Poland, NATO, and the Future of Eastern European Security

TRANSCRIPT

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- Andrew Roberts, Visiting Professor, War Studies Department, King’s College, London
- Walter Russell Mead, Distinguished Fellow, Hudson Institute
- John Fonte, Senior Fellow and Director, Center for American Common Culture, Hudson Institute
- The Honorable Anna Maria Anders, Secretary of State, Poland

Hudson Institute, Washington D.C. Headquarters
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Washington, DC 20004
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Please note: This transcript is based on a recording and mistranslations may appear in text. The names of participants in the Audience Q&A have been removed. A video of the event is available: https://www.hudson.org/events/1568-poland-nato-and-the-future-of-eastern-european-security62018
KENNETH WEINSTEIN: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Stern Conference Center here at Hudson Institute. I'm Ken Weinstein, president and CEO of Hudson Institute. Hudson Institute is a policy research organization dedicated to U.S. international leadership in partnership with our allies for a secure, free and prosperous future. And I'm absolutely delighted to welcome everyone here to a very timely panel discussion on Poland, NATO and the future of Eastern European security. I've actually, by chance, just returned from Warsaw, where I was in Poland this last week, where I took part in a German Korber Stiftung workshop at the Polish Foreign Ministry focused on European Union issues. The workshop, among others, featured Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz and other officials from the Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Ministry, as well as Bundestag Parliament. And it was a very lively discussion. And I think we will have a rather lively discussion here this afternoon. Let me note how inspiring it is to see the transformation of Poland in our lifetimes, from being literally the place where the Warsaw Pact came to be, to being a bulwark of NATO's defense in the east. And as we look at a revanchist Russia, we see Poland taking a critical lead in terms of security issues: in terms of, as a close U.S. ally, its arms purchases from the United States – including the significant purchase of Patriot missiles –, Poland's recent and dramatic request to host a heavy armored U.S. division and to pay $2 billion to host it, which is something very welcome in this administration, and of course, Poland purchasing U.S. liquefied natural gas, which is notable, given the critical importance of energy security for Poland and the region.

To discuss these issues and others, we have an absolutely all-star panel. We have to begin with Anna Maria Anders, the Polish secretary of state for international dialogue. She has had a distinguished career in Poland as a senator representing the eastern flank of Poland. She is, of course, the daughter of the noted Polish general from World War II, Władysław Anders. And she and her family have lived through Poland's history, which we'll be hearing about firsthand. She, of course, grew up in exile in London, and then in the United States — or lived later in the United States.

Secondly, we have Andrew Roberts, one of the greatest living historians of our time. He's known for his brilliant works on Napoleon, Churchill and Hitler, as well as his role as a media commentator, even for the recent royal wedding. Those of you tuned into NBC, you saw.

We also have John Fonte, a senior fellow here at Hudson. John Fonte is well-known as a leading critic of the threat that progressive transnationalism poses to liberal democracy. He's the author of "Sovereignty Or Submission."

And our discussion today is moderated by none other than Hudson distinguished fellow Walter Russell Mead, the dean of observers of U.S. foreign policy, the man whose book, Special Providence: American Foreign Policy And How It Changed The World, is known for its typology of U.S. foreign policy and particularly the Jacksonian worldview that President Trump seems to subscribe to. Walter is also the Global View columnist for The Wall Street Journal. And if you have not yet read his column today, – all of his columns are must reads, but this is an absolutely must read – it is his interview with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, which I urge all of you to read as soon as this panel is over. Without any further ado, let me turn it over to Walter. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

WALTER RUSSELL MEAD: Well, thank you, Ken. And thanks to our guests for coming. This is really an important subject and an important time. And Poland does play a significant role in the thinking of the Trump administration in American foreign policy at this time. I should mention, for example, something that didn't get into the newspaper column. But I was speaking with Secretary Pompeo, and I was asking him what people should be looking at for guidance about the thinking of the administration in foreign policy. He specifically singled out President Trump's speech in Warsaw as one of the things that very much guides their thinking. So that's an important speech. I understand John will probably be referring to it in some way. But it is a landmark, I think, for American strategic thought at this point in time.

Poland and the United States have had a long history even though for most of that history Poland wasn't independent. No country has had, I think, more sympathy from the United States more consistently than Poland, as Americans have always favored Polish nationalism and Polish aspirations. The carve up of Poland by Prussia, Russia and Austria was often taken by Americans as a sign of the worst kind of cynical old world diplomacy. The independence of Poland was a very noncontroversial element of Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points." It was widely supported. But at the same time, that sympathy has only translated at certain times into real support for Poland's aspirations. And I think that remains a key to thinking about the future of Polish-U.S. relations: to what extent will this broad popular and elite sympathy for a country that Americans instinctively look to as a friend – and an ally and a partner in shared values – translate into real support?

At the end of the Cold War, I think we all hoped that Poland would be able to live as a normal country. But as time has gone by, the difficulties and the strategic fault lines that one sees in Central and Eastern Europe have begun to re-emerge. And Poland's course looks less simple and less straightforward today than it did 30 years ago. This is a panel that is uniquely qualified to talk about that, and I'm looking forward to it. We're going to start with Andrew Roberts, one of the liveliest historians and writers
on world history around today. I understand that those of us who are inveterate fans don't have long to wait. I think November is when the next installment of the oeuvre comes out. This will be a book on Winston Churchill. So I think Andrew Roberts on Winston Churchill is something that few people will want to miss. Andrew.

ANDREW ROBERTS: Should I get up?

MEAD: Whatever you like.

ROBERTS: Thank you. It's a great honor to be invited to address you this afternoon. And thank you very much indeed for those kind words, Walter. I sit on the board of three think tanks, and I speak to them often. One can't automatically assume that they're going to be -- what's the right word? -- sane. And the great thing about Hudson is that it is. It's sane and thoughtful and thus one of the best think tanks in the world.

The statistic that you must remember about Poland, which explains so much about Polish psychology and about its assumptions in world affairs and geopolitics, stems from the Second World War. When the Italians lost 1.1 percent of their population in the Second World War, the French, 1.9, the Germans -- who, after all, started it --, 8.8, the British, 0.9, and the Americans, 0.3, the Poles lost 17.2 percent of their population during that tragic conflict. And from that, one has to remember that this was not at all entirely down to the Nazis. They invaded on the 3rd of September 1939. But six weeks later, coming from the east, the Red Army attacked on the 18th of October. And this led to appalling tragedies for the Polish people, such as, of course the killing -- still, historians don't know quite how many -- of something like 20,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest and elsewhere in 1940. Stalin was incredibly cynical when he failed to allow the allies to resupply the Warsaw Uprising of August to October 1944. And then of course he set up the Lublin Poles -- the puppet Polish government --, which set itself up as the legitimate government that it never was. The true Polish people preferred the London government in exile, but by the January 1947 entirely rigged elections, it was the Lublin Poles that were put in place. And they and their successors -- effectively men like Gierek and Gomulka and Rokossovsky and Jaruzelski -- these men, some of them pretending at some stage to be to be reformists, but all of them, ultimately, under the thumb of Moscow, managed to run that country into the ground -- primarily economically, of course. They used all the ways that you usually get in ultra-socialist and communist regimes: nationalization, collectivization, three-year plans, five-year plans and others, such as refusing to take any Marshall aid, for example.

