Virtual Event | A Conversation with Congressman Mike Turner on Ukraine

TRANSCRIPT

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- Representative Mike Turner, U.S. Representative, Ohio’s 10th District and Ranking Member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
- Kenneth R. Weinstein, Walter P. Stern Distinguished Fellow, Hudson Institute

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A video of the event is available: https://www.hudson.org/events/2076-virtual-event-a-conversation-with-congressman-mike-turner-on-ukraine22022

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Ken Weinstein:
Welcome to Hudson Institute. I'm Ken Weinstein, the Walter P. Stern Distinguished Fellow at Hudson, and I'm absolutely delighted to welcome back to Hudson Institute Congressman Mike Turner of Ohio. Congressman Turner needs no introduction here at Hudson or elsewhere in Washington, he's an important voice in Congress on transatlantic security issues. He's the ranking member on the House Intelligence Committee, he's a long-time member of the House Armed Services Committee. He has also been quite involved in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, which is a consultative body of parliamentarians from 30 NATO member states, and about a dozen other NATO partners and associate nations. Having served as president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, he chairs today one of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's five standing committees, the Defense and Security Committee.

So honored, delighted to welcome you back. Let me begin, Congressman, first of all, by getting your assessment of how we got to the situation. Reports are from the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Kyiv that there are now approximately 150,000 Russian troops amassed along Ukraine's borders. How did we get here?

Congressman Mike Turner:
I think that's an interesting question, because to talk in the context of the passage of time and Ukraine, you of course start with the Budapest Memorandum, of where the nations had come together after the fall of Soviet Union. And the Ukraine had resident within it, as it declared its independence, a number of legacy nuclear weapons in the Soviet Union that they agreed to surrender to Russia in exchange for the territorial integrity guarantees from both United States and Russia. The agreement didn’t have an obligation for the United States to defend that, but it had an assertion by both nations that they would not violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine. And then you fast forward to when Russia began its invasion of Ukraine and annexed Crimea, and the scene of Ukrainian President Poroshenko on the House floor addressing a joint session of Congress, where the Obama administration was denying them lethal aid to defend themselves, and Poroshenko saying, "I cannot defend my nation with blankets."

And think from the Obama administration forward, that we haven't done enough to give them legal aid and to give them the lethal aid and the assistance, and basically the democracies of the world coming together in identifying Ukraine as important, that has left it in this vulnerable situation, as Russia now looks to be on the verge of perhaps an invasion, but is threatening the very existence and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Ken Weinstein:
You talked about the situation in 2014, and I'm sure you were in Kyiv then, I was in Kyiv then with the Radio-Free Europe Board, which I served on, and there was a sense in Ukraine at that point, there was utter frustration with the Obama administration on a number of counts, partly outsourcing things then to Angela Merkel to handle the Ukraine account, the president's slow realization of the so-called "little green men" and what was going on, the president's unwillingness to take action, in part because he didn't want to disrupt the apple cart of the Iran negotiations.

But one of the things that I very clearly remembered talking to Ukrainians was their sense that in the administration, that Joe Biden was their friend, that he was kind of the president's point person on
Ukraine. But the frustration with the president has been deep in Ukraine these days. You hear it, not just from President Zelensky in frank moments, but you hear it elsewise from the population.

I want to get your sense of how President Biden has handled the situation in Ukraine, what should he have done, how has he contributed to the situation we now face, how has his performance been?

**Congressman Mike Turner:**

Well, and I think when you look at the current situation of the Biden administration and Putin's response, you of course have to look to Afghanistan and the chaotic withdrawal, where Biden told the world we would not run for the exits, but in fact they did, and in the middle of the night. Where they abandoned Bagram, where they abandoned Americans, where they abandoned our allies, they abandoned Kabul and left the country to the ruthlessness of the Taliban, and an unbelievable amount of military equipment that they left behind, seemingly unable to not only project what would happen, but even respond as it was.

