Virtual Event | War, Ukraine, and a Global Alliance for Freedom

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- Michael R. Pompeo, 70th U.S. Secretary of State, Distinguished Fellow, Hudson Institute
- Walter Russell Mead, Ravenel B. Curry III Distinguished Fellow in Strategy and Statesmanship, Hudson Institute
- John Walters, President and CEO

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John Walters:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. My name is John Walters. I'm president and CEO of Hudson Institute. I want to thank all the members of the diplomatic core that are here. Their member are many supporters of Hudson. Some of my colleagues are here as well, and some members of the press. I want to thank everybody for joining us. Most of all, I want to thank Secretary Pompeo for making these remarks today on this important topic. Just a quick program note, at the conclusion of his remarks we're going to have him elaborate. He's agreed to elaborate on some of the points he's going to make with my colleague, Walter Russell Mead, who is the Ravenel B. Curry chair holder here at Hudson and is of course also the Wall Street Journal global view columnist. So we'll remove the podium, we'll reconfigure, and the Secretary has agreed to allow some elaboration and discussion of his remarks before we conclude.

My brief job is to introduce a man whose career in public service is not brief, is long, and is continuing. We are honored that Secretary Pompeo agreed to join Hudson as a distinguished fellow after serving as the 70th Secretary of State. He began his career in public service at West Point, finishing first in his class. He stood the line in the Cold War to deter the Soviet Union from our allies and our own homes. He left military service and went to Harvard Law School and became a successful lawyer and a successful businessman and then returned to serve his country after that success in representing state of Kansas for almost four terms in the United States House of Representatives. He accepted at the end of that period, the request that he lead the Central Intelligence Agency, which he did with distinction in the time of transition and change.

And then he left that to become 70th Secretary of State, at a time when he helped to craft a rethinking about the dangers from the Communist regime in China including the brave announcement of the fact that the Communist regime in China was committing genocide against the Uyghur people, and that deserved the attention of the world. That has continued to cause attention and response, although that genocide continues. He also was a chief architect of the Abraham Accords, designed to reshape for the better the landscape of security in the Middle East, that too is ongoing and continues to bear fruit. So this is a man who has given us security in the past, opportunities in the future. And we're eager to hear his remarks today on war Ukraine and a global alliance for freedom. So it's my pleasure to introduce my friend, Mike Pompeo.

Michael R. Pompeo:

John, thank you. It is great to be here with you today. It's great to be here at the Hudson Institute. To those of you from the Ambassadors Court, thank you for being here. Honored guests and friends, it's an honor to greet you. I consider it an enormous responsibility to speak to you about a matter of the utmost urgency and significance. It involves war, Ukraine, and the necessity of forming a new global alliance for freedom, which has to contest, which must contest both Russian and Chinese aggression.

I last had the privilege of meeting with President Zelenskyy in January 2020. How different the world seemed then. But unlike the presidency that the Trump administration followed, America did not hesitate in supplying Ukraine with weapons, such as the Javelin, which broke the back of Russia's armed advance to Ukraine's capital. I looked back at this as I was preparing for this speech, at the joint press conference with President Zelenskyy. Your nation's heroic president thanked the Trump administration for our support of Ukraine in the war and the Donbas and your efforts to reclaim Crimea. A war for
freedom now rages in Ukraine, it demands that we speak with absolute candor and with unlimited certainty of purpose.

Let's start at the beginning. Ukraine must be free and freedom requires strength and dignity. To be secure, Ukraine must always be a sovereign, not constrained by another nation's territorial incursions or influence. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an inflection point in the post-Cold War politics. John referred to my time as a young soldier, then serving on the then East German border. Here we are, that border still challenged, the European front attacked. So what does this say? What does this portend for Europe? How does this war affect Russia's affiliation with China and that country's actions with respect to Taiwan? And what lessons must we draw for our security and for our freedom throughout the entirety of the world?

At the center of these questions, and a question I want to answer to all today, is why does this matter? Why does this matter to the United States of America? Why should America support Ukraine? And why should it matter to citizens far flung across our great country? Why should a machinist in Wichita, Kansas, or a school teacher in Des Moines care about what happens in the Donbas? It is my hope today that we will find answers because to find those answers is vital to liberty, for our own people here at home. We know this in America, the gift of freedom is always purchased. This fact is iridescent today in Ukraine. Men and women of extraordinary intrepidity are sacrificing themselves to secure liberty for their children and for their countrymen. And because of their courage, the Ukrainian people's courage against harrowing odds, I am confident that Ukraine will live. And the deeds that this generation achieved and their heroism that is on display today will forever be remembered. Not just in Ukraine, but all across the world.

For when the preponderance of a nation, that's never known war for a lifetime thinks freedom cheap they create risk. Sometimes freedom appears as an afterthought that is plentiful as the air we breathe. It's not, it is rare. It is the most precious commodity. The most precious commodity that humanity has ever attained. This is the lesson that Ukraine is teaching us all. They're teaching America's children, and it is perhaps the most important message that they will ever be taught.

Virtue. Virtue is the prerequisite for freedom for it provides the boundary that enables exercise, without unduly limiting or infringing upon the rights of others. Keep this thought in your head as I speak today. This safeguarding, the safeguarding the exercises' of freedom, depends on virtue in its totality. Liberty is freedom. Liberty is freedom from molestation by an oppressive government or authority. And freedom is crushed. Freedom is crushed if virtue is not prized. Vladimir Putin's utter lack of basic humanity ensures that as long as he remains in power, Russia will be virtual prison and no nation that borders its expanse will ever be safe.

