

Rethinking U.S. Security: *Navigating a World in Transition*

National Security Strategy for the Next Decade

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KRISTIN LORD: Good morning everyone. Good morning. Welcome to this first panel of our sixth annual conference, “National Strategy in National Security for the Next Decade.”

This morning we are very pleased to have with us a distinguished panel to talk about American grand strategy. And this panel was actually motivated by something – (off mike). Is the mike on? Grand strategy panel take two.

Good morning everybody. This morning we’re pleased to have a very distinguished group with us to talk about America’s role in the world. And the origin of this panel is actually several years old.

Four years ago, in the last presidential – before the last presidential election, Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley assembled a distinguished group of strategic thinkers, and they asked those folks: how is the strategic landscape that America faces changing? What are America’s core interests in that changing landscape? What are the threats to American interests and what are the opportunities America faces?

And we decided – Richard Fontaine, our president and I decided that at this moment, in the middle of a new presidential campaign, we should ask those questions again. And so we assembled Bob Art, Dick Betts, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and Peter Feaver, four of our country’s most distinguished strategic thinkers and we asked them the same question. Their answers to our questions are published in a volume that’s available out on the table in hard copy and it’s available on the web.

But today we wanted to continue that conversation with two of our authors, Peter Feaver from Duke University, Anne-Marie Slaughter from Princeton University, Bob Kagan from the Brookings Institution, and Colin Kahl from CNAS and Georgetown University.

And we want to start this discussion by turning first to you, Bob. Bob, can you talk with us a bit about what America’s strategic landscape looks like, what are we facing in the world right now? And then this is going to be a very informal conversation. We’re going to just open it up and let the panelists talk. So, Bob, over to you.

ROBERT KAGAN: Well, first of all, let me thank Kurt Campbell for giving me another book to have authored. (Laughter.) It actually happens more often than you would imagine. I don’t really think the two names are that close together, but, apparently, there’s a similarity. I think Bob is most upset with the comparison, but, anyway – the other Bob.

As I look at the American strategic landscape – and I’m sort of – I tend to look at this from a historian’s point of view – I would say that if you look at the whole sweep of



history that's including the sweep of the last century and even the last few decades, the United States is in pretty good shape as we look ahead.

We have – we remain in a very advantageous position, it seems to me, compared to other nations. There are obviously great areas of turmoil and risks. There are new things happening in the international system. There's non-state actors. There's terrorism, all of which pose new kinds of threats which I think we are addressing pretty effectively.

But if you look at sort of things from a grand geostrategic point of view, I wouldn't trade places with any other nation today and I wouldn't trade places with the United States, say, circa 1975, or even 1979 or – and I could go through past decades. The United States remains enormously powerful along all spectrums of power and influence. Other countries that were focused on the rise of the rest, so-called, it seems to me face far greater obstacles in achieving any kind of a regional dominance than they pose risks. I mean, if you think about China that Kurt was just talking about, China it seems to me faces enormous obstacles if its goal is regional hegemony and not least of which is the relationship the United States has with all those powers.

So as usual, probably the biggest challenge the United States faces strategically in the world is us and how we approach it, whether we approach these I think manageable challenges intelligently, whether we approach our role in domestic situation, our role in economy, make the right decisions about that and make the right decisions about our military strategy. I think that the world is always unmanageable, but it is to me as manageable as one would hope to be.

DR. LORD: You see the problem, and it is us. Would you agree with that, Anne-Marie?

ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER: Well, no one at the Center for a New American Security is going to sit up here and say, actually the United States is in a terrible position, and we're weak and we need help. So I don't think we're going to get a lot of opposition on the point. And I strongly agree with Bob, but I agree with him for quite different reasons, which is my perspective on the way the world is organized is it's a networked world.

Just imagine you're all sitting on a plane and you pull up the magazine in front of you, and you turn to the back, and you see all those hubs with all those lines connecting them. That's the world we're in. That's the networked world. And in that world, as I've written, the United States is the most central player, the most connected player. Power flows from connection.



But I actually think we need to change our strategy to start thinking very explicitly about network centrality, about how can we be the most connected player. That sometimes means we have to be the central actor, but critically it often means we don't need to be the most central actor, but we need to be most connected to other actors who are.

So let me just give you a very specific example in the Middle East, or exactly in East Asia, as Kurt just said, we need to be strengthening those regional organizations who will often take the lead, but we need to make sure they are strong and connected and we are closely connected to them so that could be the Gulf Cooperation Council. That could be the Arab League. As Kurt just said, we need to build all those institutional connections in Asia.