So Putin last year marched his troops up to the border of Ukraine. He received no response, basically, from Washington. There was no efforts by the Biden administration to fortify Ukraine after Putin had shown this visible military presence on the border of Ukraine. So in looking back to what Putin had experienced with the Obama administration, I believe in the chaos of the Biden administration, he considered that Biden as vice president would continue the policies that Obama had of just looking the other way. And we know during the Trump administration, if this had happened, there would be a significant amount of effort to fortify Ukraine.

In this, Ukraine has asked for lethal weapons. There's a number of things that could have been done. They were very slow to respond, and certainly not in a way that would give any weapons that could be a deterrent. If Ukraine had surface-to-air missiles, if they had an ability to take down a plane, even just a plane, if they had a significant ability to deter tanks and to sustain a ground war if an invasion had had occurred, it would be a significant deterrent for Putin to be thinking twice. But the fact that the West was slow to respond, Biden administration was slow to respond, didn't give them the types of weapons, has helped create the situation.

Now you couple that with the Biden administration continuing to say that NATO is unified, while we all know that it's not. Germany has the legacy from Merkel, and her constant claim that the Minsk Agreement was going to result in Putin standing down in Ukraine, remaining sovereign, which it was not, and it was never being abided by by Russia. You see now them, even Germany, blocking other nation's ability to send weapons. Lithuania wanted to send surface-to-air missiles through NATO, Germany blocked it. We had to do a bilateral between the United States and Lithuania to get the missiles, and I don't even know if they've made it yet, because there were continued delays, they were on their way.

And then of course you had Estonia requesting to send German-made weapons, and Germany, because of its legacy ability to control its weapons that it has sold, blocked that. Germany has been so unwilling to stand with the democracy of Ukraine that the UK, when they went to send weapons in aid to the Ukraine, didn't even ask for overflight rights, just flew around, and told NATO and its allies that they understood that Germany was not likely to be supportive. So as they give this fiction of "we're together, but we're not," and our NATO allies, with Germany as a big dissenter, are not being able to act with the
type of consensus that NATO requires, it really shows an opportunity for Putin and it shows our weakness.

Ken Weinstein:

And the German story in particular is really quite interesting, because as my Hudson colleague, Peter Rough, has noted in an op-ed he wrote before Chancellor Scholz came to Washington, that Vladimir Putin knows Germany well. He spent time, obviously, in the KGB, speaks German, would interact regularly with Chancellor Merkel during her time in office. And there was some sense when the Biden team came in, their argument was, "We're going to work with the Europeans in order to now focus on Asia together."

And when Chancellor Merkel made her last visit to Washington, the Biden team had the opportunity to really put pressure on Chancellor Merkel to kind of just, particularly on the question of Nord Stream, they had either the opportunity, if you want the sanctions off, to ask something that German, that Bundestag members who visited us here at Washington said, "Look, there's a real opportunity here. You can ask the Chancellor to do something for Ukraine's defense, you can ask her to either send money, to send equipment if you're going to take the sanctions off on Nord Stream 2," which was the direction the Biden team wanted to go. But instead they literally asked for nothing in exchange for lifting the Nord Stream 2 sanctions, the tough sanctions that President Trump put in place.

And just want to get your sense, you're about to leave for the Munich Security Conference, your sense of what Germany is up to, what message you're going to deliver to German officials, whom you will certainly see, certainly meet with in Munich. Are you frustrated with the Germans?