These kinds of serious errors, one after the other, meant that by the early 1980s, that country -- that proud and great country Poland -- was absolutely run into the ground. It had some terrible moments. In 1953, the Krakow church was put up on show trial. In 1955, of course, Warsaw was chosen for, as was mentioned earlier, the place where the Warsaw Pact was signed. But this extraordinary tale of woe began to come to an end in the late 1970s, when, in 1978, you had the election of Pope John Paul II, the Polish Pope. Then, in 1980, the foundation of the trade union Solidarity -- based in Gdansk and led by Lech Walesa -- showed that the ice could crack. There was martial law in 1981 through to 1982, and then, in 1984, there was the horror of the vicious murder of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, which infuriated the Polish people. So by the time you got to 1989, when you also had a brave American president who was willing to face up to and face down communism, together you had this collection of events that led to the June 1989 legislative assembly vote, which effectively was the moment that communism fell in Poland, before anything that ever happened in Russia. This was nothing to do with Mr. Gorbachev. This was to do with the Polish people showing the whole of the rest of Eastern Europe what brave people can do.

And this is the thing I'd like you to take away from this talk: against appalling odds -- one thinks of the Polish second call under the command of General Wladyslaw Anders, the father of the state senator that we have here today, whose grave I've visited at Monte Cassino, one of the great heroes of the Second World War, along with General Wladyslaw Sikorski and others -- they, when faced with these terrible times, showed leadership. Me as an Englishman, of course, I can't forget the Poles who fought in the RAF during the Battle of Britain as well. And what they were able to do again and again at battles like Monte Cassino, where Anders led, and which actually finally captured Monte Cassino, opened up the Liri Valley, and allowed the allies to capture Rome, but at the loss of over 11,000 brave Poles killed and wounded. So you have to see a people who sees the threat from the east, for whom it has led to massive and severe blood loss, people who show leadership again and again, but who are trapped in a tragic geographical position, where in the 20th century, the two most vicious totalitarian powers of that century sought to crush them, and to impose a partition that was just as bad as -- nay, much, much worse than -- any of the three partitions that Walter mentioned from the 18th and 19th centuries. So there you are. I've taken you up to the Berlin Wall, and now John will take you to the next stage. Thank you.

MEAD: John, take it away.

(APPLAUSE)
JOHN FONTE: When thinking about Poland, America and the West, we should begin with President Trump’s Warsaw speech, as was mentioned. The late Charles Krauthammer wrote, “This is the best speech he’s given.” The editors of The Wall Street Journal lauded the president for quote, “Taking a clear stand against the kind of gauzy globalism and vague multiculturalism represented by the worldview of, say, Barack Obama and most contemporary Western intellectuals.” And that’s The Wall Street Journal, not Breitbart. At the core of his speech is the Trump administration’s answer to the question: “What is the West?” President Trump concluded his speech by saying, “Our freedom, our civilization, and our survival depends upon the bonds of history, culture and memory.” We should fight like the Poles for family, for freedom, for country and for God. The concept of the West outlined at Warsaw is a more inclusive one than the pinched, post-national, culturally barren, relatively secular West presented by others. The Trump version includes Christianity and Judaism and the classical Greco-Roman patrimony, as well as the Enlightenment and modernity. So it’s not the Enlightenment only; it’s the Enlightenment plus. For Trump and Law and Justice [the Polish political party], the West and Europe did not begin with the Treaty of Rome in 1957 – that is, with the formation of the European community. Jerusalem is as central to the West as Brussels. Repeatedly, both the Trump administration and the Law and Justice government have emphasized one very core Enlightenment principle: the principle of government by consent of the governed, or democratic sovereignty.

Sovereignty is emerging as a major issue in 20th century world politics, as it comes face to face with mass migration. The president in his U.N. speech mentioned sovereignty over 20 times. But a critical question in the 21st century is going to be: do free peoples have the right to determine their own immigration policy, or will this be determined for them, by a supranational body, by the rules of transnational law, or by the migrants themselves, arriving without the consent of the people? Who decides? Within the EU, the argument is between those who favor nation-state democracy, as did Margaret Thatcher and Charles de Gaulle, and those who want more centralized power in Brussels. Moving from civilizational issues to strategic cooperation, bilateral U.S.-Polish security issues, the picture is very positive. And Anna Maria, the next speaker, is going to go into some detail on this.

Obviously, I just want to make a few points. The U.S. and Poland stand together on most issues. Poland is obviously no friend of Putin or Russian machinations. Assistant Secretary of State Wess Mitchell noted that Poland is a vital ally because it’s a front-line state. It stands on the crucial Rimlands of Europe and Eurasia against the revisionist power of Russia. Poland is one of five NATO countries that does actually meet its 2 percent defense spending goal. And we’ll hear more a little bit later about the Nord Stream 2.

I did want to mention that on the economic front, Poland is one of the most attractive European nations for foreign investments. Clearly the world’s leading CEOs are not worried about the rule of law in Poland. At the U.N., Poland votes closer to the United States than many of our Western European allies. For example, in the motion condemning the United States for moving our embassy to Jerusalem, the Poles, unlike the Western Europeans, did not condemn the U.S. move to Jerusalem. And way back in the vote in the European Parliament, when the European Parliament voted by 84 percent – 500 out of the 600 members of Parliament – to fix labels on goods produced by Jews in the West Bank, Law and Justice MEPs stood with the 16 percent of European Parliament’s parliamentarians who did not gang up on Israel. This was against the opposition of the entire left, against the center-right European People’s Party, and even a large number of British MEPs.

Now, the only problematic issue I can see between the U.S. and Poland is Poland’s desire to be included in the U.S. visa waiver program, along with some of the Western European countries. There is an elephant in the room I want to speak to briefly because I don’t know if anybody else will. It’s what I call the false narrative. As soon as Law and Justice was elected – democratically and overwhelmingly the greatest victory in Polish history –, there was no honeymoon period. The charge was, “Well, democracy is under threat.” Does that sound familiar? There was no honeymoon period. This false narrative about Poland has been picked up by many in the European Union establishment. There’ve been actions by the European Commission, and so on, and also by the mainstream Western media. They have two core arguments: that the government is undermining the independence of the judiciary and the media.

Now, the judicial system was established during the roundtable discussions of 1989, at the end of the Communist period, as we just heard. The discussions were between the reformed communists and Solidarity. The former communists have had an inordinate influence in establishing the critical Constitutional Tribunal, which determines what’s constitutional and what isn’t. So we’ve seen nepotism: favors for the children, the friends and the relatives of former communist nomenklatura. And corruption has followed for many years after that. In all of this, there are no complaints from the European Union or the European Commission. For example, the Constitutional Tribunal protected the post-communist status quo. The Constitutional Tribunal declared unconstitutional the transparency laws, lustration that the previous Law and Justice government – 0507 – carried out that would have opened the files of the communist security authorities. This was declared unconstitutional. There were no complaints from the European Union. In the past, the National Council of the Judiciary, composed mainly of sitting judges, nominated future judges. It would be as if the members of the current U.S. Supreme Court and the American Bar Association nominated future judges for the U.S. Court with only limited input from elected officials. The Law and Justice
government is changing this system, making it more democratic and giving a larger role to elected officials. In most
democracies, including the United States and Germany, democratically elected officials have a large say in the appointment
of judges. Otherwise, we’d have an undemocratic judicial oligarchy. Now, overwhelmingly, 80 percent of the Polish people want
to reform the judiciary. It’s one of the main reasons Law and Justice was elected.