A number of you are probably sitting there very skeptically. Just think for a second – NATO says we're going to be the hub of a global security network. And the Special Forces see the world precisely in terms of building up networks. And Kurt said we really need to build up on the economic side all of our small and medium exporters, our mid-cap countries exporting into Asia. That means building up our Diaspora networks, all the Asians – East Asians who are here, living here who want to export, we need a strategy that thinks about how do you build them up, how do you make them more central in economic networks, political networks, military networks, and social networks. And speaking of that, I'm not live tweeting anymore so I hope other people are.

DR. LORD: Peter, how do you assess the strategic landscape that a next president will face?

PETER FEAVER: Well, I want to – I'm not live tweeting, but I was the subject of the quote of the day. So I wanted you to know that it was – and it's worse than you think. The reporter friend came up to me and said he had a dream about me, that he had a scoop about me getting a mid-level appointment, and his editor said, come back and talk to me when he gets the real appointment that matters. So I thought this is a perfect metaphor for this. I'm on the panel with people who really matter and I'm honored to be along for the ride.

I actually agree – I'm in violent agreement with what has been said on both sides. And the only disagreement I have with Anne-Marie is that what she presents as a critique for change I would say is what we're already doing. We're already – as she pointed out, we're already the most networked country. We've already – it used to be called pactomania. I guess now it's called network centric alliances.

But much of what passes as a critique of American grand strategy is really calling for America to keep doing – we're doing a little bit better, pedaling a little faster along directions that they're already going. And I know Anne-Marie doesn't agree with me on that point so I'll give her a chance to rebut it.

But the fact remains that she had a number of illustrations from the SOCOM to Kurt Campbell's efforts in Asia, which is precisely the kind of thing that she's calling for.

I'm not saying that the U.S. does it perfectly. There's – maybe later on we'll get into areas of disagreement, particularly with what's happened in the last couple of years, but that's not at the level of grand strategy. There's been errors of implementation. There's been errors of policy. And there's been profound errors of framing and spin.

But at the level of grand strategy, we've pursued a grand strategy that has worked, and, as Bob indicated, as great powers go, it's a pretty good record. And there's very few great powers in 500-year history that would say, we could have done a much better job and actually have done a better job than the United States. So I'm bullish on the United States not because I think we do it perfectly, but because most of the reasonable critiques are easily incorporated or are already part of the strategy.

DR. SLAUGHTER: I'd love to disagree, but I think Colin should get in first.

DR. LORD: Colin, can you do us a favor and look forward a little bit? Are there particular inflection points or key decision points that a new president is going to have to face or make?

COLIN KAHL: I mean, there may be a lot so I'll focus on the part of the world I know a little bit better and looking at some inflection points in the 2013-2014 timeframe. I think the most obvious one is the drawdown in Afghanistan which is the enabling condition for any pivot, at least militarily to any other part of the world.

So if there's going to be a reorientation towards Asia or rebalancing of resources in some way that the obvious inflection point, which is already on the calendar, is Afghanistan. Now, I know it remains uncertain what type of presence there might be beyond 2014, but whatever it is, it's going to be at the margins of the type of obviously the investment that we've made there thus far.

What's interesting is if you look at the Gulf, a larger percentage of our – a significant percentage of our presence in the Gulf currently enables operations in Afghanistan. So part of the meaningful, material reposturing of U.S. forces anywhere in the world is enabled by the drawdown.

But that brings me to my second inflection point, which we can see in 2013 and 2014, which is whatever one thinks of Iran's nuclear program, it's likely to hit some milestones in the next year or two that are going to increase risks. If they accumulate enough 20 percent, low-enriched uranium for a number of weapons in the next year or two,

it will substantially reduce the time it would take for them to potentially break out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Likewise, if they start to install on a large scale next-generation centrifuges, it could have the same effect.

That's not to mean that Iran is on the brink of a bomb. They are not. But it means that in a year or two, they will be a lot closer from the point of political decision to a weapon.

And the reason I mention that is because if Afghanistan enables a shift of some resources away from where we've devoted so many – which is in the CENTCOM area of responsibility towards Pacific Command or others – the Iranian nuclear issue will tie down a lot of those same assets back in the Middle East. If we have some 40,000 forces in the Gulf today, for example, if you subtract those that are there mostly to support the conflict in Afghanistan, but you keep the forces that are there to deter, dissuade and, if necessary, be involved in a contingency with Iran, it's still quite a large number of forces.

