



Dialogues on American Foreign Policy and World Affairs: A Conversation with U.S. Sen. Todd Young

Discussion.....2

- Senator Todd Young, *U.S. Senator for Indiana*
- Walter Russell Mead, *Ravenel B. Curry III Distinguished Fellow in Strategy and Statesmanship, Hudson Institute*

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TRANSCRIPT

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KEN WEINSTEIN: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Betsy and Walter Stern Conference Center here at Hudson Institute. I'm Ken Weinstein, president and CEO of Hudson Institute. Hudson's mission is to promote U.S. international leadership and global engagement for a secure, free and prosperous future. And we are absolutely delighted to welcome back the senior senator from the state of Indiana, Senator Todd Young with us here at Hudson today. He is a guest in our bipartisan speaker series Dialogues on American Foreign Policy and World Affairs with Hudson Institute's Ravenel B. Curry III chair, Walter Russell Mead. The discussion series is designed not to solely focus on the urgent news, but also on the important news. That's to say, the broader questions and dilemmas affecting U.S. foreign policy.

Senator Young really needs no introduction here at Hudson Institute, where he's spoken many times. He's an important voice in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, particularly on development assistance and on the role of Congress in the U.S. foreign policy - in U.S. foreign policy decision-making. He's very much of a conservative internationalist on critical foreign policy issues, graduate of the Naval Academy, a Marine Corps captain who earned his graduate degrees at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, the University of London, before graduating from the Robert McKinney - Robert H. McKinney School of Law at Indiana University. I mention the name since Bob McKinney was for many years a Hudson trustee, himself also a Naval Academy graduate, as you know, and still a good friend of Hudson Institute, even though our headquarters are now here in Washington.

The senator served three terms in the House of Representatives before being elected to the Senate in November 2016. He will, of course, be in dialogue with someone else who needs no introduction here at Hudson Institute - Walter Russell Mead, the dean of observers of U.S. foreign policy, whose must-read "Global View" column in The Wall Street Journal is the most widely read column on U.S. foreign policy today. The senator has a hard stop at 12:45 p.m., so without any further ado, let me give you a warm welcome from all of us at Hudson Institute and turn the microphone over to Walter.

WALTER RUSSELL MEAD: Well, thank you, Ken, for the introduction. And thank you, Senator, for coming. It's great to see you again and great to see you at Hudson.

TODD YOUNG: Well, Walter, thanks so much for having me. It's great to be at Hudson again, especially in light of the Hoosier pedigree of this institute. Yeah.

MEAD: That's right - a proud former Hoosier, like a lot of other folks. The thing - this series of conversations, which - some of you may remember we had Senator Chris Murphy here recently - are intended not to do the usual journalistic sort of gotcha thing, but to give the - give people in our audience here in this room and watching us on TV a chance to hear what American policymakers and serious foreign policy folks say when they get a chance to really express themselves. And you can agree with it. You can disagree with it. But our hope is that after one of these conversations, you have more insight into how American foreign policy is seen by people who make it.

So Senator Young, I wanted to start out by asking you about the Indo-Pacific and the - I guess we used to call it the pivot to Asia. I'm not sure what we're calling it now. But trying to shift resources and attention into the Indo-Pacific has been a theme we've heard in several presidential administrations, but it somehow seems hard to do. It's a little bit like Don Corleone.

We keep getting dragged back in when we think we're leaving. Where is the pivot to Asia, and what do you think we can do to advance along this?

YOUNG: Well, you're right. There has been a branded or a rhetorical pivot to Asia occurring for some time now. But it's unclear the extent to which we've really been able to dedicate the appropriate amount of resources and attention to it. I think it's - one of the reasons it's very important to reassess our military presence in particular regions and how we're spending our military resources is, we need to move more towards naval. We need to become increasingly navalist as a military so that we can cover that large stretch of ocean in the Indo-Pacific region. We need to strengthen our alliances in that region, and some improvements are being made in that respect. I'm not sure it's helpful when we create uncertainty among our allies in the Asia-Pacific. And so I think at every term, we need to reassure them because the Chinese in particular, as they engage in their adventurous activity, are giving essentially our allies a choice. They can either be accommodationist towards the power located most closely to them, but one who tends to behave in more transactional and predatory terms, oftentimes. Or instead, they can take a chance on the United States of America in a liberal international order. So I think we have some work to do with respect to reassuring our allies in the region.