Turning just briefly at the end here to the media criticisms: in the early period after the end of communism, the Polish state
media was in the hands mostly of the Democratic Left Alliance – mostly former communists who ran the National
Broadcasting Council. They made the decisions. When the centrist civic platform won the elections, they put their support
behind the state media. When Law and Justice did this – not surprisingly – they were doing the same thing. This is what usually
happens with state media in European countries. Private media, on the other hand, is mostly German-owned and is strongly
anti-Law and Justice. In other words, there’s plenty of media opposition to the current conservative government in Poland, just
as there is plenty of mainstream media opposition to any conservative government anywhere in the West, from Israel to the
United States. This is not an argument about the rule of law. It’s an argument about policy: about democratic conservative
policy that suddenly you and the Western media don’t like. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MEAD: Well, Anna Maria would you care to... and you can speak at the podium, wherever you like.

ANNA MARIA ANDERS: I can talk here (laughter). So for me, I'm unable to talk on the subject without saying something
about my past, about where I came from. Andrew touched on the subject of my father. And that, I think, has a great bearing on
the way I look at Poland now and the threats that are facing Poland. I was born in the United Kingdom with an innate mistrust
of Russia. My father had spent one and a half years in a prison in Russia. He saved the lives of over 120,000 people that he took
out of Siberia. So I was brought up as a little girl to know that you cannot trust Russia. And I think that feeling is so general in
Poland for obvious, obvious reasons. Poland was talking about the dangers of Russia for many, many years after the Cold War.
I think the feeling in the West was, “Well, the Cold War is over. We can relax.” We could not relax. But I think it took the
annexation of Crimea in 2014, for the world to wake up and see that Russia continued to be a threat. We in Poland see
ourselves – at the moment, in our situation – we are in the middle. We are with Russia on one side and Germany on the other
side. Of course, we are not in a war with Germany, but we are in dispute with the European Union. With Russia, it is a slightly
different situation. I – as well as being secretary of state responsible for international dialogue, and the chancellor of the prime
minister – I'm also a senator in Poland. I never imagined that I was going to be a politician in Poland, let alone at a time which I
think is so important for Poland.

Not only am I a senator in Poland, but I am responsible for the northeastern flank. And the Suwalki Gap that we are hearing so
much about and have heard so much about is within my region. So, recently, we have heard discussions about the propositions
of a permanent base in Poland, as opposed to a rotational force. Arguments are being presented that, in fact, this would make
sense, transportation within Poland as being one of the reasons. The other thing that we are faced with now is natural gas –
Nord Stream 2 –, which has become a huge point of contention between the United States and the European Union. In fact, it
has divided up Europe, as, I imagine, Putin would only desire. What I would like to stress is that I and many others – I and many
others, I think – believe that Putin has done an incredible job of dividing up Europe. I know that Russia was keen on the U.K.
leaving the European Union. Brexit has divided up the European Union: the pros and the cons. As somebody who sees the
European Union from a British point of view, I'm not sure which way that's going to go. I don't live in the U.K. anymore. But
from a Polish point of view, it may be a problem because it – you know, if we have to leave – well, Poland has profited enough.

So Brexit is one issue. Definitely, energy is a huge issue. We have Nord Stream 2, which would present a pipe directly from
Russia to Germany, bypassing Eastern Europe and particularly bypassing the Ukraine. We see the tensions in Ukraine and
Russia's involvement in Ukraine, and so we do not want to see that happening, and particularly, we don't want to have another
Russian-German alliance.

President Trump is against the Nord Stream 2. Actually, even President Obama, when it was first introduced in 2015, was
against Nord Stream 2. So the Trump administration is against it. On the other hand, you have Germany, who is for it, Austria
that's for it, Holland, as well. Poland is supported by the Baltic states and Denmark. So here we have another fraction. We have
the question of LNG. We have a new terminal in Poland – in the north of Poland – as being possibly very lucrative positions for
the United States. I mention all this because it is also important to understand that it is very beneficial – not only to Poland, but
to Eastern Europe – to decrease its dependence on gas from Russia. So we have the Baltic pipeline leading from Denmark to
Poland, and we have the question of Nord Stream 2. So I think these are the issues that I would like to talk about today and
discuss. I think there are other factors in the world which make it even more of a stressful situation, but these are the ones that
I would start with. So thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)
MEAD: Thank you. That was very clear. Let me just ask you, Anna Maria, while we have you here, if you were speaking with President Trump: what are the things that Poland most wants from the United States? And what is Poland prepared to do for the United States?

ANDERS: Well, I would say that Poland considers the United States definitely its best friend. President Trump’s visit to Poland was a huge success. I think his speech was wonderful, how it presented the history of Poland. Poland wants security from the United States. We are grateful for the NATO forces and the Polish forces that we have, but, as I've said before, we want something a little bit more permanent, because we still do not feel secure. And I think that's not just Poland; I think that's the whole of the Baltic states. I think Poland would be prepared to do anything, really, to get that security, whether it's going to be a financial security – what else, you know, do we have to offer? –, we would go hand-in-hand with the United States anywhere. If I were going to speak to President Trump, I would be concerned about his potential meeting with Putin. And I would say, “Look, you know, I was kind of drummed in by my father that the Russians can be extremely charming.” My father had dealings with Stalin. And, you know, the fear is that President Putin will actually charm President Trump to giving something up. What could we give up? Well, what we're afraid of is that we'll give up the military advantage that we have at the moment in Poland.

MEAD: Well, listen: John, this might be a question for you, coming out of this. We see Russia sort of figuring in many interesting and difficult ways in Polish thinking and in American thinking. But I know when you hear some people talk about this new vision of a Christian West, some people would add Moscow to that group of Jerusalem, Brussels and so on. And that's certainly how Putin presents himself, that Russia oddly – in some ways, the rhetoric is not dissimilar from some of the rhetoric in Poland: traditional values, Christianity, a strong stand for these, against the cosmopolitan post-nationalists. How do you make sense of that for us?

FONTÉ: Yes. There's no doubt that Putin has been doing this, and somewhat effectively. I think he was particularly effective during the previous administration – during the Obama administration – when the U.S. State Department and the foreign policy apparatus were pushing, essentially, progressive social issues, making it very easy for Putin to sound to be the champion of traditional values. Of course he's not, and that is phony. But now, I think, with a change of government – I went over this –, we probably no longer have a State Department that’s going to be pushing the, let's say, progressive social policies that've gone on in the last couple of years. We now have a State Department that is aligning itself more now with traditional forces. Russia will try to continue and make mischief, but that doesn't mean that the move toward democratic sovereignty is any less legitimate. The move toward democratic sovereignty across Europe, we see in election after election. I mean, the Austrian chancellor referring, I guess inopportune, to the Berlin...

