians. These agreements point the way towards a region of peace, mutual coexistence, trade and economic development. Iran, of course, continues to violently oppose progress towards peace. And while we can expect a departure from the Trump administration's maximum pressure campaign towards Tehran, which was centered on powerful economic sanctions, it is important that these kinds of policy disagreements don't undermine the broader importance of sanctions as a key tool for U.S. policy. Sanctions relief remains one of Russia's most urgent demands from the United States. And I would argue, it is essential that we keep sanctions in place. They deny vital financing and resources to rogue regimes, terrorists and bad actors and reduce their capacity to engage in malign activity. They also play a defensive role by preventing enemies from exploiting the U.S. financial system, especially kleptocratic authoritarian regimes. The broad use of the global Magnitsky Act by the Trump administration was notable. I suspect it will also be a cornerstone of President Biden's commitment to defending human rights and, also, to tackling transnational corruption as a national security priority.

Let me conclude on grounds of optimism, and not simply because our institutions tested on that awful day of January 6 yielded to the beautiful dawn of the seventh. At a much more concrete level, the Biden team recognizes, and numerous advisors have noted this, including National Security Advisor Sullivan, that President Trump understood better than most of Washington policy experts that American foreign policy, especially American international economic policy, can't be divorced from its impact on the home front. The Biden team comes to office driven in part by a call for a middle-class foreign policy, cognizant of the price to be paid when the divide between the grandiose schemes of foreign policy elites and average Americans is simply too great. Heeding the cautious wisdom of the American people and proudly defending our democratic principles is key to restoring a deeply fractured trust. Many thanks.

Thomas Carothers: Hi, I am Thomas Carothers. I'm senior vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. It's my pleasure to be with you. Among the many challenges that the Biden administration faces in renovating U.S. foreign policy is the question of how to re-engage with U.S. support for democracy and human rights in the world. It hardly needs saying that the state of democracy in the world is troubled. Many democracies are struggling to achieve the democratic aspirations they set for themselves a generation ago. Many established democracies, including our own, are struggling, as well. And a number of non-democratic powers are asserting themselves in the world in ways that work against a more democratic world. Although U.S. interests are complex, we can boil it down in a simple way to say that the United States is a safer, more prosperous country if it lives in a

more democratic world. Thus, it behooves the United States to find ways to support democracy. Now, there's been a consensus on this basic idea over the last 30 years. Both Republican and Democratic administrations alike have made supporting democracy abroad at least one part of U.S. foreign policy. It doesn't mean it's an overriding interest. The United States has other economic, security interests that often cut against democracy. The United States has been consistent in pursuit of this goal, and many times, it's made some serious mistakes. But nevertheless, this has been a mainstay of U.S. foreign policy, and, I think, needs to be in the future, as well. Unfortunately, during the last administration, the U.S. fell away from it a bit, and more, in quite a few cases. At the presidential level, we did not see the engagement on democracy and human rights that previous presidents had shown. U.S. diplomacy was not always there when there were difficult democratic junctures in other countries that could have used external support. And, of course, at home, democracy didn't shine as an example to the world.

So as the Biden administration seeks to reengage on this, in some ways, what it needs to do is fairly obvious. The U.S. president needs to speak out on this issue, speak forcefully. He needs to raise it with foreign leaders who are facing democratic challenges or who are actively working against democracy. The United States needs to return to the multilateral fold at a number of places and engage on democracy issues. And the United States needs to continue the democracy assistance that they've been providing. Fortunately, even during the toughest times over the last administration, U.S. democracy assistance continued, thanks to bipartisan support from the U.S. Congress. And the United States needs to continue that assistance, step it up, and renovate, as well. Now as it does all of these things, the Biden administration faces a special challenge, which is, it's really pretty obvious, unfortunately, for the world, that U.S. democracy has been in a very troubled state. Not just the insurrection on the Capitol on January 6, the challenges to the free and fair elections that the United States held in November, and other violations of democratic norms by politicians over the last several years.

Thus, the United States needs to take onboard this troubled democratic reality as it reengages on democracy support. How can we do that? I think three things are really important in that effort. First, the United States needs to approach democracy support with a strong emphasis on partnership. The idea that the United States is the natural global leader on democracy unfortunately is in question in the world. And it can't just assert that. Instead, it needs to radiate out the message that most established democracies try to support democracy outside their borders. Whether it's Canada, or Australia, or South Korea, or France, or the European Union, or Sweden, or many others. And the United States needs to pursue a partnership-oriented approach, in which it looks at what some of those countries are doing and tries to support them in their efforts. So, Canada, for example, is putting a lot of emphasis on gender inclusion in its policies abroad. Sweden has been emphasizing human rights in many different ways. Great Britain has been pursuing anti-corruption policies that are important. In all of these domains, and others, the United States can move in alongside and say, "How can we support? We want to be part of this." Because by pursuing a partnership, it lowers the idea that this is a sort of special American preoccupation and allows non-democratic countries to push back and say, "Oh, this is just an American geopolitical ploy." Instead, the United States should do a partnership approach, and say, "This is something that all established democracies do and we're just one of them." Second, the United States needs to move fully away from the idea, really an outdated notion, that democracy support is an export venture. And instead, think of it as a mutual learning endeavor. We have trouble at home. Other countries face similar problems. Let's find ways to work together on these challenges. So, if the Biden administration identifies a few key areas of challenge for the United States, like election administration,