Liberty. Liberty as promised in our Declaration of Independence and as guaranteed by our Constitution and guaranteed by the constitution of Ukraine is thus only possible, if limited government is practiced and not enlarged for expansive government, through its desire to accrete power, subverts individual agency and choice, ultimately destroying liberty. I worked on this as a member of Congress. And this choice ultimately destroys liberty if we centralize. Economic security begins with this understanding, and I want to talk about economic security. Ukraine, like America before, is the magnificent answer to the questions that I've raised. You can see it, you can feel it. Is freedom worth dying for? And the question that gets asked in my hometown is, but should America be involved in this war? We're not the world's policemen, Mike. But I tell them because this is clear, by assisting Ukraine, America bolsters our own
security without the involvement in combat of our men and women. We're not going to send America's military into this war, our president has made that clear. But we can do so much.

We can do what President Zelenskyy has asked. We must aid Ukraine, for to do so in part is our first duty to America and to Americans. It's because supporting Ukraine, we prevent larger European conflict. A war that would almost certainly involve America's military because we have a deep commitment to the NATO treaty and Article Five there in. By helping Ukraine, we prevent Russia's reconstitution of the Soviet Empire, the thing that I studied about when I was a cadet at West Point. That empire, if rebuilt even in small measure, would dictate world fossil fuel supplies causing massive economic hemorrhaging in America and throughout the globe affecting every single American.

By aiding Ukraine, we undermined the creation of a Russian-Chinese axis bent on exerting military and economic hegemony in Europe, in Asia and in the Middle East. This would further devastate the lives of Americans and our economy here at home. Indeed, by empowering Ukraine, we demonstrate to China the cost of invading Taiwan. Or frankly exerting its influence in nations all across the world, thus helping to thwart an assault that would rupture the living standards of the world by crippling supplies of goods, such as semiconductors. Look, we must act in support of Ukraine's territorial integrity, lest we undercut America's self-interest. It is a deeply American mission.

I served in a unique administration. I'm proud of that uniqueness. And in the Trump administration, before the global pandemic induced by China, we created the greatest economy America has ever known. The strength of America's economy propelled by affordable and abundant supplies of fossil fuels was a bulwark and an enormous tool for America's Secretary of State. It was a bulwark against Russian and Chinese expansionism. Today our economy is at risk. Stripped of our energy dominance, subdued by our disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, subjected to waves of undocumented immigrants coerced by transnational criminal organizations. Shattered by inflation, due to deeply irresponsible federal spending and pummeled by lawlessness as we approach a precipice here at America. A broadened European war would push us over the edge and spell unmitigated disaster for our economy.

Farmers from my home state in Kansas would see their markets evaporate as our nation's manufacturers in all towns, in all cities. I ran a machine shop in Wichita before I lost my mind and ran for Congress. It would be devastating to American manufacturing not to support what's taking place in Ukraine today. Every American, every American would face the burden of exponentially higher costs of living on top of what we're already facing.

You need not guess about this next fact. Putin has proclaimed that there is no intermediate state. Either a country is sovereign or it is a colony. Xi Jinping believes the same. This war, Putin's war, is to expunge Ukraine as a sovereign nation and as a people. Ukraine is to be folded into the new Russian Empire that seeks to become a rump of the Soviet Union. Nine, count them, nine American presidents from each of our political parties. Nine American presidents dismembered the Soviet Empire at enormous great human costs, to allow it to even begin to be reconstitution unthinkable.

Putin's illegal assault of war represents a planned genocide, which is deliberate obliteration of a people, as defined by the 1948 United Nations. Though each genocide is different and unique as John mentioned, the one taking place in Xinjiang. This genocide that we're seeing today is like the Holodomor engineered by Stalin that murdered millions of Ukrainians and it must be named to be fought.
I get asked all time, “Has Putin changed?” In 2005, Putin declared the demise of the Soviet Union as one of the greatest tragedies in history. In 2007, he enunciated his rationale for conquest in terms that would be familiar to dictators who ruled Europe almost 90 years ago. Putin's been consistent. He's been consistent in his revanchist objectives. In Grozny in 1999. In Georgia in 2008. And in Ukraine in 2014.

Today is different however. Putin's intentions haven't changed, but his calculus of risk did change. The implacable resolve of the administration, which I served gave pause to Putin's vicious goals. For he knew if he invaded Ukraine, he would face a whirlwind. I made this clear to the president of Russia when I spoke with him, to my counterpart Lavrov and I think they both understood the might that I represented. Look, Putin may or may not be ill, but what is certain, what is certain is that he cannot contain his murderous fury. That he still leads a country exemplifies Russia's decline into the abyss of madness.

A mass murderer. A mass murderer is someone who kills a large number of people at one time. A serial killer murders sequentially. Only in war therefore can a man be both a mass murderer and a serial killer. Putin is that. I pray that Russia will reclaim its soul, its country's soul. But it cannot do so as long it is led by a man who does not evince any concern for the horrific carnage he has wrought, or any concern for his own people.