Congressman Mike Turner:

Right. So as you mentioned earlier in the introduction, I'm very active in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. I still sit as a ex officio vice president, having chaired their Defense Committee and having been president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and I can tell you among the membership, they are very upset and very antagonistic in their interactions with the German delegation because they're being disingenuous. It's not just that they're being un-unified, if you will. I wouldn't say they're being anti-Ukraine and pro-Russia, but they're certainly being anti any intervention or any ability for others even to support Ukraine. What we're seeing with Germany obviously is almost a betrayal of their past. I mean, NATO came together not just to support the nations in Eastern Europe and embrace them coming out of the Warsaw Pact, but because of the division in Germany and the unification of Germany as an ultimate goal, to look to other nations like Ukraine and say, "Well, Russia's occupying you. We don't want to assist you," well, then we would never have assisted Germany if we followed their own logic of, "Well, they're Russians and so therefore we cannot unify Germany." People also are offended by the fact that they think it's an economic relationship issue, that Germany, because of the natural gas, because of Nord Stream, because of there being an economic powerhouse in Europe, that they're unwilling to challenge Russia, even when they're challenging democracy, but this goes to basic values.

I mean, this is an authoritarian nation that's showing up with tanks on the border of a validly elected sovereign democratic nation. They're not showing up on the border with ballot boxes and saying, "All these people want to be Russian." This is not even where there's a split in the society or even a split in
the political structures of the government. This is an absolute authoritarian regime seeking to invade and annex a nation that is a democratic country. It's the basic violation of sovereignty.

Ken Weinstein:

Are you sensing any sort of a change in Germany's willingness to assist Ukraine? Germany does a lot on the ground in terms of building civil society. They're quite present through NGOs, with the [inaudible 00:12:13] and the like. But obviously on the defense issues, they have refused to engage in the most modest way, only providing 5,000 helmets, which led to Twitter and Ukraine blowing up and then most of the western world as well. I want to get your sense from what you're hearing from members of the House. Obviously, President Trump in particular was deeply skeptical of Chancellor Merkel. Chancellor Merkel was called by some, the leader of the free world. Whereas President Trump consistently honed in on the Germans and said, "Look, you're not meeting your NATO obligations in terms of defense spending, Nord Stream 2, you're giving cash to the Russians, and you're asking us to defend you."

There's a sense now I'm hearing from people on both the left and the right that Trump was right about Germany. I'm wondering, are you hearing those kind of messages? You're hearing that kind of talk?

Congressman Mike Turner:

Oh, absolutely. I mean, when you look at what their policies are and you just mentioned the failure to reach the 2% of the commitment for NATO spending. This was the Wales Agreement at the Wales NATO Summit. It was by consensus, which means every NATO nation agreed that they were going to go to the 2%. Germany has a thriving economy. They have surpluses in government coffers. They have an ability to undertake the spending. They also have a military that has very, very little capability. The assessments of their ability to even operate the equipment that they have or their military to operate shows a very low readiness. So they have a gap both in their own defense, and then they have a gap in their contribution to NATO. All of these things are achievable by them and they have, through excuses, tried to say, "Oh, well, as you indicated, we do other things."

Well so do we, thank you. We're very active in all areas of soft diplomacy, including military diplomacy, but there used to be this sense among Germans that they don't have to invest in military spending because they're in NATO, meaning we're going to defend them. That comes from the legacy obviously of when they were occupied by Russia. But they have been reunified and they have a strong economy, they have the ability to invest. So I think, especially if you look at the Eastern European countries, they're very suspicious of Germany because they believe Germany has looked at them as almost expendable and we can contract back to our former native NATO boundaries, as Putin has requested. If that is their view, it's obviously it's very offensive to the other members who've joined NATO sense.

Ken Weinstein:

Let me turn now to the French. We've done enough asking about the Germans here, but then you'll certainly get enough face time in Munich. President Macron, his attempts to find an off ramp on the crisis with Russia, what do you make of it? Do you think this is being coordinated at all with—how closely coordinated with the Biden administration? Is this being done? What's your sense of what President Macron is up to with his recent trip to Moscow and his attempt to try to reengage the Russians in the Minsk framework?
Congressman Mike Turner:

I think it's genuine. France, for all of their frequent independence in international crises, in this one, I think they see it as an issue of democracy and sovereignty and that there are basic principles that we need to stand for. France is one of those nations that invests in its own defense, including having its own nuclear weapons capability, its own aircraft carrier capability, and its deployment capability. When they have this interaction with Russia, they come to that with credibility because they've stood for consistent values, they have military capability, they've stood strongly in the west, and I think certainly United Nations, they've stood for what we think are the principals of self-determination, which lead to democracy and human rights. So I think it's a genuine effort now. Obviously, as with the Germans, are always going to be tensions between our two nations as we try to formulate together what our foreign and international security posture would be. But this is one, I think, they're on the right side.