polarization, the need for electoral reforms of different types, and then goes to other countries and says, "We're working on these things. You're facing these challenges. Let's work together. Let's learn from you. Let's bring some of your experts to our country. Let's have some people from our country go to your country and work with you. Let's pursue this in a mutual fashion." I think it'll find a better hearing on these issues. So mutual learning, rather than export. And then, finally, smart messaging. The United States, U.S. officials, when they go to reassert the United States as a pro-democratic actor, we really need to have a smart messaging strategy that doesn't just broadcast that "We're back. We're here. We want to support democracy." Instead, it starts with a strong dose of humility and realism and says, "We are struggling. We are facing this challenge. U.S. democracy has been ailing in different ways. But we're on it. We're going to get to that. And we're going to integrate our efforts at home with our efforts abroad, in a spirit of humility and solidarity." If the right messaging is done, I think we'll get a hearing, again, and a better audience for these things. So, in sum, democracy is in trouble in the world. The United States needs to step up. This is a big opportunity to do so. But it has to be done in ways that are consistent with the realities of both what's happening with U.S. democracy at home and what the situation is abroad. If we bring those things into alignment, I think a Biden administration will be able to return the United States to a valuable place who is a major supporter of international democracy and contribute, in significant ways, to American security and prosperity by doing so. Thanks for your attention.

James Jay Carafano: Well, I want to thank the U.S. Institute of Peace for inviting us to participate. USIP and Heritage have been great partners throughout the years. We've worked on a lot of projects and have a lot of success. And I think the reason for that is that we always kind of live by the rule that you put policy ahead of politics. I think it worked for us and I really think it is the magic formula that we should all be focusing on going ahead and dealing with the really great challenges that we have in the future. Certainly, I think topping that list is dealing with the issues of great power competition. I don't think that is a bumper sticker. I don't think it's a Republican mantra, or a democratic mantra. I think it's the reality of the world that we live in today. And if we don't adapt our policies to deal with the challenges it presents, then we're missing, the really, the great generation challenge that we face in our lives.

I think nuclear issues are something we're all going to have to pay a lot more attention to. Part of great power competition is achieving strategic and conventional balance. Part of that is the important role of strategic and conventional deterrence. And so, I think we'll be talking a lot more about nuclear systems arms control, and I think it's just an issue that all of us need to be prepared to take a lot more seriously.

As we enter into a post-COVID world, I think there's an important role for American leadership in leading the post-COVID economic recovery of the free world. I don't think that's traditional trade deals or protectionist policies, or kind of traditional foreign assistance. I think we need new models and I think the private sector needs to play an important role and government needs, really needs, to facilitate that. So, I think it's something that we all need to give a lot more attention to and talk an awful lot more about.

And finally, I think we need to take a hard look at the Atlantic region. We talk a lot about the Indo-Pacific strategy and how we bring prosperity and stability to that region. We've kind of taken the Atlantic region for granted, from the Arctic, to the Antarctic, from Europe to Canada, Latin America to Africa. But

I think it's a part of the world that we have to pay attention to as a holistic region and think about what policies can we implement to ensure the continued stability and prosperity of the region. Again, I really want to commend USIP for this really important event and their leadership. Thank you for having me.

Ambassador Gordon Gray: Thanks for inviting me and the Center for American Progress to participate in this important event. Our democracy faces enormous challenges. Earlier this month, each of us bore witness to images of chaos and rioting, at the very heart of our democracy, incited, unfortunately, by then-President Trump. The images are a visceral reminder of the obstacles that we must overcome. The new administration inherits a damaged union, one where disinformation and division at home threaten our national security. The national security divisions on the home front will also hinder incoming officials from focusing on foreign policy problems, be they rising competition with China, cyber-attacks from Russia, or other brewing conflicts around the world. And while we are rightly focused on the problems of today, there are also clear opportunities for progress going forward. As we've seen, when U.S. leadership is absent on the global stage, it leaves a void. But the United States has an opportunity to fill that void with easy, early wins. We can harness U.S. expertise to help ensure global vaccination efforts are successful. We can rebuild diplomatic relationships with key partners, such as NATO, and with democratic allies, such as Canada and South Korea. And we can bring back a robust policy process based on facts and expert judgment, rather than on capricious tweets.