MEAD: The axis.

FONTÉ: ...Rome axis. He said Berlin. He could have said Munich. Vienna, Rome, Munich, because it looks like currently there's a revival of what I would call democratic sovereignty everywhere, even in Germany, certainly in Bavaria.

MEAD: Andrew, I know one question is with Britain leaving the European Union – at least as of this week, that's what I'm hearing, that it's still going to be leaving the European Union – how is that going to affect British-Polish relations, and the British view of whether its security is still connected to Poland and the Baltic republics?

ROBERTS: I think one thing we've very much got to get clear is that on the 29th of March next year, Britain is going to be leaving the European Union. That's under no question whatsoever. We have the latest vote in Parliament. Every time there's a vote in Parliament, we have the left and the media saying that there's a huge question mark over this. First of all, Mrs. May always wins these votes in Parliament. And secondly, we've had 17,410,762 people voting for Brexit – including me, I hasten to add –, which is the largest number of people that have ever voted for anything in the whole history of Britain. And if a bunch of people in the newspapers and people who live on Planet Remain still want to try to stop it, they're simply not going to be allowed to do so. It's the will of the people. House of Lords has tried, any number of legal cases have tried, and they've all failed, because this is a sovereignty-of-the-people issue.

So the question, then, with regard to Poland, where we of course have hundreds of thousands of Polish people living in the United Kingdom, is what is the effect of living and working – and working extremely hard, by the way. The great thing about the Poles is that they are not scroungers. They are people who really do contribute to the United Kingdom. And as a result, they will be taken care of in the same way that we expect British people to be taken care of who live in the European Union, of which there are millions. And so there is a straightforward deal to be done. And it seems to me that it to all intents and purposes has already been done. So that will not be a problem for the Poles living in Britain. If the European Union genuinely was a security apparatus, if it really was – as it tries to pretend to be, and indeed, as it somehow weirdly got the Nobel Prize for being – a force for peace since 1945, first of all, it didn't come into existence until 1957, by....
ROBERTS: By which time, we had already, in April of 1949, created the genuine platform that genuinely underpins peace in the West – and, indeed, in the world – which is NATO. And so long as Britain remains a member of NATO, so long as Article 7 of NATO pertains, so long as the United States stays committed to NATO, and so long as Poland is in NATO, I see absolutely no trouble. So long as some of these smaller nations that feel under no threat whatsoever, like Luxembourg, which pays 0.9 percent of its GDP for the right to stay in NATO, while you people are paying 5-plus percent. It is vital – and this is one area where Mr. Trump is right – that they pay more, they stump up properly. You can't have the Italians paying 1.1 percent of their GDP, forgetting the nuclear umbrella and everything else that, they get as a result of being in NATO. But the Poles pay their 2 percent, which, by the way, isn't enough. I don't believe Britain should be only paying 2 percent either. But, nonetheless, they're paying the bare minimum, as we are, and virtually nobody else is, apart from the United States. And so: when we recognize that NATO is the thing that gives us security, and not the European Union – in fact, if anything, the European Union has caused all sorts of trouble when it comes to security. Look at the Yugoslavian crisis. If we accept that it's NATO that matters, then we will all be right.

ANDERS: And, in fact, Poland is now paying 2 percent. We have a goal of increasing that to 2.2 by 2020, with the hope that it will be 2.5 by 2030.

ROBERTS: Very good.

MEAD: Very good. What is the future of Europe? Because Poland is clearly a part of Europe, and I've been hearing, you know, both from Andrew and John, some questioning of the model that Europeans are using in Brussels – the Brussels-based approach. What is a future of Europe that provides for both the liberty and the security of countries like Poland, whose future is really unimaginable without some kind of broader European structures?

ANDERS: I think this is a huge problem. I think that the problem is that the Europeans can't agree on anything at the moment. I mean, everything seems to be a point of contention, which is, I think, another reason why Poland is concentrating even more on the United States. Because, you know, you look back on 1939 and say, "OK, you know, that time nobody came to Poland's aid. And can we trust them today? They're in disarray. And nobody can agree on anything." So, the future of Europe: Europe is confronted with an awful lot of problems now. You know, we touched briefly on the migrant subject. I mean, that is one of the potential downsputs of Europe. It's a huge issue. And there are others. But who knows?

ROBERTS: But Europe is much more than the European Union. This is the thing that the Poles understand and that Britons understand, but the bureaucracy in Brussels does not understand. There is something that is ancient about Europe. It goes back centuries before the European Union and will last centuries after the European Union. And it is something worthwhile, and it is an addition to world civilization. However, to somehow mix that up with a small group of unelected politicians in Brussels, who attempt to impose their policies on the whole of the rest of Europe, I think would be a cardinal error for us.

FONTE: And, picking up on what Andrew just said, there's actually an intellectual manifesto that states exactly this. It's called “The Paris Statement: A Europe We Can Believe in.” It's signed by leading intellectuals, such as Pierre Manent, the French intellectual, Roger Scruton, whom many of you know, and Ryszard Legutko in Poland. They signed exactly this, saying that Europe is more than Brussels, it's Athens, Rome and Jerusalem; it's the heritage of Christianity, of the Hebrew Bible and so on. So you can look it up: "Paris Statement: A Europe We Can Believe in." As far as where Europe is headed, I think that there is this resurgence of nation-state democracy, which was the vision of Charles de Gaulle – a Europe of nations – and certainly the vision of Thatcher as well. And, you know, once upon a time, there was this thing called the European Community. Was there something wrong with the stage that they reached during the European Community? Were Helmut Kohl's Germany and Francois Mitterrand's France, were they going to go to war because there was no more Europe, or a greater integrated Europe? There was the European Community. There were some power grabs by Brussels and the European Court of Justice in sums that could be adjusted. But by and large, more power was in the hands of the nation-states then after then with the establishment of the euro, which has proven to really not effective economically or politically, and the Lisbon Treaty. So I see a continuous movement. And it keeps moving west from Poland and Hungary to Austria to Italy. And then we see the French Gaullist party now saying similar things. So I see a movement and a resurgence of democratic nation-state democracy.

MEAD: I think for Poland, we talk a lot about the Russian side of the Polish diplomatic problem. But there's a German side too. What is the situation now with Polish-German relations?

ANDERS: Well, I think the problem between Poland and Germany really is not so much Germany itself but the European Union. The fact is that I think a lot of people have the impression that Angela Merkel made the decision of the migrants unilaterally – single-handedly almost. And now it's a question of everybody, well, doing their bit. So this is a long story when it comes to Poland, because... I don't want to go at length on the migrant issue. But that is one of the questions. I think, as
Andrew said, I think it really is more the EU than Europe, and also, what John said, about the inability for Poland really to portray a positive narrative. I mean, sometimes we feel that we really are put upon. It started on at the very beginning, when the Law and Justice party won the election. And there was all this resentment because nobody expected them to win. So the complaints went from Poland to the European Union. And, again, you know, what went on with the judicial system (unintelligible). It goes on and on. So I don't think it is essentially a Poland-German question, because the actual relationship is not that bad. It's strained now because of outside factors. Like I said, Nord Stream 2 and factors like that, and migration probably being the most important thing at this point.