Putin has this dream, to reestablish a lost empire. If America behaves properly, it will not occur. And we know this, we know that the dreams of dictators quickly become nightmares, if the world has resolved. As with so many tyrants before and Putin has sought refuge from his maladministration corruption and unaccountable crimes by taking his nation into war. What Putin has ordained, however, is not war with any justifiable purpose, but a pact of death, a pact of death to which Putin has forced his nation's signature. The Russian people and their armed forces are now paying dearly for their toleration of what must never have been tolerated. Russia's power has exceeded its wisdom, which itself must rest on decency if wisdom is to be meaningful at all. There will be repercussions for this calamitous war. This calamitous war results from the change in perception of Vladimir Putin. And that begins with mechanisms of conquest being allowed to feed on Europe's and the world's demands for natural gas and other hydrocarbons. The greater part of Russia's federal budget continues to be funded by its energy sector, which rests on oil, coal and natural gas revenue. Comprehending that Russia's inexplicable decline due to its endemic corruption and its demographic collapse, Putin, in order to secure his own rule, covets that natural gas and coal of the Donbas and Ukraine's untouched oil fields that he may be open to fracking.

Also sought are Ukraine's warm water ports and the pipelines Putin seeks to permanently control, including those with access to China. It is my conviction that America and the West must acknowledge the centrality of hydrocarbon energy to the world geopolitics and indeed to man's ability, humanity's ability to adapt a cornerstone of life. Adaptation results from prosperity, which is made possible through the use of fossil fuels. The present administration has a different approach. They assert that America's energy producers gouge and must produce more fuel all at the same time. Today's obscene fuel prices should stimulate increased output. But for the fact that our government's degrowth policy stand in the way of that increase in output. Central to America's place in the world and our support of Ukraine is that these radical policies must be eradicated. If we're to regain our energy dominance, which we must, we must eliminate these policies. Russia and China understand this. Many advanced countries, however, do not. For we've become enraptured by unreal narratives.
Thank you, Greta. This war is a clarion call. Energy and economic security along with military strength are the pillars upon which geostrategic power and peace rest. Energy is the fundamental basis for everything we consume. If energy prices spiral further, the economies of every nation will fragment, leading to massive worldwide recession and to authoritarian regimes coalescing their power in a time of turmoil and political strife. Indeed, if Russia has allowed dominion over the Donbas and Ukraine's coast, Putin will next seek control of the energy resources of other independent countries as well that were once part of this Soviet empire. Russia will become a juggernaut, dominating fossil fuels in addition to its present lead in supplying nuclear power plants to recipient nations.

This will serve and can serve as citadels to which Russian military forces may be deployed without any notice or any warning. This is what’s at stake. Nothing less. Had the current administration maintained American energy dominance rather than prostrate itself to radicals, America could have led the way in securing the world's hydrocarbon needs during this war. But because America's abdicated this vital role, the war in Ukraine is compounding the pain that consumers are feeling today to cool their homes and to drive their vehicles. Farmers in Kansas can't fuel their tractors. Fertilizer, 300% increase in cost to help continue to feed the world. Again, I ask why does this matter to hardworking Americans? I've given many reasons, but it's in part because if Russia controls Ukraine's energy, today's ruinous prices of the pump will be remembered as a type of cheap gas.

Contrary to Russian propaganda, Ukraine has always maintained its own unique culture, language and identity. This should always be so, so long as the Ukrainian people are prepared to fight to defend it. This maintenance of distinctiveness during protective periods of foreign deprivations is the mark of a great people. A great people who have sought independence throughout their history. In our country, America's founders decided that people of a common past, people of a shared future, people of a common purpose have the right to choose a path for themselves. And so must it be in Ukraine. The ancient Greek geographer and historian Herodotus wrote of the Ukrainian homeland. Before the time of Charlemagne, a polity was established in the land that is now Ukraine. It is a country of immense historical, linguistical and cultural roots, which deserves the world's admiration.

One of our greatest Ukrainian Americans was Ambassador Lev Dobriansky. Instrumental in the formulation of what became Public Law 86-90, as well as the plans to free the captive nations that were the constituent parts of the then Soviet Union. These nations were unchained in 1991 because of the collapse of the Soviet Union. And we dare not let any of them be recaptured by Russia. Ambassador Dobriansky had it right. Ambassador Dobriansky worked tirelessly to create a Ukrainian memorial to the great Ukrainian poet and patriot Taras Shevchenko. President Eisenhower signed that law that authorized the monument. Shevchenko was born into serfdom. His liberty had to be purchased. This is why Shevchenko devoted his life to attaining freedom for his people. He and America's great abolitionist, Frederick Douglas, who himself was born into slavery, shared a common quest for seeking dignity for all of humanity.

On the base of the Shevchenko memorial are inscribed these words. They read, "When will Ukraine have its own Washington with fair and just laws? Someday we will." I believe Ukraine has found it's Washington in the embodiment of a single man. His name is Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He has led the world at a time of great peril. For centuries, Russia has been revered for its innumerable artists and scientists. But in mere months, Vladimir Putin has turned the world's perception of his country into one of absolute disgusted and disdain. Russia employed a ballistic missile to murder over 50 civilians at the
train station in Kramatorsk. This is butchering. This is nothing less than butchering cowardice to compensate for the failing Russian army. Putin has brought great shame, exodus and poverty to the Russian people. And in the wake of that missile attack, Russia's homicidal rage in Bucha, its merciless siege of Mariupol and its destruction of food stocks.

America and the nations of the world cannot continue the pretense that the war in Ukraine can end in a negotiated peace, which mollifies Russia. For such a peace cannot be negotiated with Vladimir Putin. Ukraine must win this war. It must win this war decisively if it is to realize peace, independence and freedom. Same goes for Europe. The transit of ships today carrying grain from Ukraine must be guaranteed by the international community. Over 40% of Ukrainian wheat is exported to Africa. I know a little bit about wheat, having lived in the state of Kansas. Russian denial of these wheat shipments may result in starvation across multiple continents. Consideration must be given to convoying shipments of grain out of Ukraine. For Ukraine to be victorious, it must be provisioned with the weapons that it needs. And I don't just mean talks inside the Oval Office or the West Wing. You have to deliver the goods.