At the Center for American Progress, or CAP, as we call it, we're dedicated to advancing a progressive and sustainable national security agenda. With that in mind, we recently published a 100-day report on steps the new administration can take. First, we need to rebuild and rebalance our national security tools and institutions. There's long been consensus among national security experts that our diplomatic capacity has not kept pace with our military capacity. Rebuilding diplomatic institutions and tools, in conjunction with restoring trust and accountability, will ensure U.S. foreign policy officials are best equipped to carry out their jobs and meet future challenges. Second, we need to prioritize and uphold our democratic values and support human rights in both U.S., foreign, and domestic policy. And this has long been a widely shared bipartisan view, but with mixed results in actual policy. But again, unfortunately, the past few years have done real damage to the U.S., with Trump's embrace of dictators, and as we witnessed on January 6, his incitement of violence. The Biden administration's Summit for Democracy can be an important step, but it will take concrete policy actions on top of that to ensure progress at home and abroad. Third, we should end wars responsibly. The Biden administration will need to find ways to wind these conflicts down while promoting sustainable peace. Hopefully, President Biden and now Secretary of Defense Austin will find bipartisan agreement about how to reconfigure DOD's resources to do so. Fourth, we need to recalibrate global relationships. And here I would include adversaries like China and Russia, challenging partners like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and allies who have been given the cold shoulder, such as our European partners. I think there's much bipartisan agreement here, as last week's confirmation hearings reflect, particularly in the face of rising competition with China and the need to cooperate with allies. While there may be different perspectives on how to manage these relations, bringing experienced diplomats back to the State Department is an important first step. And finally, we have to tackle global challenges, such as climate change, mass migration, new technologies and, of course, the pandemic. While there's bipartisan agreement on the scope of these challenges, there are, of course, differences on the right policy solutions. Still, I think there's also a shared understanding that one country alone cannot tackle these problems, but that bringing U.S.

expertise and muscle back to the international community could help spur cooperation and new solutions.

Let me finish, if I may, on a personal note. I had the privilege of serving as our ambassador to Tunisia 10 years ago, when the Arab Spring began. I was impressed and gratified by the widespread bipartisan support from senators such as John McCain, John Kerry and Joseph Lieberman, senators who understood and backed Tunisian aspirations for democracy. Looking forward, I hope that we will see our approach to foreign policy mirror theirs, and we can return to what Senator Arthur Vandenberg liked to call “un-partisanship,” where national interests, rather than party politics, drive the agenda. So, thank you again for inviting CAP to participate, and thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Kori Schake: I'm Kori Schake, the director of the Foreign and Defense Policy Studies program at the American Enterprise Institute. And on behalf of our president, Robert Doar, and the fellows of AEI, we are grateful to be participating in the U.S. Institute of Peace's *Passing the Baton* project. It's so important for us to restore bipartisan collaboration on the issues most pressing for our country. The American Enterprise Institute is a public policy think tank dedicated to defending human dignity, expanding human potential, and building a freer and safer world. The work of our scholars and staff advances ideas rooted in our belief in democracy, free enterprise, American strength and global leadership, solidarity with those at the periphery of our society, and a pluralistic entrepreneurial culture.

In foreign and defense policy, we have been doing an enormous amount of work on using the tools of free society to band together with likeminded countries to effectively manage the rise of a China that is increasingly a threat, not just to its neighbors, but to the global order itself. We are also doing groundbreaking work, coming up with software that will help people who are not defense budget experts to see where in the defense budget we are accruing risk by underfunding our strategy. And a third area we are doing a lot of work, and we think also has the basis for bipartisan cooperation, is identifying areas in the Trump administration's foreign policy, where even if some of the means by which they were trying to achieve objectives need course correction, we ought to be careful not to throw out the advances that they nonetheless made for protecting American interests. And we're enthusiastic about teaming up with the other organizations, under the U.S. Institute of Peace's banner for this project, to rebuild bipartisan collaboration, because, of course, our country is strongest and safest when we work together.

Ambassador George Moose: My name is George Moose, and I have the pleasure of serving as vice chair of the Board of Directors at the U.S. Institute of Peace. Now, let me begin by thanking our panelists and partner organization representatives for sending us off with those reflections. As their comments made clear, there is a broadly shared understanding of the momentous opportunities and daunting challenges that lie ahead for American foreign policy and national security. Their remarks also affirm that there is an equally shared understanding of the nonpartisan character of those opportunities and challenges. The issues are certainly multifaceted and complex, and they will demand the conservative attention and effort of our entire foreign policy community. Let me offer special thanks to our principal speakers and participants, Admiral Michelle Howard, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, outgoing National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Their very presence

here today reaffirms the importance of standing united against threats to global peace and security. And last, but not least, I wish to thank you, our audience, for joining us for this important conversation. A recording of this event can be found on our website at usip.org. We will be hosting other bipartisan conversations on foreign policy and national security in the weeks to come, and we hope you will join us. We look forward to working with our partners here in the U.S. and around the world and continuing to play a leading role in the effort to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable peace. I thank you.