MEAD: What is it that you feel that, say, the EU does not understand about the Law and Justice party in this program?

ANDERS: Well, I think that the tendency is to say that it's non-democratic. If you compare the fact that President Obama was unable to select a judge to the Supreme Court just before he went out of office because it was too late, we had a similar situation in Poland, where President Komorowski selected judges to the court there, whereas we already had a president elected. We already had a president-elect. So it's sort of like, you know, a misunderstanding from the very beginning.

I think the other problem is that people don't really understand that we still have leftovers from the communist system in Poland. It has not gone. You can see it everywhere. You can see the influence of the communists within Poland. And so a lot of the judicial system was still based around the old judges and the old – you know, the whole thing. So I think that's the main problem: the people just don't understand that what we want to do is not a question of being democratic. We just want to go ahead. We want to get rid of the past. We want to go – nobody talks about, and I always say in Poland – positive narrative. I said, I would like to see something good about Poland on the front page of The Washington Post or The New York Times as opposed to having something good on page 10. And the bad stuff is always on the front, you know? And we aren't able to talk about the good things. What are the good things? Our economy is booming. We have a wonderful relationship with the United States. Even at the time when we had the problem with the so-called Holocaust bill at the beginning of this year, which is now finally getting itself sorted out, our relationship with Israel – our business relationship – never waned. It was always good. There were two things. Those problems were on the higher level. So I think we're unable to portray this. I think it is what John said. The media is against us. The general mainstream media, generally, is against Poland. I would like to see something positive written about Poland, which I hope will happen after the (inaudible).

FONTE: There is a connection between Poland and The Washington Post, but we won't get into that.

MEAD: Right.

(LAUGHTER)

MEAD: Well, John, if you were to be talking to the editors of The Washington Post or The New York Times, what would you tell them would be some good news stories about Poland that they're missing?

FONTE: Well, this is a democratically elected government. It was elected. It was the greatest democratic victory in modern Polish history. And they ran on a reform ticket – drain the swamp, essentially. And that's a tipping of what they're attempting to do, to restore democracy to the judicial process as Anna Maria said. It's hard to believe that, essentially, elected officials had very little input in in the choice of judges. I mean, Israel has this problem, too, I guess, of the Supreme Court, where the judges choose their own judges pretty much. Not 100 percent. There are some complications.

So this is a re-democratization, both in the question of the judiciary and the media. A government is elected to follow certain policy. Otherwise you have an oligarchy. You have a judicial oligarchy. And even some writers from the National Endowment for Democracy have talked about underdemocratic liberalism. They talk about illiberal democracy, but the flip of that is undemocratic liberalism, where you have rule often by the courts and a one-sided media, which you have, I'd say, throughout the West.

MEAD: Andrew, did you have anything to add before I take it off to the...

ROBERTS: Yes, I think it's worthwhile also pointing out that Poland, because it ran a much more sensible banking and fiscal setup prior to the great crash, actually escaped many of the financial problems of the great crash. And that was very forward thinking and intelligent of their bankers. It didn't mean that it didn't negatively affect Poland because, of course, it negatively affected everyone in the West. But actually when it comes to countries that survived the crash best, Poland was right at the top there.

FONTE: Unfortunately, it's not in the euro.

ROBERTS: And it has the other great advantage of that of course.
ANDERS: I think just before we, as you said, go ahead onto questions, I think the one thing that has been very apparent to me, as somebody who has traveled a lot since I started to work in Poland – I was elected at the beginning of 2016 – is the general ignorance about Poland. I was shocked the first time I came to the United States and went to Congress – I mean not to the United but to the U.S. Congress – as a politician about how the congressman or the representatives or even the senators spoke about Poland. And I think that has changed. I have since been here many times, and I think the attitude is generally sort of far more positive and far more knowledgeable.

MEAD: Well, great. I gather Mark Zuckerberg had a similar experience.

ANDERS: (Laughter) Yes.

MEAD: They didn't seem to know much about Facebook when he went to get questioned. So Poland is not alone, perhaps.

ANDERS: No (laughter).

MEAD: All right. We have a large audience today looking very interested. I would be happy to take your questions. Let me just ask you to identify yourself. Do we have people with microphones here? Yes, we do. So please, when I call on you, wait for someone with a microphone to come, and then give your name and your affiliation, if there is an affiliation, and your question. A question is normally a short statement that ends with a sort of rising intonation of the voice.

(LAUGHTER)

MEAD: ...And would be punctuated by one of those squiggly things you sometimes see.

(LAUGHTER)

MEAD: ...So questions, please, more than statements. Yes. We have one here. Can I get a microphone up?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Thanks. I'm [...] from the Ethics & Public Policy Center. So Poland has some tensions with the EU, but it's also deeply skeptical of Russia. But there are other countries and parties in Europe that have tensions with the EU that seem a lot less skeptical of Russia. So how do you interact with them? How do you understand their view? What do you say to them, when you interact with the other people pressing up against the EU, about your view of Russia compared to theirs?

ANDERS: Well, I think that the people who have a problem with the EU are the same; we all have basically the same issues. I was quite young when Britain joined the EU. I was living in London at the time, and I think the vision of the EU was very different then. It's become very, very bureaucratic. And I'm not sure how many people are aware of this, but when Timmermans said the other day that he was going to come to Poland, or that he's looking forward to meeting the Polish government in Moscow to discuss the problems, this is an issue.

(LAUGHTER)

ANDERS: And then a day later, Guy Verhofstadt said that Kaczyński, who is the head of the Law and Justice party, was being funded by the Kremlin. That doesn't help, you know? And I think that perhaps in Poland this a little bit more extreme, but I think, basically, Europe all feels the same way: that they are being boxed in into this bureaucratic mess, and that they are told exactly what they have to do. And I think that's really where the resentment comes.

MEAD: I wonder if anybody else on the panel wants to get into this question: the relationship between the Polish party that is critiquing the European Union, and some of the populist parties in other European countries, that are critiquing the Union in some of the same ways that the Poles are, but also supporting Putin and see those together. How does that all mix together? John, do you have any thoughts?

FONTE: Well, I think the main issue is that all of these parties, as Anna Maria said, like to rule themselves and set their own policy. I mean, they some of them have support from Putin, but that's not the major issue. The major issue is what's going on in their own country, whether it's in Austria or in Italy, or in France, for that matter, with the Gaullist opposition. I mean, I think the new leader of the Gaullist party is taking a slightly softer line on Russia, but his main interest is French nationalism. So I think this is exaggerated, and I think it's used by the EU, as Anna Maria just said – Guy Verhofstadt, who should know a lot better, and obviously, Kaczyński is not funded by Putin. I mean, this is a smear. So what you see is a lot of this is slanderous toward Poland and toward some of the other countries. So I think the main issue remains democratic sovereignty, and Putin is somewhat of an issue that's as a stick to beat up on these folks who basically want government by consent of the governed.

MEAD: OK. I have another question up here, up front.
UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Hey. I'm [...], with [...]. I'm a [...]. And my specialty area [...], so I really enjoy...