The war can be won. This war can be won if America and our allies supply a range of our most capable conventional weapons to Kyiv. Dauntlessness is needed to end the war in Ukraine, seriousness of purpose. NATO solidarity is essential Germany and France must not defer to any of the Kremlin's wishes. America and Britain have supplied multiple launch rocket systems. Ukraine has received advanced artillery from a number of NATO nations. That's good. It's crucial that Spain follow through in sending Leopard 2 tanks. That's an old M1 one tanker. The Leopard's a great tank. The Europeans will use it well. They're third generation tanks. They're comparable to what I was in, the ones that I commanded when I was sitting face-to-face with the evil empire. America has large numbers of Abrams tanks in storage. A significant portion should be immediately made ready for employment in Ukraine. You can train the Ukrainians on them in days.

The combination of rockets, artillery, armor and advanced unmanned combat aerial vehicles providing real reconnaissance, real intelligence and real kinetic capabilities and advanced targeting systems would provide Kyiv with precise the tools they need to begin to recapture, deterrence, to recapture precious Ukrainian soil, and to be coupled with an unending supply of ordinance that would stream into the nation. Don't give any heat. We must not give heat to Russia's false claim that it believes its borders are threatened. This is silliness. I spent maybe 10 hours with Vladimir Putin. There was never any chance that he truly believed that an invasion from Ukraine or from Europe was imminent. Are Russia's borders more secure say than Ukraine's territorial integrity or America's Southern flank?

In addition to land systems, Ukraine urgently needs new air defenses. Putin will continue to pummel Ukrainian cities if Ukraine does not receive surface to air missile system that engage both aircraft and missiles. The present Soviet era S300 system isn't enough. How many more innocent civilians need to be slaughtered before Ukraine receives what morality demands? Indeed, Patriot missile batteries must be complimented by the transfer of fourth generation fighter aircraft and remotely piloted vehicles, which can loiter for hours. I've seen them used well. These synergistic weapons, if rapidly provided will absolutely be determinative. Russia cannot be allowed to dictate the terms of this conflict. Though perhaps counterintuitive, a surge providing conventional weapons will reduce the chance that Putin will resort to weapons of mass destruction. For providing decisive weapons to Ukraine will irrevocably shape the face of battle, causing Putin to realize that his strategy is doomed to fail.
One can’t speak about this in isolation. American military power has been the guarantor of my country’s promises for decades. It’s been the means to give body and shape to my nation’s obligations by supporting diplomacy. I used it well for my 1,000 days as Secretary of State. It remains a tool without equal if properly understood. Sadly, the fall of Kabul and the creation by force of an undemocratic government in Afghanistan are assaults on the international system. I believe deeply that the weakness that was expressed in America’s undisciplined withdrawal from Afghanistan was interpreted by Vladimir Putin as a green light, recovering from a doomed strategy that spanned decades. The administration which I serve sought to reduce our commitment there in a responsible manner. This planning was cast aside for reasons that seemed to hinge on expectations of or appearances rather than the discernment of realities.

As Secretary of State, I built upon my work as the director of the CIA to aid President Trump in formulating concrete terms that would’ve allowed for force reductions and withdrawal from Afghanistan but without the debacle and the hard one progress that had been made in that country. And without the risk that we told bad guys all around the world that America was abandoning our friends. What a help established was the certainty of action that should the Taliban renounce operationally or operationally rescind what was agreed, that we would with certainty respond in a way that restored the heart of deterrence. And we did it at a tactical level time and time again. Russia’s assaults has exposed the sinners of global economic and energy and securities affecting every single American. The United States should never again fight another nation's war. But we must stand ready when people who are willing to fight for their own liberty request support that will not require the dispatch of our armed forces.

America must not let Afghanistan and the war in Ukraine be the cue that ignites combat in the Indo-Pacific. China stated intent is to displace the United States as the world's preeminent power. The height of the global health catastrophe that it created, the Chinese Communist Party did not moderate its objectives. Instead, it accelerated them with utter disregard of its commitments to the United Kingdom and to the people of Hong Kong. China broke the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The declaration constituted a treaty granting Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy. China was obligated to main this through 2047. We all know what has fallen. It did not. And given China's actions, it matters of world health, bio safety, Hong Kong. We have to ask ourselves on what important document is China's signature meaningful? The answer is that China's signature is authentic as that of the Russian signature on the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, in which Russia guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity in exchange for Kyiv's elimination of its nuclear arsenal.

We must not ever allow the communist model for development to proliferate, for it's a kleptocracy. It is autocratic rule by thieves as is demonstrated by the magnitude of China's theft of American intellectual properties and the millions of jobs that fled our country as a result of it. We know China's intention. It's intent on dominating global infrastructure development through its Belt and Road Initiative. But this is subterfuge. It hides. It's a deceit. China's Belt and Road Initiative is a form of imperialism. It is the manifestation of a corrupt intent to entrap less developed countries with promises of loans and infrastructure improvements.