Moreover, whether it's the military presence in foreign areas - places like Afghanistan - or the institutional focus in the State Department and in other agencies of government on places other than Asia, I think that that slows us down. So we know that the greatest existential threat - as we look out a generation or two - to the United States is China, on account of its population, its different value set, and its growing economy. And so I would give us a incomplete if I were to grade us. But we really need to be engaging partners and allies on every front - diplomatically, militarily, the mil-to-mil relationships, intelligence sharing where we can. And then a real point of emphasis that I've been trying to sort of elevate in terms of our public discourse, as chairman of a subcommittee that oversees international economic policy on the Foreign Relations Committee, is, we need a coherent economic strategy to help work with these nations, to partner with these nations - an alternative, frankly, to Belt and Road and some of the predatory approaches that China in particular has taken.

MEAD: So this would be support for infrastructure development.

YOUNG: Well, this is support for infrastructure development - so we passed the BUILD Act...

MEAD: Yeah.

YOUNG: ...Which will allow us to crowd in a lot of private money. That's the real advantage to the BUILD Act because the United States can actually get an equity stake, as can other countries when they give development assistance in major development projects. So the BUILD Act was an important stride, but I go far beyond development assistance. We need more free trade agreements - multilateral where possible. I know we had the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, and there was sort of a bipartisan consensus during the last presidential election not to enter TPP. So we accept that political reality and move on and try and identify other countries - hopefully, large economies - with whom we can forge closer economic relationships. And then I think we need a - coordinated strategies with partners and allies on things like energy.

I think we need to come up with a written plan, which I've called for, in terms of investment in some key frontier technologies, just as the Chinese are doing - so for example, 3D manufacturing, artificial intelligence, quantum computing. These are all areas where the United

States, if we're not making some strategic bets, we're going to fall behind, I'm afraid. And we've met with success doing this, historically. You think of DARPA, which was - laid the predicate later for the Internet. These don't always succeed, but if we don't try - if we don't invest those resources - we're sure to be outpaced by other sort of state capitalist models.

MEAD: You've been - going back to the Middle East now for a minute, you've been one of the strong critics of Saudi Arabia in the Senate and had spoken very seriously about wanting to put some conditions on the aid and have a strong response to violations of human rights there. I know you went to - you visited the region earlier this fall. Did you come away from that with any change in perspective? Or where do you think we are now with Saudi Arabia?

YOUNG: Every time I travel and my perspective changes - which is why I find travel so valuable - and as I spend a little more time in the Senate, I'll continue to travel. But you're right. I have been critical of Saudi Arabia. I've given criticism where criticism is due, and I've given fulsome credit where that's due. On one hand, the Saudis - MBS in particular - is really trying to modernize his country, and that's something I came to more fully appreciate as I visited the country. Women are becoming increasingly empowered. There is a bit more breathing space for civil society. That's not to say this is the United States of America or Alexis de Tocqueville would marvel at current Saudi society, but they are modernizing. And I think longer-term, there's a real opportunity for the home of Mecca and Medina to send a signal to the rest of the Muslim world that you can indeed modernize one's economy and one's culture over a period of time and reconcile that with the Muslim religion.

On the other hand, the way that Saudi Arabia's partnering with the United States and the Emirates have carried out their military operations in Yemen were deserving of the very vocal and direct criticism that I gave of them. I believe they violated international humanitarian law, denying food, fuel and medicine to Houthis and others in the country of Yemen, thus radicalizing people who wouldn't have otherwise radicalized, further destabilizing the country at a time when 20 million people were on the verge of starvation, and creating an environment that was fertile for Iran to come in and provide more wherewithal to the Houthis. So it's a very complex situation.

But this is a complex partnership with Saudi Arabia that we likely will need to maintain for some period of time because the greatest threat in that region - something that was reinforced during my visit - was clearly Iran. And Iran continues - as all of your viewers know, they continue to try and develop nuclear weapons, continue to improve their military technologies, including missile technology on which those weapons could sit, and engage in terrorist activities and adventurism throughout the Middle East. And so that destabilizing presence is a threat to not just those in the region, but ultimately, the United States. And so it's important for us to maintain a dialogue with sometimes bad actors and complicated partners like the Saudis.

MEAD: I know you'd mentioned you'd seen some changes in their - in Saudi's policy toward Yemen that you thought were positive. Is that right?