So I think those are inflection points we can completely anticipate. There are wild card scenarios though that could turn things upside down. You know, you get a war with Iran. You get a nuclear Iran. You get an implosion in Pakistan. You get an implosion in Mexico. You get an implosion of the E.U. These are all things which I don't think our black swans, in the sense that they're not completely things we can anticipate, there are low probability of high impact events that could end up forcing the next administration, whether it's Obama two or Romney one, into some pretty fundamental decisions about where we're going to invest our resources.

DR. KAGAN: The poor E.U. It's on a list with Mexico, Pakistan. I mean, my God. Are there any Europeans here to defend this position?

DR. KAHL: You said they're the envy of the world, Bob. I'm just saying – I was explaining why.

DR. KAGAN: I think the EU would be surprised to be on that list, but that's okay.

RICHARD FONTAINE: Let me – Anne-Marie, did you want to respond?

DR. SLAUGHTER: Yes. We'll get some disagreement here because there's really a fundamental disagreement. There's an agreement in one way.

So, Peter, if you're sticking to the world just of states and then you say the U.S. wants to be the most connected state, yes. I agree with you, although not everybody would, because my strategy says we should be connecting to regional organizations and



encouraging them to act, whereas many people think about their current campaign right now would say, no, the U.S. should be doing the acting.

But you and I – and I think Bob – we’d probably all agree from 1945 forward, we want to be in the central institutions, we want to be center. So if we’re just talking about institutions, there’s much – state to state, there’s much more agreement, although, again, it’s not in my view letting the Arab League act. That’s not leading from behind. That’s leading from the center. It’s a different perspective.

But the key to the network centrality frame and why it really is different is because it breaks away from states only as the principal actors in the international system and it gives you a conceptual framework that really says we have to bring in not only all the transnational networks, the terrorists, the drug traffickers, the traffickers in arms, in money, and people, and all of that, which we’ve talked about a lot – non-state actors – but also to think about social and economic networks and think about those in grand strategic terms.

So concretely, why am I so focused on intervening in Syria or doing whatever we can to support an Arab League and Turkish intervention in Syria, because I do not think we should be leading that? I think we should be enabling them, because I look at the Middle East and I see networks of political Islamists and young people who within five years will be running the place. I don’t know how – and it will be different in different countries – but I see that they will be critically important. How are we going to be as central as possible to those networks? How are we going to answer when they say, where were you at the revolution?

So I’m looking at the entire frame, not just in terms of Syria’s strategic position and Egypt and Turkey and the rest of it – all very important – but I’m thinking about in terms of the social, political and economic networks, and how is the U.S. going to be placed relative to them militarily as well.

DR. KAGAN: I think setting this networking discussion aside, because I think it’s interesting and important – I’m not sure it’s the central thing going on in the world – but you raise the interesting question as to whether how much we can turn to regional organizations to pick up some of the slack from an American power that you would not like to deploy in a place like Syria.

And I think it’s interesting – again, if you think back historically, this has been actually an American effort going back at least to the beginning of the 20th century where we looked at Europe after World War I and hoped that the Europeans could somehow get it together themselves. That was the American decision. It failed. We looked at Europe after World War II and hoped that the Europeans could sort of pull themselves together ultimately. It was decided that the United States had to play this central role. In the

Balkans in the 1990s, we hoped that the European – a regional organization would deal with the Balkan crisis.

It turned out that the United States had to come in and play not just – and I don't know as I look at the Gulf Cooperation Council or the Arab League or ASEAN or a lot of these other organizations, including NATO, for that matter, to me it's yet to be demonstrated that they have the capacity or the will actually to play the role that you're outlining for them. It's certainly right for us to empower them as much as we possibly can, but as I look at Turkey, for instance, or other neighbors of Syria right now, they are not I think about to play that role with us saying, we're behind you, way behind you.

I think that we are going to have to – it's not clear to me – now, we can just decide we don't want to do anything about these problems. That's an answer. It's not my answer, but it is an answer. But I don't think we should kid ourselves that there really are these organizations ready to step up and play this role.

DR. SLAUGHTER: So Libya was an aberration?

DR. KAGAN: I think Libya may turn out to have been an aberration. By the way, I'm not so thrilled with Libya as a model. For one thing – I mean, I'm hoping Libya will turn out well and I supported the intervention as I support doing something in Syria as well. I don't think we have another French and British to play that role. I'm not even sure the French and the British can ever play that role again or want to play that role again.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Hollande does.

DR. KAGAN: Who?

DR. SLAUGHTER: Hollande.