These loans are national assets. They're collateral for terms that are designed to ensure non-compliance of the detonation with asset forfeiture. More properly thought of as political extortion in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party. Even more ominous still is China’s stated intent to conquer Taiwan.
Through Ukraine's bravery resisting Russia, it's given China pause. I am confident Xi Jinping is asking his generals, "Really? Can you do what you say you can do?" Part of the answer to how to combat this is what we do in Ukraine. Part of the answer is that every president since Truman believed Taiwan's existence is crucial to America's defense. I believe that with all my heart. The 1970 Taiwan Relations Act requires that we maintain Taiwan's defensive abilities to thwart an attack, but we're now in danger of becoming complacent. The capture of Taiwan would grant the following objectives to Beijing: it would severely reduce American influence in the Indo-Pacific, America's status as a superpower would be placed in jeopardy, which would invite armed conflict affecting our nation directly. It would eliminate a primary technological and economic partner of the United States. The principle supplier of high-end semiconductors to the United States' economy, were these supplies to be disrupted, America's economy would falter and our security here at home would be at risk. It would also remove the key strategic chill point to a Chinese military breakout, which would threaten the entirety of the Indo-Pacific, including Guam, Hawaii, Japan, and Australia.

So, our approach to promoting the Indo-Pacific security was to believe that our relationship with Taiwan should be reinforced at every turn. It's become a shining example in Taiwan of democracy, democracy for Asian peoples, and a hope to all of Asia. And it is my steadfast view that our government should immediately confer diplomatic recognition to Taiwan, for it is a free and sovereign country. Our recognition of Taiwan should not hinge on what will occur. Taiwan is already an independent country. Our government should simply reflect that fact.

This is central to helping us in Europe as well, because central to the economic wellbeing of American families is a United States that leads. It leads all across the world, both in military and in economic power. We must use our strengths prudently, our founders knew this, and conservatively, for America is most secure when it leads by example and not by intervention. This is the lesson that we have learned since 9/11. We can get this right.

I hope that my words today will galvanize American support for Ukraine and for Europe, for such aid is essential if we're to enforce the national security policies that place American public interest as of paramount importance. Europe must do more too, to meet daunting economic challenges, which were first provoked by irresponsible domestic policies. We must take steps now to ensure that Europe realizes peace and not continuous war or extortion. For Europe is inextricably bound to our nation as it is to both Asia and to the Middle East.

American industry and our farmers rely on the vitality of export markets that will be stricken if Russia succeeds. Weakness, indecisiveness, and disengagement in the world stage invite needless conflict. Timidity, timidity in the face of evil emboldens tyrants. Energy has already been weaponized, and we should never allow Russia or China to weaponize food and mineral supplies as well.

Let us summon the will to ensure that this present conflict does not entrap our future. We must act in concert with our allies to affect strategic clarity, unmistakable to both Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping. We must prevent the formation of a Pan-Eurasian colossus incorporating Russia, but led by China. To do that, we have to strengthen NATO, and we see that nothing hinders Finland and Sweden's entry into that organization. This would be an enormous boon to Russia were they to be denied access. Russia's military would have the capability to deploy against Ukraine in ways that were different and even worse than what's being confronted today.
In the Indo-Pacific, America must continue to expand the quadrilateral security dialogue to incorporate the Republic of Korea, Great Britain, and France, in addition to Japan, Australia, India, and the United States. The AUKUS Union should be folded into this expanded security alliance.

Moving past our current geo-strategic focus, the United States must help in building of the three lighthouses for liberty. These beacons should be centered on nations that have great strife: Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan. They can be the hubs of new security architecture that links alliances of free nations globally, reinforcing the strengths of each member state, in time, linking these three bastions with NATO, as well as the new and expanded security framework for the Indo-Pacific will form a global alliance for freedom. This will benefit America.

The need for this network of alliances is patent and cannot come too soon. The world has become too small for free countries to not be part of something greater, which will forestall armed conflict rather than react to it.

I close today by relating a story, a story of pain, bravery, and rebirth that affected my wife, Susan, and me deeply. Oksana Balandina was walking to her home with her love, Viktor Vasyliv, when a landmine tore off her legs and part of one hand. Oksana and Viktor were married last month in Lviv Surgery Center, after Oksana endured multiple operations. Although she lost her legs due to Putin’s cruel and unconscionable war, the couple danced after they were pronounced man and wife. Viktor took Oksana in his arms as they twirled and kissed.

This is rebirth. This is the future of Ukraine and of Europe and of America. The brave nation, the brave nation that now feels the pain of Russia's onslaught, but will soon know peace, as is the promise of our Lord to be virtuous. Putin believed he could destroy Ukrainian unity, pitting brother against brother on the basis of their spoken tongues. But all Ukraine has emerged with a single heart. Putin sought to destroy a great nation. Instead, this war has forged all Ukraine into an unbreakable sword that Russia now fears. The people of America are committed to seeing Ukraine emerge from this war as an undivided nation which will be a beacon to all, to show the world the primacy of freedom, determination, and of love. Thank you, and God bless you.

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Walter Russell Mead:

Oh, Mike, thanks for giving the talk. And also, thanks for being willing to take a few questions.

Michael R. Pompeo:

You bet.

Walter Russell Mead:

And I was struck by how much ground you covered in a short space of time. I don't know whether my questions will get to everything, but I'll do my best. Your talk looks at the very challenging situation that
we face in the world today. You can see the United States and our allies confronted in Ukraine, confronted over Taiwan. You didn't say much about it, but Iran is moving closer to a nuclear weapon with every day, and the Middle East, despite the new peace between Israel and some of its Arab neighbors, is in a grave danger.