YOUNG: Yes. Let me commend the government for making changes. Their targeting of different, you know, military targets has improved. I'm persuaded of that. I spent a lot of time with now-Ambassador Abizaid, as well as some top government leaders in Saudi Arabia, spent some time directly with MBS. And myself and Senator King, who traveled together, felt like we left there with a much fuller appreciation that they are making significant strides. The Saudis understand that they need to bring that conflict in Yemen to a political resolution, and they strike

me as dedicated toward doing whatever they can to make that happen. They are pulling in the expertise and the diplomatic weight of the Emirates, the Omanis - who, incidentally, have a positive relationship with Iran. And together, they're all working collectively with some other GCC countries to try and stabilize that fraught region.

MEAD: Given the latest news from Iran that the move on enriching uranium and so on is accelerating, how would you advise President Trump to proceed with Iran at this time?

YOUNG: He needs to maintain a maximum pressure campaign, but really, I think the key is going to be to have a full diplomatic initiative vis-a-vis the Europeans. We really need the Europeans on board so that we cannot just bilaterally apply pressure vis-a-vis the Iranians, but so that Europe will - we will ensure remains on board with trying to bring Iran back into a position of better behavior. And we've had our challenges, first with respect to military contributions from our NATO partners in Europe. But we need to make every effort to patch up any hurt feelings, to enhance trust and to try and work together with the nations who still, arguably, are closest in terms of sharing, you know, values and a vision of a liberal international order that we have.

MEAD: Well, that brings me to some comments by President Macron recently that...

YOUNG: Yes.

MEAD: ...Of France - that we are witnessing...

YOUNG: I thought you might bring that up (laughter).

MEAD: ...The brain-death of NATO. I tweeted last night, I wonder whether NATO was really dead, pining for the fjords, or just mostly dead?

YOUNG: Reminds me of a "Monty Python" episode - not quite dead yet, but...

MEAD: Yes, exactly.

YOUNG: Sure.

MEAD: And then "Princess Bride" when he comes back.

YOUNG: Yes.

MEAD: What - where do you think NATO is? And what should be done about it?

YOUNG: So to stick with the tortured analogy here - improperly stimulated, you know? I - we're not brain-dead. And in fact, as I said, we share common history with so many of these European countries. We share common Western values. I understand there are distinctions between every nation, every country. But they are our best shot, and we are their best shot. And I have - and this is why Macron spoke up - because I believe that so many European leaders fervently hope that we can breathe more life back into NATO, and I believe it's in the best interest of our country to do that. I also, relatedly, think it's important for us to try and establish analogous relationships with Pacific countries, going back to the Indo-Pacific question you started with. So I know APEC is not a mutual security alliance, but it could evolve into something more robust, into something more ambitious. And, you know, look. Our values and our alliance system - I'm not the first to conceive of this idea - are our greatest assets, geopolitically speaking. And the Chinese have to pay others. The Chinese have to hire out partners. The United States

genuinely has friends and allies whom - and like any friendship, they need to be cultivated and sustained to endure.

MEAD: President Erdogan of Turkey is going to be visiting Washington soon. And when we think about NATO and problems with NATO, Turkey has a way of coming to the fore. What do you think - what is the message you think the United States should be giving President Erdogan?

YOUNG: The Yogi Berra message - you know, when you come to a fork in the road, take it. All right? You can't have it both ways. You cannot at once purchase Russian weapons systems - in this case the S-400, the air defense system which is designed to shoot down the most sophisticated American-made military aircraft. You can't at once do that and remain a high-level partner of other NATO countries. So I don't know precisely how this gets resolved, but I think that's the message that needs to be sent, and then here, again, work together with our NATO allies to figure out a path forward. I do understand there's some competing dynamics with laying down the law but also wanting to make sure you don't fully push Erdogan into the Russian orbit, understanding that there will be another leader or set of leaders who follow Erdogan. And they may follow the Ataturk model, as opposed to the Erdogan autocratic model. And so all of these things will have to be factored into, you know, how we scope any sanctions regime that we might decide to impose and any future actions. But I'm eagerly awaiting this meeting and the readout from the conversations.

MEAD: OK. One of the requirements for having a strong foreign policy is having a strong domestic economy. There are a lot of people in the United States who would wonder why we're spending all this money on other people's security or aid to other countries when we have so many problems here at home. How do we build that economy and how do we build that consensus at home for a more active foreign policy overseas?