DR. KAGAN: Hollande may but I don't see that – I'm not sure that they're going to play that role in advance of the United States in the case of Syria. So Libya may in fact be a one off, although, again, the problem I have with Libya is the follow-on. I'm not sure that in ordinary circumstances we would have just said to whatever nation had to happen – I hope you guys can work this out now. That's probably an overstatement about where we are, but we have not – I would think in the past, there would have been a European or some kind of multinational peacekeeping force to try to make sure that things moved in a better direction as they were in the Balkans. But setting that aside and looking ahead to a lot of these issues, I'm just not sure – it may be a fundamental disagreement between us.

DR. SLAUGHTER: It is a fundamental disagreement.

DR. KAGAN: And a grand strategic disagreement that I'm not sure that the lesson of history is any more comforting today in terms of other countries' willingness to pick up the slack.

MR. FONTAINE: I want to bring Peter in here, but I also want to highlight another area potentially of grand strategic disagreement. Bob talked about America leading and being at the center of many efforts. Anne-Marie talked about America being at the center of many networks. And Peter has written in his paper and mentioned here as well a lot of the continuity across administrations, which was for kind of American leadership role.

But there's another view out there, a view of greater restraint. And Dick Betts, who wrote one of the papers for our volume couldn't be here today unfortunately. But he advocates a strategy of much greater restraint in foreign affairs. He calls for a managed transition to a global balance of power for the U.S. engaging less in military action, a reliance on deterrence rather than preventive war.

So I wanted to ask Peter to respond to that view and also talk about why that hasn't gotten greater traction between 1945 and today in Washington among policymakers.

DR. FEVER: So there's a view even further restrained than Dick's that would call for radical retrenchment of U.S. global commitments. And it's predicated on an assumption that if we don't lead and if we let other people deal with the problem, they'll learn to deal with the problem. They'll have to. And that it's our leadership which has created a dependency on their part and a moral hazard on their part. They're free-riding off of us and we should just incentivize them to look after their own problems by stepping back. And, by the way, if they don't, we can live with the consequences. So it's Rumsfeldian in the – you know, take your hand off the wheel, let them ride the bike, and if they crash, they crash.

DR. KAGAN: Really? That's okay with you? If they crash, they crash? Can we mention some prominent crashes throughout history?

DR. SLAUGHTER: I strongly – yes. Fine.

DR. KAGAN: World War I, World War II? (Laughter.) Okay. Fine.

DR. FEVER: She's not saying we're –

DR. KAGAN: Fine. Fine. Fine.



DR. FEAVER: She's not saying we're not going to get our – (inaudible).
(Laughter.)

MR. FONTAINE: We're starting to lose control of the conversation here, so let's – Peter, you're done with your point?

DR. FEAVER: I'm not done, no, but I will –

MR. FONTAINE: Let's let Peter go and then we're –

DR. FEAVER: Let me provoke Anne-Marie two or three more times and then, once I've goaded her into – (laughter).

MR. FONTAINE: Okay. Then we'll go to Anne-Marie.

DR. FEAVER: By the way, I was in a debate with the presenter of this position just last week, and my assignment was to defend the Obama-Bush grand strategy. I thought, if you want a sign of the troubles and (hedges ?) that the administration is facing, when I'm the guy assigned to defend the administration's grand strategy, that's a real sign of problems. (Laughter.)

The argument was – the argument is flawed on a number of – or the critique I should say is flawed in a number of dimensions. First, it's flawed in pretending that we don't already do this. Of course the United States exercises restraint and has exercised restraint. There's never been a time in U.S. history where we could and did run around the world and solve every world's problems. There are many, many problems, many, many bicycles that we allow crashing. And part of what wise management of American power involves is deciding which bikes we can let crash, regretfully, and which ones we must engage on.

So the disagreement is not should ever the United States show restraint. The question is on which issues should we show restraint, and can we afford to show a whole lot more restraint than we have?

And when I talk to folks from this restraint school, they never want to talk about Sudan, or Congo, or Rwanda, or – and there's a long, long list of things where the U.S. just did not engage. On some of those things, I think we should have engaged and we didn't.

They all – they want to talk about Iraq. This basically boils down to a critique that says, it was a mistake to invade Iraq. And my argument is, well, if you have a grand strategy, then it must have guidance beyond, don't invade Iraq. It must be broader than that and I haven't seen it.

Let me make one more provocation on Libya and then let Anne-Marie go – unleash.

DR. KAGAN: You can leave then. (Laughter.)

DR. FEATHER: Unleash the dogs of war at that point. There's the Libya as it was described or sold to the American people and then there's the Libya as it happened. And I think there's been a jump back and forth between the two.

Libya was sold to the American people in the following way, that we have friends who need to move a piano and we happen to have the pickup truck. And we're going to loan them our pickup truck, but our friends are going to move the piano, and if they get stuck halfway up the flight of stairs with the piano, tough. We've loaned them the pickup truck and they will solve it. That's the way Libya was sold to the American people and that's what leading from behind meant, and then loaning them our pickup truck, our key critical resources that we had that they didn't have.