We see an economy that just a few years ago was strong, was progressive, was raising incomes at every level of our society, is now undermined, and a lot of people in the country are asking as they struggle to find the money to fuel their cars and worry about their heating bills for next winter, "How did we get here?" The end of the Cold War was we had peace abroad. Russia was moving toward democracy. China seemed to be becoming friendly and wanting to trade. How the heck did we get from... And I think this is one reason maybe a lot of folks are skeptical about engaging overseas. They wonder, "Does our leadership really know what it's doing? What happened?"

Michael R. Pompeo:

Yeah. Look, these are all important questions. They're really questions for political leaders to answer, in the first instance. I reminded myself when I was a member of Congress, if you don't go articulate things that you support, right? So I was very supportive of making sure America was secure, significant defense budgets, which people back home in Kansas say, "Well, you spent an awful lot of money on that Army, that Navy, that whatever it is." Leaders have to go make the case for what matters.

The case is pretty straightforward, in my judgment. I'm looking around the room here. You all are too young. Anybody remember the Fram Oil commercial, right? "You can pay me now, or you can pay me later." Right? So you can buy the oil filter or a new engine, your call. Security is often the same way. It is difficult to justify. You can drive that old oil filter for another six months or 100,000 miles. It's possible, but in the end, these bills come due.

And what happened, President Clinton talked about his peace dividend, President Obama went around the world apologizing for America. Those are dangerous things to speak of, because I think as a historical matter, I could demonstrate to you with enough time. And as a Christian, I could tell you in the Bible, evil exists. And that evil is not going to sit back and say, "Well, you beat us in the nineties. You beat us in the early 2000s. It's all good, man." That not the way dictators, authoritarians, people who have designs on destroying humanity for their own personal gain, whether it's the Ayatollah in Iran, or Chairman Kim in North Korea, it's hard for rational Americans with our value set to understand these folks intend harm and have capabilities to inflict it. And so, we have an obligation as leaders to make sure that we put resources in the right place to actually deliver against that.

Walter Russell Mead:

So you're telling me that history didn't end in 1991?

Michael R. Pompeo:

History has no intention of ending.
Walter Russell Mead:

I just hope it doesn't end us. You made a very strong, and to me, very compelling case about defending Ukraine. But as we think about how to do that, and what the implications might be, and what the end game might look like, it gets very complicated very fast. Certainly one question I have is, people talk about the possibility, and I gather that Russians have threatened this a little bit, that Russia might use tactical nuclear war missiles in Eastern Ukraine. These are not big city-killing bombs, but it's the use of nuclear war in conventional warfare. How do we deter Putin from those kinds of moves? And what should we do if he goes ahead in that direction?

Michael R. Pompeo:

Yeah. These are very difficult questions. Deterrence is about demonstrating massive capacity to respond, and a willingness to do so, even if one doesn't demonstrate that publicly, even if these are private conversations about, "If you do X, we will do Y." By the way, we will do it. We will not hold National Security Council meetings and debate this. We won't go on TV and talk about this. We're actually going to do this. We lived this in the Trump administration. We were at risk of losing deterrents against the Iranian regime. And I was at the center of it. And I can't say everything, but make no mistake about the Iranians knew how we intended to respond. We were prepared to respond in that way. As they continued to move about the cabin too freely, we executed a piece of our deterrence model demonstrating massive credibility.

And then I'd say the other piece of this, and this goes to Putin's nuclear weapons in particular. It won't just be his tactical nuclear weapons. One, unmoored from this line that is drawn in most places in the world will embolden other nations around the world to not only obtain enriched material, but nuclear weapons capability.

The second and third order ramifications of this are deep, so I pray that the Biden Administration has gone through the list of things. I know what we provided them as ideas about this exact type of threat. I don't want to go into them, because I think these are best to be held in private. But we should have demonstrated that we are prepared to execute against those things, which are things that Vladimir Putin would find so difficult to find his way through that he will, but for the most calamitous situation, refrain from using those nuclear weapons. I don't put that risk at zero.

I also think that our fears that something we do will escalate him into that are much overblown. There are a handful of things that I'd say, "Yep, if we did that, he might well do it." But delivering four MLRS systems hasn't even scared that line. You can't even see the line from four MLRS weapon systems without providing the UAVs with the capacity to do precision targeting. We're not close.

Walter Russell Mead:

So you say we should be more worried about deterring him, and less willing to let him deter us.

Michael R. Pompeo:

Yeah. Timidity is escalatory in every situation that I experienced as CIA Director and Secretary of State.
Walter Russell Mead:

Okay. When we think about what the end of the war might look like, and I realize that could be a very long way off, do you think we should be looking... The Europeans are often saying, "Well, Ukraine should be the one that decides." But the sort of subtext is always, "And they'll have to compromise when they make that decision."

Michael R. Pompeo:

Yeah.

Walter Russell Mead:

How do you think we should be approaching this issue?

Michael R. Pompeo:

Yeah, Walter. Actually, the first half of that sentence, I agree with. Ukraine should decide. The second of that is they should decide with the full capacity to make that decision on the terms that are what the Ukrainian people want them to achieve, not being extorted or under the risk of further assault from the Russians. What does that piece of paper look like?

To think about an enforcement mechanism is silly on its face. I’m borrowing this line, but Putin won’t be looking for an off-ramp. He's looking for a parking spot. Right? He's looking for a place to park and refuel and refit and make sure that he's got his car running right. This is in Vladimir Putin's heart. We should accept that. It gets to your point about history not ending. Vladimir Putin, until the day he passes from this planet, will have as his design, the destruction of Europe and greater Russian expansionism. So we should provide Ukraine the tools so that they can make whatever hard decision that they may one day have to make, but they should make that on terms that aren't the terms of surrender.