YOUNG: Sure. So A, we build the economy by following sort of macroeconomic basics. We need a favorable tax regime, not just with respect to the domestic environment, but with respect to international taxation. We've recently made significant improvements on that front. We need a favorable regulatory environment. We need trained people. So we actually need further investment in human capital - especially, I would say, for rank-and-file Americans, those who don't aspire to attend a four-year college. So we're really trying to rethink higher education. And that's a key part of our national security, because as you've said, to the extent our economy grows larger, we then have the wherewithal to invest in the military technology, occasionally the foreign assistance that is required to keep - to advance our values and to defend our values. The other component here is immigration reform. Look; I've studied a bit of economics. I know there's two ways to grow an economy. One is to make individual workers more productive. Another is to bring in more workers. I haven't figured out how to nudge individuals into having significantly more children through public policy.

MEAD: Mmm hmm.

YOUNG: And so in the absence of that, we should embrace the great American tradition of inviting others into the country to help contribute. I do think we should move toward sort of what the Canadians, the Australians, and many others have done, which is a skills-based immigration system so that those who come into this country can maximally contribute on day one to the growth of our economy. In terms of how all that translates into our power, our ability to project force and values abroad, it takes resources to do that. In - you know, during the time I was in

the military and in recent years, that has meant aircraft carriers and so forth. We're going to be entering a new era, a sort of - a tech era where it's going to take iterative development of the latest asymmetric technologies and the ability to defend against them. And so, you know, there again, much of this will come - one of the great things about the United States is so much of this will come from private sector investment and privately led innovation. But there remains an outsized role in this era, I think, for government-funded research often partnering in unique ways with the private sector.

MEAD: When you go home to Indiana and you talk to folks there about foreign policy and American interests and so on, what do you find they're interested in, and what questions do they have about where we're headed?

YOUNG: So many - we have a high rate of military enlistment in the state of Indiana and one of the largest National Guards in the country. So they want members of the Foreign Relations Committee and members of Congress more generally to be constantly questioning our presence abroad, to play a significant role and to speak on their behalf as we consider, you know, additional troop commitments or sustaining existing troop commitments. So that's one thing I hear, particularly from military families and veterans.

Another thing I hear about is the growth of our economy and the extent to which others play fair. I think to President Trump's credit, he elevated the importance of intellectual property theft, which is not just something that the United States is afflicted by, but so many other countries. And China is the main violator of this and other predatory economic practices. So that's why I've introduced some legislation calling for the administration - a global economic security strategy calling for the administration to work across departments of government and with other countries to come up with a written plan to address these things moving forward in a multilateral basis.

MEAD: You hear a lot of talk about a gap between the foreign policy establishment and the opinion of ordinary Americans. Is that - do you find evidence of that gap as someone who, again, spends a lot of time with people outside the Beltway?

YOUNG: I think, you know, naturally members of the foreign policy establishment, as you put it, believe that rank-and-file Americans, Hoosiers, spend more time thinking about foreign policy than they do, right? Most Americans are like people - you know, members of my family. We think about our families. We think about our neighborhoods; maybe occasionally we - states and national issues. What happens in Yemen rarely is...

MEAD: (Laughter).

YOUNG: ...You know, meets the dinner table conversation. At least, it didn't at my house growing up. And it still doesn't with my 9-year-olds these days very much. So I think sometimes we overestimate that. And that's why it's especially important, I would say. That's why I feel duty-bound, and I think other members of Congress have a duty, to speak about these issues publicly, especially when we've had, you know, a military engagement lasting 18 years in Afghanistan. I - we rarely debate this issue. We certainly don't debate it in a fulsome manner on the floor of the United States Senate. And there are a lot of structural reasons for that. Is there enough time? We have judges to vote on. I understand there are a lot of competing priorities. But nonetheless, we owe it to the men and women in uniform to elevate these issues, to

educate the American people about what is going on and to rethink our positions from time to time as circumstances change.

MEAD: Well, this, I think, brings me to what often seems to be at the heart of a lot of American foreign policy issues now, which is that - and maybe not just in foreign policy - but Congress has sort of lost authority and lost direction. And in general, in domestic policy, it means both the executive and the judiciary have claimed that empty ground. And in foreign policy, it's mostly the executive. How does - as a senator, how do you view this trend first?

YOUNG: I think it's ironic. For those who studied our early American history and the framing of our Constitution, James Madison had a fear that it would be the legislative branch that would serve as a vortex for all the power of the other branches of government. Heck, we can't give powers away quickly enough. Congress does not want to make difficult decisions. And it's not confined to foreign policy. We pass very vague laws, punting on the difficult provisions, leaving the details up to these large administrative agencies here in Washington, D.C. And then we come home and lament the unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats for ruling our lives, right? So that's why I introduced the REINS Act. Look it up. It would help address that structural challenge. With respect to spending, we've delegated a lot of spending authority to the executive branch. And then war powers, in particular. It's a whole other conversation. I'm happy to get into it. But when you still have on the books an authorization for the use of military force dating back to just months after I entered the U.S. Navy after high school, 1991, that's a real problem. That shows that Congress hasn't even been doing basic housekeeping with respect to war powers.