Ken Weinstein:

Let me ask you now about one place where there's a real big disagreement between U.S. and our NATO allies and Europe in particular is on the intelligence assessments of Russia's imminent invasion. The White House was going around saying, "Look at February 16th." The date has now passed. Why are European allies so skeptical, at least our Western European allies, about U.S. intelligence? Here, you're going to be ranking member, you are ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, where the House elections held today, you certainly would be chair of the House Select Committee on Intelligence. Why is this happening? Is it because of our intelligence? Is it because of their intelligence? Is it the way our intelligence is read? What do you make of such a massive divide on a very basic question, that the intelligence should be able to give you, you would expect, greater coherence within the alliance on this.

Congressman Mike Turner:

Yeah. Obviously, we're sharing intelligence with them, so it's not as if they don't have access to the information that we have or that they're uninformed. Some of it, I think, may be cultural. I mean, we tend to call someone out when we say they're going to do something. Culturally, they deny that someone's going to do something with the hope that they're not going to do something, but at the same sense, when you look at what Germany's posture has been, and you have to wonder whether or not they're saying that they don't think they're going to do it because they don't care if they do, which is a little bit different than trying to dissuade someone. I think that's the part that is probably the most disconcerting is that, not only the United States, but Europe and our NATO partners are really getting a sense from Germany that if tomorrow Russia invaded Ukraine and annexed Ukraine, that you wouldn't have the sense of outrage from Germany.

Even as we begin to have discussions with them as to what the overall, supposedly, crushing sanctions that the Biden administration is saying that they want to put in place, that they're not even certain that they have full buy-in from the Germans for that. So you have to take it to the next step. If they're not for supporting Ukraine to defend themselves, if they're not for punishing Russia for taking this action, then what are those basic values that they stand for? Then that causes a shaking of NATO, because those have been the unquestionable values of NATO.
Ken Weinstein:
As you look at the differences in intelligence, the differences in outlook about what may happen in Ukraine, how do you assess the will, the unity of the Ukrainian people on the eve of potential conflict? What's your sense of things? Have you been speaking at all to Ukrainian parliamentarians or officials?

Congressman Mike Turner:
Sure. So there's a delegation from the Ukraine that participates in the new parliamentary assembly. And so, we have direct access to members of their parliament. Through the covid and post-covid interactions, we're all used to using technology now to immediately come together. Certainly they are worried, but at the same time, they are optimistic. The invasion, as of this point, hasn't happened yet. And so, they're obviously still holding on hope that it does not occur, as we all are.

There are several things that are happening in Ukraine that we all need to take note of. We all know, and the polls beforehand had showed, massive support in Ukraine for Ukraine's independence and its sovereignty, massive disapproval for Russia and a striking reaction from Russia's annexation of Crimea and the continued conflict that was happening in the Donbas region.

But when you have a nation that is so under threat, that has all these troops with this unbelievable firepower that amasses on the border; you could imagine that not only would you see dissension in the populous, but that would be a political threat to the government that's there. But we're not seeing that, right? We're seeing relative stability.

I mean, President Zelensky, who is, I think rightly so, trying to calm his populous and the investment that is there, try to make certain that there aren't people fleeing the capital and fleeing Ukraine on the chance that this is a big fake out and that they're going to retreat and go back to Russia. We're not seeing the threats to his government that you would normally say.

If there was this Russia-leaning or opposition political movement in Ukraine that would portend its own instability, we'd be seeing it now more than time with these troops here, and you're not seeing that.