MEAD: You must be very busy these days.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Yeah (laughter). I really enjoyed the panel. I thought you all had great things to say, and I really do hope there are some positive stories that come out about Poland in the future. But so, my question: NATO deals with hard-power issues – right? –, but these influence campaigns are soft-power issues. And I'm curious: I'm sure you're aware that 1990 in Warsaw, the Community of Democracies group was formed. And I'm curious about the panelists' thoughts on what's going on with that organization and if it's useful. It was a group of democratic countries that wanted to come together to sort of further the democratic peace theory, and it's my understanding that it still exists. And so I'm wondering where it goes with that, if it should be updated, if there's a different way to approach that in order to form more soft-power ways to counter the sharp power of China, Russia, and other non-democratic, authoritarian adversaries.

MEAD: Anna.

ANDERS: So I have to confess, I know nothing about it.

ROBERTS: I've never heard of it.

FONTE: I mean, well, we could say, it's not 1989 or 1990 anymore (unintelligible). The situation has changed.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: John McCain brought it back up in the 2008 election as proposing the League of Democracies, so, as a way to reform the Community of Democracies. But I guess this confirms it's not very active.

(LAUGHTER)

ROBERTS: Yeah, but that doesn't mean it's not a good idea.

FONTE: Well...

ROBERTS: It sounds like a good idea.

MEAD: The absence of evidence isn't evidence of absence, so let's...

(LAUGHTER)

MEAD: Let's not be too sure here. But, yes, good point. Yes, sir, right over here. This gentleman.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: My question is about the efforts of the EU to impose or inflict – whatever the right word is – a quota of immigrants from Middle Eastern countries on Poland, and the dispute that's arisen from that. How is that dispute likely to be resolved? What are the consequences of having the dispute? And what are the likely consequences of whatever resolution you think there's going to be?

ANDERS: We have had a lot of criticism about the fact that we have refused to take migrants. We stand by it. Our views have not changed. But in order to understand this Poland situation, we have to appreciate that we have taken in over a million Ukrainians in the last year and a half to two years, who are fully integrated in our society. Furthermore, about a year ago, we passed a bill in Poland that will permit Polish people who were families of those who were deported from Poland to Soviet Russia or Soviet anywhere – we have people in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan – and we permit them to come back. But we actually have a government scheme that would support them coming back, help them get jobs, accommodation, and provide education for those who want to come back. Poland is not a rich country. And what we have said all the time is that we don't want to appear as if we are un-Christian, but we cannot afford to take more than we already have.

The other thing, which is, I think, an innate fear – not just in Poland, but all of the Eastern Europe – is they spent so many years under communist rule that there is this fear that this is now going to be Islam or Muslim religion taking over Poland. And frankly, if you look at the photographs and you look at the pictures on TV, what is happening in my hometown, which was London, or Paris, where I lived for five years: it is frightening. In Poland, if you come to Poland, you can go anywhere, to any bar, any outdoor cafe; you're not going to have any problems. And that's the way the Polish people want it to stay. We don't want another threat. We don't want to feel like we are, you know, exposing ourselves to a danger. So all this together colors
our views. So, you know, people have said, well, you can just take Christians and so on. You can't do that because most of these people arrive without documents, so you don't know where they come from. So all in all, I mean, basic thing is, we're not changing our minds. The Law and Justice party is strictly against being allocated a certain number of refugees.

MEAD: Yeah, John.

FONTE: Yeah. Actually, I think that this is going to be one of the major issues of the 21st century: mass migration to the First World. And then, what does the First World do? We see this this here, as well, in North America and in Europe. As I said in my talk, it's a core principle of the Enlightenment...

ANDERS: And I can...

FONTE: ...Government by consent. Our people...

ANDERS: I can add, also (unintelligible) – excuse me. It's the fact that we are actually helping people on the spot and we have given funds to refugee programs in Jordan and Syria. We are for helping people on the spot. And, you know, frankly, I mean, my view, generally, is the fact that the world should do more to prevent people from coming – whether it's to Italy or Greece or anywhere – to encourage programs to stop these people from coming, because once they're there, this is a huge problem.

FONTE: Well, the whole issue boils down to two words: who decides? Who decides whom a free people can have within their body politic? Do the citizens themselves decide, or is it decided outside of the citizenship body? I mean, that's a crucial question. It's a crucial question here. It's a crucial question. It's not just Poland. We see many of the countries in Europe share the same view. And even in Germany, the situation now is that the Germans themselves want to control the borders.

ROBERTS: I agree. And I think it's monstrous that Brussels should be imposing quotas, effectively, on Eastern European nations. It's part of the inherent rights of a sovereign nation to decide whether it wants its way of life to alter. Mass immigration does do that. There is any number of examples of that. And if a country doesn't want that to happen, then it has every right to say no.

MEAD: Yes, in the front.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: My name is […], and I work for Voice of America.

MEAD: Can you keep it closer? Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: My […], and I work for Voice of America. After all the discussion that I've heard here, I have a question. How firmly is Poland anchored in the European Union? Can you see Poland at any point deciding, like Britain, to leave the Union?

ANDERS: Poland has benefitted an awful lot from the European Union – unquestionably – over the years. So it's a point of contention. I mean, this is where everybody turns around and says, "Well, you know, you're part of the family, so you've got to chip in." But it's not just Poland. It's other countries, too. We do chip in. We do contribute to the European Union. Generally, Poles are for staying. But there are some people in Poland who will argue that, in fact, we contribute more than we get out. We have a certain amount of funds allocated till 2020, and that may be reduced. I think a lot of countries feel that they are being, as such, blackmailed by the European Union right now – "if you don't do this, we will reduce the funds" – which is seen not just by Poland, but, you know, we've seen Italy, where the new government now is stopping the ships coming. It's like the huge pressure that you've got to fit in. So generally – they did a survey – I think 80 percent of Poles want to stay with the European Union. There is a concern that we would not be able to sort of be on our own, but that doesn't mean that we love everything that the European Union wants us to do.

ROBERTS: I think it's worth also pointing out...

MEAD: Yes.

ROBERTS: …From the British aspect of this is that Britain wants Poland to stay in the European Union. Poland is a voice for sanity in the European Union. It's always been against closer integration. But Poland was a communist dictatorship only 20 years ago. It's entirely different. It's a much smaller economy than Great Britain's, which is the sixth largest economy in the world. Whereas Britain can leave the European Union, there are lots of other countries – smaller countries – for which it would not be beneficial. However, there are some other countries – one thinks of Greece and perhaps Italy and Spain and Portugal – who, under certain circumstances, when they lost their own currency, are far worse off than they might have been had they
not entered the euro. So each country has got a separate and different attitude towards this. And so just because Britain is leaving doesn't mean that other countries should. But equally, it doesn't mean that they shouldn't.

MEAD: Can you wait? Can we get the mic back if she wants it?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Just saying that as a journalist, I've been following the events in Europe for a very long time, and it seems very wobbly now. I mean, yes: maybe the populations in high percentages can envision leaving the European Union. But the problems that are accumulating and not being solved don't seem to bode well for the project.

FONTE: And the European Union doesn't have to remain more Europe, more integration. It can slow that down, or even the bicycle can be reversed. I don't think that this bicycle metaphor doesn't have to continue.