So we need to claw back some of this authority. It's been a real point of emphasis of mine. In fact, within weeks of being sworn into the Senate, becoming a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I introduced - this is back in 2017 - an authorization for the use of military force against ISIS. Now some can claim - I understand a very earnest and serious argument that the 2001 AUMF applied to associated forces that were derivative of those forces originally targeted and therefore allowed us to fight against ISIS. But I feel like at some point after, then 16 years, those powers become attenuated. And we have a duty to reaffirm our support, reconsider in a public setting what our men and women in uniform are doing and take some measure of accountability as a new generation of elected officials charged with overseeing these sorts of conflicts.

MEAD: Now I can remember back even before 1991, and I can remember back in the Vietnam era, hearings at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were almost central to the public debate over questions like the war in Vietnam. And Senator Fulbright would have his point of view, and other senators would disagree. But there was a public debate over...

YOUNG: Yes.

MEAD: ...Basic questions of American foreign policy. I find, if anything today, that has kind of moved over to the cable news shows.

YOUNG: It has. And it's moved elsewhere, too. Let me - before I riff a little bit, let me commend Chairman Risch. I held up a vote at a business meeting we had in the Foreign Relations Committee. I actually agreed on the substance. Rarely do I do this. But I said, Mr. Chairman, you're not going to have my vote on this one if we don't have a hearing on war powers. He wanted my vote. He's a pragmatic man. He's also a man of his word. And he held a full

committee hearing on assessing the various AUMFs we have out there. So this is really important to me. But there's sort of a - this is - and it maybe will strike some people as an odd thing to bring up - but we haven't passed a full authorization bill when authorizing new authorities and changing existing legal authorities under Foreign Relations Committee jurisdiction since chairman - you have any guess?

MEAD: Jesse Helms.

YOUNG: He nailed it. Walter is just...

MEAD: I just - I grew up in North Carolina, and Jesse Helms is a very thorough guy.

YOUNG: So my former boss for a couple of years, Chairman Richard G. Lugar - incredible statesman for whom I have incredible respect - came very close. He passed what we now call an authorities bill. It's a more abbreviated bill. But nonetheless, if you're not passing an authorization bill - I tell this to Lindsey Graham all the time because he is chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee. That turns Lindsey Graham into both the authorizer and the appropriator. He is a very powerful person, right? So my own belief - my conviction is that if we can't make floor time to consider an authorization bill for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, then let's at least start bootstrapping it to the National Defense Authorization Act. Let's get it done. Let's get it in the muscle memory, and then maybe someday, the Super A committee can become once again a full-fledged Super A committee.

MEAD: So just to help some of the audience maybe with this, what would an authorization bill from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee do, you know? What would it change? What would - what affect would this have?

YOUNG: So there are authorizing committees, and then there are appropriating committees. Authorizing committees are charged with coming up with new legal authorities - many of which allow new expenditures - or changing existing legal authorities. So we could shut things down that are irrelevant or repurpose certain functions of our federal government. The Appropriations Committee is charged with taking whatever budget, you know, amount has been agreed upon through the budget process and allocating it to some of the things that had been authorized. So the Appropriations Committee will remain a powerful committee, but we don't - it's not good policy to mix the two. If we're going to mix the two, let's just dispense with, you know, this notion that we have two distinct functions, because you're not making much policy if you're not passing authorizing bills. You're doing oversight - which is very, very important. And so...

MEAD: So...

YOUNG: Yeah.

MEAD: An authorization bill, in your view, would - the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would think about, do we need to restructure the State Department? Do we need to reconfigure our priorities? So you actually give a sort of legislative guidance to the department. Is that the idea?

YOUNG: That's exactly the idea. And unfortunately, symptomatic of not passing an authorization bill, it's not uncommon now for the full committee to invite high-level administration witnesses before the full Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We don't see them for months,

and we later find out that they have appeared before Lindsey's subcommittee. So you know things are amiss when that's the case.

MEAD: Interesting.

YOUNG: Yes.

MEAD: All right. Well, we have a few minutes left, and we have some questions from the audience. So let me see. We have a question here. It says that the Russian foreign minister in a speech in Paris said that the U.S.A. wants to establish a ministate in northeast Syria. What is your view about that?