Ken Weinstein:
Yeah. What's your sense in terms of what would happen if there was an invasion? Any sense of what that might look like in the opening days? I know obviously there are a variety of scenarios involving everything from Odessa to Kharkiv to Kyiv. What's your sense of where things stand, where they might be heading?

Congressman Mike Turner:
Right. So, there have been headlines that have incorrectly cast this as, "Conflict continues," or, "Conflict heightens between Russia and Ukraine." There is no conflict between Russia and Ukraine. There is just Russia aggressiveness, that's it.

So, when you try to extrapolate that into what would a conflict look like, where one nation is the aggressor and the other doesn't even have an ongoing conflict with them but is merely trying to defend themselves, but is just so overwhelmed on a military side and the government side by the capabilities,
the amount of forces, and the weaponry; you are going to see the structures of Ukraine; military, a police and government fall relatively quickly.

But that still leaves an unbelievable amount of populace that are not supportive of the troops that are coming, that have an ability on their own to be an insurgency, to fight. And I believe that this is going to be much more difficult for Russia than they think. This is certainly not going to be that they just take this territory and they occupy it.

The country, the populace is there. Their spirit does not want to be annexed to Russia. They believe, rightly so, that their country is theirs and that Russia will be an outside invader and aggressor. I think this would be a very, very long and protracted conflict.

Ken Weinstein:
Do you have any sense that Vladimir Putin understands that? Without going into anything classified, do you have any sense that he has a sense of what the Ukrainian people are up to?

Congressman Mike Turner:
No, I don't think he does, but the other aspect of this is you can look from non-classified sources. You are seeing a lot of reports as to what forces that Russia is amassing, what capabilities they're amassing; field hospitals, what they're expecting in conflict. What you're not seeing is a sustainable occupying force.

You're seeing the plans. You open a newspaper, you can look at the map and see arrows and where troops would come in to invade, and this is not like Stratego. It's not inert once your pieces move, right? Once they're in, they're in a protracted and ongoing conflict and you don't see occupational force strength, you don't see the level of support that's going to be necessary there to actually suppress a people.

Ken Weinstein:
What are the dangers we're heading into a long stalemate? Either with Putin going in and then having the situation of armed resistance and the like, the porcupine strategy. Or, the possibility that he doesn’t go in, keeps his troops amassed in large numbers, keeps the price of oil high which is his economic benefit, and that the situation is stalemated? Let me throw in a third question on that, which is, any signs of a ladder to deescalate anywhere?

Congressman Mike Turner:
Well, part of your question is, can he still go home?

Ken Weinstein:
Yeah.
Congressman Mike Turner:

And the answer is yes. He has proven, with the troops that he has amassed, that he has the ability to both amass troops with Belarus being a host, and he has the ability with the capabilities of the military that he amassed to take Ukraine.

Now, there's a couple things that follow from that would need to be very concerning for the United States. One, if he goes home, great. It was a demonstration, he's made the point. He probably has established a chilling effect if not to the United States, but to others as they look to Ukraine and Georgia joining NATO. Certainly, it'd be hard to get consensus from that point on with everyone having seen what had occurred.

But if he goes ahead and invades Ukraine, Ukraine is not the heart of the former Soviet Union, it's a part. So, he has openly said that his goal is the reunification of the territory of the former Soviet Union. Well, sometimes we should listen to our adversaries, because this is not about Ukraine. Ukraine is not a threat to him, NATO is not a threat to him.

Ukraine has some symbolism. I mean, even in the arts, it has symbolism for Russia as being formally Russian, and where has been continuous efforts for Russia to have Ukraine join and Ukraine, to leave, and then Russia being once again successful, and now they stand as an independent nation.

But if they do this, he's not stopping. He said he wasn't, and that means that the remainder of the nations that used to be part of the Soviet Union, those in the Warsaw Pact, are now at risk. So, if he took the force that he amassed to invade Ukraine. It's stable there where those forces are, again, free.