Walter Russell Mead:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And do you think-

Michael R. Pompeo:

I want them to be Grant, not Lee at Appomattox.

Walter Russell Mead:

That's pretty clear. As a South Carolinian, I am aware of that example.

Michael R. Pompeo:

Hey, it's just 0-1. It's okay.

Walter Russell Mead:

Well, somebody did say that the motto down there was, "If at first you don't secede..."
Michael R. Pompeo:

There you go. There you go. As a Kansan, we don't do North-South jokes, but I'll try.

Walter Russell Mead:

It didn't work out that well in Kansas. Look, the thing is too that we're looking at post-war, would Ukraine belong in NATO, do you think, or what do we do? Because they had the Budapest Memorandum, these beautiful signed declarations. It didn't seem to do ... even the sacred UN Charter doesn't seem to have restrained Russian aggression. What do they need? What should we do?

Michael R. Pompeo:

Yeah. I don't know exactly what that looks like. It looks like something more than the Budapest Memorandum. There has to be something there that is bigger, whether it's formal entry into NATO. I don't buy the theory that if Ukraine was in NATO, this would've spurred even greater Russian aggression. I don't. I think that's silly on its face. I'm not worried about escalation. I want to make sure we get it right.

When we bring NATO into it, I must say, the Europeans have to step up. This is an imperative. This isn't American bluster. It's not Donald Trump reading the riot act to the Europeans, or Mike Pompeo giving Hamas a hard time. This is serious stuff. If America's going to do its global leadership role in confronting the Chinese Communist Party, it must be the case that Europe actually chooses to defend itself, for the first time in decades. I mean no mal-intent to any of the European peoples, but math is really easy with respect to Europeans simply saying, "We'd rather do business than soldiering." They need to do some soldiering. When we think about what Eastern Ukraine will look like, the European eastern front will look like in the aftermath of this, it needs to have a heavy European component.

I have one more thought on the Budapest Memorandum. When's the next time somebody's going to give up their nuclear weapons if we don't defend Ukraine? I left it out of my remarks today, but imagine the next time some nation has a nuclear weapon and we say, "Hey, just hand them over to so-and-so, and it'll all be good there." Chairman Kim is watching, I assure you. Every Arab nation who's thinking about their own nuclear program is watching. The Iranians are watching. The Iranians are probably watching through my cell phone. This is serious stuff, if we walk away from a commitment that the United Kingdom and the United States made in signing that document. We shouldn't forget about the proliferation risk that's created if we simply say, "Nope, Ukraine, you're on your own."

Walter Russell Mead:

Speaking of proliferation risk, you didn't say much about Iran in the speech, but I know it's on your mind. Any thoughts for us there about where we are? It's beginning to look as if the JCPOA might not. Maybe it was the Schrodinger's treaty, is what it is right now. Where do you see this going, and what should we be doing?
Michael R. Pompeo:

We had it right on Iran. I'm convinced of it. I don't mean that as a political matter. I mean it as an American security matter. The Trump administration had it dead nailed. It's not the JCPOA. Frankly, in some ways, I've fought against it for seven years. I think that most of the important components of that now, if re-entered into, are months along now. This is a political gesture of the Biden administration to try and re-enter that to say, "We undid what Trump did." Whatever.

The nuclear deal, I'm against it, but not my primary focus when it comes to Iran. My primary focus is that we are not only rearming them, but we are refunding them, already, today. We haven't lifted very many sanctions, but we're not enforcing them. The difference between lifting a sanction and non-enforcement is exactly zero. The GDP of Iran will grow more this year than the GDP of the United States of America. That thought, put it in your hat.

This is absolute malpractice, to think for a moment that our ally, Israel, should be targeted with rockets from Iran, and it takes you 97 hours to issue a statement saying that the Israelis might could defend themselves from that. This is an abdication of responsibility, responsibility that matters to the American people. Our friend and ally, Israel, the Abraham Accords that we built upon, the efforts that we put in place, created an enormous amount of stability in the region. We are on the cusp of expanding it even more. That certainly matters for the people of Amman or Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates or Morocco, but it matters to Americans too. Don't ever forget how many times we've sent our young men and women to fight and die in that place.

More peace, more stability, more prosperity in that region, being upended almost exclusively today by the world's largest state-sponsor of terror, Iran, is something that the American people ought to care about. Certainly if you have a family member who is serving today in the United States armed forces, you should be appalled that we are sitting at the table with an Iranian regime, and we're having to be dragged to talk with a Saudi partner who's worked with us on defense issues for so long. I get human rights. Sign me up. I'm against murder, any place and always, but it is the Iranian regime. It is the Iranian regime that presents a real threat to the United States of America, and our Arab, Gulf State partners that present the promise of prosperity and peace in that region.

Walter Russell Mead:

Okay. Well, let's keep moving east and get to China.

Michael R. Pompeo:

You've named all the places I can't travel.