YOUNG: Look; one of the primary planks of Russian foreign policy these days is to misinform people worldwide and try and distort through propaganda the United States' intention. So no, we're not trying to establish a ministate. The goal for a long time has been to maintain a measure of stability in northeastern Syria. One could argue that the recent quick, you know, withdrawal of our troops and then reinsertion in a different location did destabilize the region. But nonetheless, there's been no effort to maintain a ministate. Yeah.

MEAD: Well, now here's a question I wish I had thought to ask you. What are the U.S.'s most pressing problems in foreign policy now and for the next 50 years?

YOUNG: (Laughter) It's a great question. You know, I really think that our economic growth is ensuring that we remain on the cutting edge of innovation and education so that we might advance our American values is really - it's our primary foreign policy challenge. I guess the second one that comes to mind is continuing to nurture our alliance system - right? - and repair it where necessary. And that can occur bilaterally. It can also occur by utilizing the many multilateral forums out there, many of which the United States created and may need to be refashioned so they're suitable to the 21st century.

MEAD: The question about the events in Hong Kong and what looks like a bit of an escalation there on the part of the authorities - how should the U.S. respond to what's happening in Hong Kong? Is there something that we can or should do?

YOUNG: I believe it's helpful when senators, members of the House of Representatives are vocal about maintaining not just international law but ensuring our values are respected by our partners and sometimes our adversaries. So to the extent we do that, it gives more diplomatic leverage to our own diplomats and - look. The Chinese - they don't want to develop a reputation worldwide as the great sort of malefactor - as a human rights violator. But do they have gulags? Yes. They've established gulags. Yes, they are violating the terms of the law that ensured that Hong Kongers could remain free, at least until China assumed full control. And so we need to blow the whistle on that. At the same time, this is not the Cold War. We need to maintain economic relations, mil-to-mil relations and so forth with the Chinese because this is a much more fluid situation. And so, you know, speak up, and we'll continue to reassess the situation. And I know the administration is doing that as well.

MEAD: We have another question here asking about kleptocracy and asking, what is Congress doing about dirty money and political influence associated with foreign governments? What are we - are we doing enough? Is there more that we can do?

YOUNG: I'm sure there's always more that we can do, and I'm open to suggestions. So anyone that feels like you have some good ones, either those in the audience or those watching on C-SPAN, visit young.senate.gov and please submit them. We're always open to good ideas. You know, we've spent a lot of emphasis during just the last couple of years on Chinese investment in the United States and ensuring that our companies don't become woven into the fabric of China's state capitalist model. So that was the so-called CFIUS legislation. That was really important.

But when you think of smaller economies - say, some Latin American economies or African economies - we know that where there is fraud, where there is kleptocratic behavior, you know, freedom tends not to thrive, and trust in the government is very low, and that often results in violence as well. So, you know, this is what our diplomatic community in particular - is out there trying to address these things. But this, as with so many other challenges, can only be properly addressed by working with other countries so that we can, you know, bring to bear all of our wherewithal - diplomatic, economic and so forth - in order to bring leaders and governments into better behavior.

MEAD: OK. Well, it sounds like the Kleptocracy Initiative here at Hudson is getting - hearing that there's an open door in Senator Young's office for your proposals. And another question from the audience that - asking, what can the U.S. administration do to convince the North Koreans - Kim Jong Un - that it's time to denuclearize?

YOUNG: That's a great question (laughter). I credit the administration for sort of trying to change the game, to flip the script. I really do. I think at some point, it's the old definition of insanity - trying the same thing over and over again that's failing and trying again. And so we had tried a sort of cautious approach, strategic patience. And the Trump administration moved away from that, sought direct engagement and then a pressure campaign. It's met with mixed success, admittedly. But I think we need to continuously look for opportunities to sort of - to change the game. There's frequent speculation - though it's hard to get great intelligence about what's occurring in North Korea - that there may be some internal threats - internal to North Korea - to Kim Jong Un, who holds, really, all the cards. And those - you know, to the extent we can exploit some of those threats, that would be a good thing. But we need to be very careful because, to put it mildly, he's impulsive and reckless and very dangerous.

MEAD: Fortunately, there's no other world leader who could be characterized in those terms.

(LAUGHTER)

MEAD: All right. Senator, I want to be respectful of your time, and I know you had a hard stop at 12:45. So if the audience can be seated while the senator gets away - not really make his escape - that's not the right way to describe it. Thank you very much for sharing this time with us.

YOUNG: Thanks so much.

MEAD: Appreciate you.

: (APPLAUSE)