If he turned those forces north and went to the Baltics, we're in a conflict between the United States and Russia and NATO, and the RAND study that was done on what happens if Russia invades the Baltics is that the Baltics would quickly fall and NATO would be in a situation of real conflict between nuclear powers.

That's the thing that we have to really worry about, because if he packs up and he goes home, great. We've had diplomatic dialogue that's going to continue, and he will have won the day on the diplomatic dialogue. If he invade Ukraine, he's not stopping there.

Ken Weinstein:

Part of the concern is also the fortification of Kaliningrad, which makes it easier to go in. And obviously, as you mentioned, the whole question of Belarus now being essentially a Russian fort or outpost, which it wasn't a few years ago. There was a point where the current government, Lukashenko, looked to Washington was hoping to figure out a way to counterbalance with Putin, and obviously has given up on that.

Let's Look at the Black Sea for a second, because that's an area like the Baltics where what's been amazing is to watch our allies in the Black Sea area really step up. The Turks in particular who have been remarkable, despite they've had a special relationship with the Russians and the S-400s, and Erdogan and Putin have a complicated...
Congressman Mike Turner:
But they have shot down a Russian plane recently.

Ken Weinstein:
They have, they have. But they have this complicated, they are frenemies of the worst kind. The Turks are now all in, offering drones to the Ukrainians, helping. We've seen the Romanians, the Bulgarians, there's just deep concern that the Russians are really trying to take Odessa and shift the equation in terms of what not only happens to Ukraine as a country, turning it into an [inaudible 29:22] nation, but also to change the strategic equation there.

What's your sense, from your dealings with the parliamentary and parliamentarians in those countries where you think things may be headed? I mean, it's a sign of real health for the alliance, I have to say.

Congressman Mike Turner:
Certainly for Eastern European nations and those on the Black Sea. Greece, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland; they all get it. But it was interesting when you were making the point of Kaliningrad, because again, Putin making the false statement that Ukraine represents a threat with NATO to Russia. Many say, who've done military analysis, that what Russia has done in Kaliningrad and Crimea and what they've done in Syria has been to recreate an area of access denial that's greater than what they had, even when they had the Warsaw Pact states. So even though NATO has moved and now encompasses those nations that broke free from the Soviet Union's grip, Russia's ability to deny access to the area, to defend itself by Crimea, Kaliningrad and what they've got down in Syria, is even greater than it was. So, they're not in a diminished capacity, they're even actually in a greater capacity. And I think what people, our Black Sea allies see is after they militarized Crimea to make it look more like Kaliningrad and perhaps even have nuclear weapons there, that they're very fearful of what Russia will do along the border of Ukraine with our other NATO nations. They see what they do in Belarus and if they replicate that in Ukraine, especially how they intimidate shipping and others, aircraft, the shooting down of the commercial airliner when they were invading and occupying Crimea. This is going to become a very dangerous space.

Ken Weinstein:
One of the challenges we face in trying to handle what this complex situation is the global responsibilities we as a country have. You've also spent a great deal of time thinking about the China challenge, which comes simultaneously. We've seen the Xi-Putin partnership, that was reinforced on the eve of the Olympic Games. What's your sense of how that partnership works and the challenges we could face in both Eastern Europe and in Taiwan in particular?

Congressman Mike Turner:
That's an interesting transition because it's one of our vulnerabilities. And one of our vulnerabilities is we fail to evaluate our adversaries as having different values, goals and objectives than we do. We can't fathom why another nation would invade another. That's an independent democracy that doesn't want to be part of you, and that doesn't have a security threat, and isn't a threat to others. That's not how
China and Russia see things. With what you're seeing in the south China Sea, with what you're seeing with Russia, they are looking at being aggressive in their territories. They're authoritarian regimes, they're suppressing their own populace in China.