MEAD: Would you say that there's any chance that Poland will join the euro?

ANDERS: Unlikely. Unlikely. What I hear from our prime minister and people sort of, who are more powerful than myself...

MEAD: I find that hard to believe.

(_LAUGHTER_)

ANDERS: It wouldn't make sense to me. I think I've traveled enough and lived in various parts of the world enough to realize that, in fact, the fact that Britain didn't join the euro is a good thing. The fact that Poland didn't join the euro is a good thing. And the people who did join the euro were all complaining that the prices went up, and so on. So I think it's not beneficial. So I would say, in the short term, no.

MEAD: All right. We have another question way in the back here. Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Thank you very much. My name is [...] of [...], and I came from Japan. My question is: what do you think about current close Russia-China relationship? Thank you very much for giving me a chance.

MEAD: The Russia-China relationship.

ANDERS: Oh.

MEAD: How do you feel about that, which is getting very close now?

ANDERS: (Laughter) That is a tough question. That is a tough question. I think if Russia is difficult to read, China is even more difficult to read. I think – actually, I'm good. I just had an email from my office saying that the Chinese ambassador wants to come and see me in my office, when I go back to Poland. We are keen on having a good business relationship with China. There is huge potential there. So I don't think – I may be wrong – but I don't think that Poland is desperately concerned right now about, you know, China and Russia together – separately, but not together.

MEAD: Andrew, you've written a good deal on geopolitics. What's your sense of this Russia-China relationship and where it might be headed?

ROBERTS: I don't think that they have enough in common for it to be a really long-lasting thing. The thing that they primarily have in common is a rivalry with the United States. If at any stage that was to alter or be dislodged, then there'd be nothing to it.

MEAD: All right.

FONTE: No, I'll pass on that.

MEAD: Notice I'm favoring this side in questions. This side has seemed kind of silent. Are there any questions over here? Well, then I'll go back.

ANDERS: There's one person there.

MEAD: Yes. The gentleman in the yellow shirt's been waiting a very long time.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Thank you. I'm [...], a member of the Foreign Service, retired. Considering what the speakers have seemed to agree on about Polish attitudes towards Russia and Putin, and also their strong agreement with the president of the
United States, President Trump, I wonder how they feel about Trump's apparent hesitancy to criticize the authoritarian regime in Russia, and his suggestion that Russia be invited to join the G-7 again, make it the G-8. What does the Polish government make of this attitude of Trump? How do they feel about it?

MEAD: If Anna Maria would like to speak to that, she can, but I'm going to suggest it may be easier for some of our independent observers to comment on that. Andrew, do you want to?

ROBERTS: Well, speaking as a citizen of a country – indeed, a subject of a country – where a Russian operative attempted to murder a person in Salisbury only a few months ago using a repulsive nerve agent, I thought it was outrageous of your president to offer a chance for Russia to get back onto the G-7, turning it into a G-8, and so did almost all of my countrymen.

FONTE: I'd say actions speak louder than words. You can look at what the president has done in Syria. I think he himself said, "Well, we've killed more Russians than anybody" – I guess more than any previous president probably in history – that I can think of. So, yeah: it's clear in the national strategy document, which the president did write the first two pages of, that the actions of the United States government in confronting them have a lot more... I think what he was saying, as far as the G-7, is that you should talk to them at some level, which is what he did in North Korea and that seems – at least at this point – to be working out. But I'd look at the actions rather than every particular speech.

MEAD: All right. And behind you, right behind the man in the yellow shirt. Sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Thank you. [...] I'm a retired Foreign Service officer and I...

MEAD: This is the retired Foreign Service section here.

(LAUGHTER)

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: I wanted to raise the name of Mr. Macron and the notion that what's wrong with the EU is that we need more of it, and we need to reform it and make it better. I'd appreciate the reactions of Anders to that as well as other members of the panel.

MEAD: How do you view Monsieur Macron's initiatives in Europe?

ANDERS: Well (laughter)...

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Excuse me; I would just like to include also the idea of strengthening (inaudible).

MEAD: OK. Yeah.

ANDERS: So Macron, you know, won the election in France really touting Europe above all, right? So I think we're really not surprised that he has since been even more friendly with Angela Merkel, and that they are both together trying to bully everybody else. There was some hope when Macron became very friendly with President Trump that in fact something would change. But we see now that it really has not changed, and it went back to where he was. And France has been one of those countries that is supporting Germany on Nord Stream 2. So that is another factor that has driven a wedge between the Trump administration and France. And Macron is one of the people who has been most vocative about the migrant situation, and so on and so forth. Hard to tell – I think – I don't know. I get the feeling with Macron it just kind of depends on which way the wind is going, you know? 'Tis what it is, you know? France has got a new president. Vive la France! (laughter).

MEAD: To follow up on that a little bit, I think there's talk of shifting European Union spending from the east to the south. How does Poland see that, and does Poland think you can fight it?

ANDERS: Well, I think the question of fighting it to the south is really probably because of the migrant situation – you know? –, because the countries that are the poorest countries in the EU are the southern countries: those like Greece, or you have Italy – which shouldn't be but it is –, or any of those countries. So, again, you come to the fact, well, you know, why? I mean, the funds have been diverted there to help something that we don't want. So: not that happy about that.

FONTE: Well...

MEAD: OK. Yes, John, and then Andrew.

FONTE: And to get to the gentleman's question: Macron is expanding the EU's democracy deficit – his proposal to have a common budget fiscal policy. If you're taking away from nation-states their ability to determine where they spend their tax
dollars, that's a move away from representative democracy. So the EU, from the beginning, is at a democracy deficit. This even greatly expands that. So I see what Macron is doing as very problematic.

ANDERS: I think it's a little bit like the whole wealth distribution thing. We know how that went down. So it's the same as you were saying.

MEAD: OK. Andrew.

ROBERTS: When I heard Emmanuel Macron's speech about how important it was to – in your words, you got it absolutely right – to reform and energize the EU, I was reminded very much of Francois Hollande's promise to reform and energize the EU. And, at the time when he made that, it reminded me of Sarkozy's plan to reform and energize the EU, which I'm sure reminded everybody of Chirac's plan.

(LAUGHTER)

ROBERTS: But I'm not old enough to remember...

MEAD: I see some of the Francophiles in the room feeling a little...

ROBERTS: I'm old enough to remember Mitterrand, who undoubtedly thought that it was a driving force of his administration to reform and to energize the European Union. I'm not old enough to remember Pompidou or de Gaulle, but I would bet you anything you like that they also made speeches that they were going to try to reform and energize this totally un-reformable (ph) and totally unenergetic organization.

FONTE: And you mentioned the European Defence Agency, which would be a rival of NATO. I mean, where would the funds come from? The energy, time, money spent on a European Defense Force would directly rival NATO. So it would be a negative thing.

MEAD: So the Franco-Polish relationship, which for a long time was kind of a pillar of European order, doesn't seem to be very healthy.

ANDERS: Well, that was way back. I mean, France was very close to Poland. One of the first languages I learned after Polish and English was French. My father was a Francophile. Everybody who's anybody spoke French once upon a time.

ROBERTS: The only – sorry to interrupt you – the only foreigner to be mentioned in the Polish national anthem is Napoleon.