Walter Russell Mead:

I have to say, I don't even have your achievements, but I'm just as banned. It's very depressing, actually. China, you say that they've broken the Hong Kong treaty with the UK, which is true. The threat to Taiwan, it's real. At the same time, our economies are incredibly entangled, and it would be hard if even Russia, which had so little impact. When we cut relations with Russia, we've seen a big impact on the world. How do we manage this Chinese economy that isn't going away, that is actually important to the businesses, a lot of American business? What do we do?
Michael R. Pompeo:

This is a problem we began to approach in the Trump administration. Like any good 12-step program, we got to step one. We have a problem. I traveled the world, alerting the world to the threat from the Chinese Communist Party. I joked earlier that I take a lot of credit. You take global polling today. I think the whole world ... by the way, bipartisan here in America ... understands the threat from the CCP, so I'll give myself a little bit of credit, but Xi Jinping gets most of the credit for allowing the Wuhan virus to kill millions of people around the world. It seems like a long time ago, but don't ever forget what Xi Jinping did. If you'd killed millions of people any other way, I promise you'd be in the dock someplace. Instead, he is still ruling the world's first- or second-largest economy. How do we confront their economic power, is the question you ask. How do you confront China in the world, where you have deep economic interest that are tied there?

The answer is, like any elephant, one bite at a time. You start with the things that matter most, national security risks to the United States of America. In my remarks, I mentioned semiconductors. I could go through half a dozen other items that you say, "These are central to American national security. We're going to make them here. We're going to make them in some country that is unalterably connected to the United States of America in a way that we can trust, even in times of conflict and hardship." I can think of a dozen or so that I would put in that bucket. We just should make them here. At some point we should get to a point where we'd prohibit them from being made there. We did that with a few, and we should do that with more, beginning to create the space to do the hard things that will have to be done to confront the Chinese Communist Party.

Second idea, as an economic matter, pure reciprocity. Why on earth we have allowed the Chinese Communists to build their economy on the backs of the American worker is beyond me. I think it was some level of fear and some level of greed, or some combination thereof. It doesn't matter why we did it. Today is the day that we should get off the mat and go get it right. If a Chinese company wants to invest in America, they should do so on terms that an American company could invest in China. We should not become more like them. We should force them to become more like us. We should demand that.

If they want to trade on an American stock exchange, so be it. Here are the rules for an American company trading there, so will a Chinese company. You should know that's not true today. When an American company wants to be on the Shanghai Stock Exchange, we should not demand, as the Chinese are now doing, that they establish a Communist Party organization inside of their company. Think about that for just a minute. An American company doing business in the financially-regulated world in China will be required to establish a Communist Party. That's almost as bad as letting the AFL-CIO inside. Tough call, and this is craziness.

Reciprocity, right? This is the central thesis upon which we've always had international trade. We set rules, and every nation is forced to comply with them. That's what we ought to do. This is how you unwind from the Chinese economy. While we are dependent on them, I promise you this. They are far more dependent on the United States of America and on Europe than Europe and the United States of America are on China. It is not the case that she's going to say, "Fine, I'm stopping it all." Woe be it unto the 900 million that will be thrown into poverty and food insecurity and energy insecurity, for which China has no answer, immediately.
Last thought. I've gone on too long, but this is an important topic. The Chinese problem isn't a problem of American diplomacy or American national security. They are inside the gates. This problem is here, inside the United States of America today. It is at our institutions of higher learning, almost none of which could survive today without Chinese money. 360,000 Chinese students pre-COVID, studying in the United States of America, and every major research institution in the United States, from MIT, Berkeley, Harvard on down, is enormously dependent on Chinese research and grant money. If you think they provided that because they like America, come see me afterwards. We’re going to go cut a deal.

They have their teeth into America. They attend our school board meetings. They attend our county commission meetings. Try to get an American diplomat to attend a Chinese school board meeting. Godspeed. Reciprocity. We should demand that their diplomats behave the way ours do. We shut down probably the largest espionage operation ever conducted in the United States of America. It was being conducted out of their diplomatic facility, the consulate in Houston, Texas. We'd known about it for years, and nobody had the temerity to say, "Well, that's silly," and shut it down. Director Ray and I shut it down, and set them back and their espionage operations back substantially, but not permanently. This risk from inside the gates is the one that we have to confront first.

It's not about Chinese Americans. It's not even about Chinese citizens that are here in America, most of whom are good people, but no Chinese student, as goodhearted as they may be, ever returns to their own country without a visit from the Chinese apparatchiks. "How's your uncle doing? How's your cousin?" The Chinese are watching every single thing that they do while they are here inside the United States of America. This is something that we should think hard about, as we think about how to make sure that we have fair, reciprocal, even relationships, which is all that we should ever demand from any country, and we should include China amongst those nations.

Walter Russell Mead:

Great. Well, thank you very much.

Michael R. Pompeo:

Thank you.

Walter Russell Mead:

Great. Very helpful. Certainly interested to see what you do next.

Michael R. Pompeo:

Great. Thank you. One last thought. One last thought while we have everybody. I'll be brief. When you hear me talk, I identify all the risks and all the dangers. Those are all real. I believe every one of them. In America, we live in the greatest nation in the history of civilization. I'm long America. I'm convinced we'll get all of these right. Churchill has the line that says, "America always gets it right, after they exhaust all the other possibilities." You articulate in your opening that we're pretty close to that, but I also believe that there will be timely leadership rise. I'm not talking about presidents. I'm talking about city councilmen and school board members and faith leaders all across our country.
America will get this right, and nations across the world should count on that as they think about how they interact with the United States of America. We are not in decline, but rather we are a nation that will be ascendant, and we will be the dominant force in the world and a force for good in the world, as we have been for the last decades, for an awfully long time to come. You can bank on it. Thank you all for being with me today.