You have the surveillance society where they've gone farther with the use of technology to both monitor and suppress their own population. These are two nations that are self-declared United States adversaries. Regardless of how we try to trade with China and have them be more like us, they're never going to be like us under their current communist regime. And Russia, as long as Putin sees himself as the legacy of the Soviet Union and maintaining an authoritarian regime is going to continue to be a threat.

We need to have our policies, both our military modernization, our work with our allies and the manner in which we have diplomacy with this nations, recognizing the threat.

Ken Weinstein:

Yeah. One of the things, you've been a forthright spokesperson, you've gone into the lion's den and you even went on Tucker Carlson to take on those who have been saying that, look, the challenge in Ukraine is not something the United States should be engaged in. And we're seeing voices, I think, disturbing voices on the left and right, making that case. And we're also seeing incredible voices of some noted policy intellectuals saying, "no, we can only focus on Asia. We need to focus on China. We can't focus on Europe." What do you make of these arguments? What can we do to restore belief in the importance of the American deterrent and the need to be able to handle multiple crises at once?

Congressman Mike Turner:

Right, well, certainly we can do, and we have to do, more than one thing at a time. And as I said earlier, adversaries self-select and when they do, you have to rise to that challenge, or your whole security is at risk. Those who question, "Should we be with Russia?" Need to ask the question, where are their nuclear weapons pointed? Where are their anti-satellite weapons pointed? Where are their efforts to try to undermine other nations? They’re directed at us. France is a nuclear weapons state. The UK is a nuclear weapons state. They [are not pointing their nuclear weapons] at us. And you can't say, "Well, I'm going to be aligned with this nation who has nuclear weapons pointed at me as they try to invade this other sovereign democratic country. Because, I think I might like them in the future." They don't like you currently. So this being with them as they invade Ukraine is not going to result in this nuclear weapons being pointed someplace else. They are a self-declared adversary, and to delusionally try to define them as otherwise only makes it more risky for us.

Ken Weinstein:

Let me ask you as a last question. Let me ask you about the arms control talks that the Biden administration wants to reengage with the Russians on, what's your sense of where they want take things? And do you think they'll continue to promote this framework if the situation in Ukraine continues to be a murky one?
Congressman Mike Turner:

I had the opportunity just recently to talk to Henry Kissinger at an event that I was at and to talk in terms of what he had undertaken in nuclear arms control is really the basis that later nuclear arms control and the Reagan administration followed. We took the view then and so did Russia, we were on the brink of an unbelievable level of weapons that were a threat to both the world and each other. And that we had parity enough that we could scale back and retain deterrence. Most recently, most of our arm control deals have had an effect to restrain us more than they have restrained our adversaries. If you look at the INF intermediate nuclear weapons agreement with Russia, Russia wasn't complying, but the Obama administration wanted to stay in it.

Well, you're not really in a treaty, if the other side isn't complying or Russia was both developing and fielding weapons that violated the agreement. Well, that's no agreement. That's no benefit to us. The other is that we've watched Russia modernizing its nuclear weapons. Now what we call “modernizing” is replacing the old with one that's not old. [What the Russians] call modernizing, is increasing their capabilities. They have deployed hypersonic nuclear weapons. They have developed “Skyfall,” a nuclear powered missile that orbits the earth. They've developed them and announced their work on Poseidon, which is basically an underwater unmanned vehicle that pops up and destroys an American city off the coast. All which are untrackable, undefendable. And there's no effort either on Russia's part or really on our part for Russia to be dissuaded or deterred from undertaking those. So, every day that Russia advances, we become less safe.

Ken Weinstein:

Well, on that note, I want to thank you, Congressman. It's been, it's daunting, challenging, but I really want to thank you for coming here. And I mostly want to thank you for being such an important voice on a national security and on the Ukraine challenge. I know all of us, at Hudson Institute deeply appreciate you and your work.

Congressman Mike Turner:

And thank you for your work because you continue to invest in the ways in which we can look at diplomacy, the way we can look at national security and try to change and affect policy to make our country safer. And you have an important role in that.

Ken Weinstein:

Thank you.