ANDERS: Yes. Yeah. And my father had a very close relationship with General de Gaulle. In fact, I have books in my library that are signed by General de Gaulle. So it was different, but then France is different, you know. Well, my view of the European Union anyway, is that it's very difficult to have so many nationalities, so many cultures. And, really, I think it is a struggle between France and Germany over who is going to lead the European Union. Because you'll still have the nationalism in Germany and you'll still have the nationalism in France.

MEAD: OK. We have another question here.

FONTE: That woman out back.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: [...]. I'm [...] of The National Churchill Library and Center, where, incidentally, you can attend the launch of Andrew's book on November 5.

(LAUGHTER)

ROBERTS: Thank you, [...].

(LAUGHTER)

FONTE: So you're a ringer.

ROBERTS: Hurry, hurry, hurry, while stocks last.

(LAUGHTER)

MEAD: So you've picked Guy Fawkes Day for the...
(LAUGHTER)

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: I do have a Brexit-related question, mainly for Andrew, but for the other panelists as well. I wonder if you think that Brexit might, in the long run, threaten the European Union's long-term existence, or whether or not it might somehow strengthen it, through the removal of a country that arguably never belonged in it in the first place.

ROBERTS: You know, it's not a primary reason for the British people to have voted to have got out. They weren't trying to destroy the European Union at all. They were just trying to get Britain out of what they saw as being a sclerotic and failing undemocratic institution. But if the French and the Germans want to be together – if they genuinely think that that's the reason that they haven't gone to war together, rather than NATO and all the other proper reasons –, that's totally up to them. Brexiteers are often accused of being fanatically devoted to the destruction of the European Union. That's not the case at all. All we want is for our own country to regain its sovereignty.

FONTE: It's an example of national self-assertion, which wouldn't have to come by leaving the EU at all. It could come by changing the EU from within and moving back toward the nation-states, as De Gaulle originally suggested.

MEAD: So you have a question in the far back there.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: [...] at The Institute of World Politics. I would like to revert to the issue of France and Germany being through some sort of rapprochement. Do you think that France calling for the creation of the 'European Union Armed Forces' expresses the wishes of Germany? And how would Poland see that configuration appearing on the European scene? Thank you.

ANDERS: Terrible, terrible. We really don't want to have anything that is going to interfere with NATO. I mean, there is just no way. And I think it brings me back to what I was saying before about people in Europe – the European Union or the European Parliament – being unable to agree. I mean, I don't see a European army. It seems to be a wonderful idea, but it's just not going to happen – I don't think – not in my lifetime. And I think, you know, again, it brings us back to the question of mistrust, and what happened in 1939. Could we really rely on something like that to defend Poland or any of the Baltic states, if Russia were going to be the aggressor?

ROBERTS: Yes. It's also a way of effectively casting out the United States, and that would be absolutely disastrous.

FONTE: Well, because that's its purpose, basically.

ROBERTS: Yes, and it always has been. The idea first came up in 1954, and Churchill, who was prime minister at the time, called it a sludgy amalgam. And the idea of a European army has come up again and again since then. It still is a sludgy amalgam. And so it's something that is profoundly dangerous to the concept of NATO and something that should be fought against by NATO.

MEAD: Ah. Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: I don't have to wait for the microphone.

MEAD: Here it is, the microphone.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Hi. My name is [...]. I'm a student. So my question is about...

MEAD: Where are you a student, [...]?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: I'm sorry.

MEAD: Where?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Oh, we just graduated from UVA.

MEAD: Oh. Congratulations.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: So, Mr. Roberts, you said that NATO is kind of the agency that keeps peace in Europe. But we've seen in the Balkans that NATO is actually a problem between the United States and Russia. When NATO gets involved in the Middle East or the Balkans, it actually creates problems rather than solving them, because, as it was stated earlier, it's a hard power, not a soft power. So for Poland, is NATO really necessary for security? Do you really see Russia as an aggressive, revisionist state that's going to come after Eastern Europe or the Baltics?
ANDERS: I've been (unintelligible)...

MEAD: All right. The core of the question is: do you see Russia as an aggressive, revisionist threat, that's a threat to its neighbors in the Baltics and Poland?

ANDERS: Well, yes, yes. I mean, it's...

(LAUGHTER)

ANDERS: Yes. I mean, the U.S. and NATO forces in Poland, it's not just Poland: It's the whole of the Baltic states. I mean, that's what I was saying before. Like, with the Suwalki Gap, if you had Russia cutting that off, it really eventually means that it cuts off that part of the world from the rest of Europe. So the whole of the Balkan states is worried. I mean, Ukraine is right there, Kaliningrad, Donbass, the huge build of forces. They're not just close to Poland. They're close to Estonia, Latvia, Lotvia (ph).

MEAD: Lithuania?

ANDERS: Lithuania. Lotvia. How do you say Lotvia?

MEAD: Latvia.

ANDERS: Latvia, Latvia. So, yes: everybody sees that, which is why any plan or hope that Poland may have for a permanent U.S. base in Poland is fully supported by all of the Balkan states.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: May I follow up?

MEAD: Sure.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: So even with Article 5, it's still a real threat to Poland that Russia will one day invade the Baltics or Poland.

ANDERS: Well, yes. Article 5 says if any of the NATO countries were to be attacked – right? –, all members of NATO are going to support it. I don't think anybody wants a world war. And it would essentially be a world war. So I think the idea is that a deterrent is better than risking it. So the more we do, the less there is a chance that this will happen.

People who are against it will say, "OK, if you have buildup of forces, Russia is going to think it's even more threatened." They may retaliate because they feel that, you know, they're sort of in a difficult situation. The same thing from Germany, you'll get the same thing. When we talk about Germany and Russia, Russia feels the same way, and Germany will feel the same way: too much of a buildup is in fact risky because it may go the other way. We don't think so. We think that if Russia sees a buildup, a huge buildup, where it's just... and, you know, I've heard different views. Some people will say that a permanent base would be good – and I'm talking about military people who know more than I do – a base would be good. Other people will tell you that it's probably better to have them spread around. Other people will tell you that it's better, maybe, to have combat forces that would be ready to move. Whatever it is, I think the pressure is that there should be more. But right now, it's not quite enough.

And what we hear is that there are signs of more aggression from Russia. There is more of a buildup of troops. We also have cyberwarfare to deal with, hybrid warfare to deal with. I think we'll see all of this coming up in the NATO summit at the beginning of July. And I think the NATO summit will really show the differences in Europe. You know, a journalist asked me this morning: "Do you see it being a success or a total failure?" I'm hoping it's going to be a success. But I think it will bring to the fore the divisions that exist in Europe.

ROBERTS: I think it's important to remember there are large minorities – Russian-speaking minorities – in some of the Baltic states, whose irredentism can be easily used to destabilize these states from within, at which point the Russians would be so-called "invited in" to restore order. That's the way it's happened in the past. Mr. Putin is an absolute genius at this kind of non-state-on-state warfare. And that's the way that he would try to destabilize the Baltics.

MEAD: All right. Well, we have had a terrific discussion. I know everybody would like to join me in thanking our panelists for excellent presentations.

(APPLAUSE)