What in fact it turned out to be was something like cosigning the lease with some college age friends on an apartment and when things went poorly, we were backstopping it and we had to step up. And so, by the end, what we did on Libya was far more consequential than simply loaning them some critical enablers in the first 48 hours of the mission. It became something closer to leading from the front, like the Kosovo mission, the difference being that once it's over, we said we're bugging out.

And I'm with Bob on this. I think the jury is out as to whether Libya first should be called a full success. I think it's still a little early to tell, but I would say the jury is not out on whether we can know that the French and the British would want to do that again. I detect no eagerness on their part to do another one of those exactly the way it happened again, because it much harder than they had anticipated.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Do I get to talk?

DR. LORD: Please.

DR. SLAUGHTER: So let's just start with Libya, which, of course, it's way too soon to tell that it's a success, but Juan Cole just went to Libya, spent a week in Benghazi, Misurata and Tripoli, came back said, jewelry stores stay open until 8:00 p.m. He says, that's a pretty good measure of security, because, you know, jewelry stores, kind of easy to break that window and fence the good. Jewelry stores are staying open until 8:00 p.m. He had pictures of children's carnivals. He had pictures of busy markets. He said, you know, the Libyans know they've got lots of issues, but fundamentally, the army's coming back

together, and I'm just showing you these pictures from these three cities. They look safer, frankly, than a lot of the cities in Iraq.

So we have a long way to go, but the Economist Intelligence Unit predicted that Libya would be the fastest growing economy in the world this year. That's the Economist Intelligence Unit. They're not known for naïve pipedreams.

So Libya actually, given that it cost us \$1 billion, given that in fact people who should be taking responsibility were, given that because the French and the British had such a hard time delivering what they needed to deliver they're now really talking about joint defense acquisition much more actively, which is exactly what they need to do, I'll take Libya over anything else we've done recently, not to mention the fact that the Libyans are much happier selling us oil now than the Russians or the Chinese. That's a first for countries in that region.

So all things considered, in terms of where we're positioned in North Africa and with Libya itself, I'll take it. But, no. We don't know it's a perfect success.

But second, we're not going into Syria directly. So we're not going to do that. But if you think something has to happen, then it has to happen with the Arab League and Turkey and then NATO's support. And all I'm saying is that model, as we've practiced in Africa on Cote d'Ivoire, on New Guinea, on a number of other countries – I would like to see much more going on in Sudan, but the only thing going on in Somalia is through the African Union and probably ultimately the only thing in Sudan will be the African Union and our supporting them.

So I actually agree with Dick Betts. Our primary strategic challenge is getting our own domestic house in order. We need to rebuild our economy, rebuild our educational structure, get our health problems in order, and develop an infrastructure that is not for a third-world country, because, frankly, you ride the trains in this country and a lot of the basic infrastructure is crumbling. That's our priority. This model of network centrality allows us to build up, stay connected. And yes, if we have to intervene, of course we do. But we're one removed but centrally connected.

Now, the key difference – Bob, we just did this in Brussels where you said, oh, yes, this network stuff. My proposition is that when people look at –

DR. KAGAN: At least I'm consistent.

DR. SLAUGHTER: I know. People look back on this age, they are not going to say that the single most important thing was the rise of China or even the rise of China and India. They are going to say the late 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century was the

rise of global networks. The world became globally networked for good or for ill. That is the world our children live in. That is the world that is shaping economic and social and political relations. Look what is happening across the Middle East. We need to adapt our strategy to that world state by state but also below it. It is the central proposition. So I think we've got at least enough difference now. We're not –

DR. KAGAN: You could say the same thing about the beginning of the 20th, the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It's absolutely true that at that period there was the equivalent of a globalization revolution. There was incredible increases in communication and transportation, incredible increases in the amount of interdependence among nations. And that is a fact and historians teach about that.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Of course.

DR. KAGAN: And they had World War I.

DR. SLAUGHTER: And World War I interrupted it and it kept going.

DR. KAGAN: No. No. World War I didn't interrupt it.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Of course it did.

DR. KAGAN: They happened side by side.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Over the sweep of human history?

DR. KAGAN: And so that's what's the problem with your analysis is that it's too centric-centric. (Laughter.) It's one of the things that's going on, but it's not the only thing that's going on and you can't build a grand strategy around it.

DR. LORD: Okay. Moderator intervention. Where's my gavel? We are in the midst of a presidential election, a fact that is not lost on any of us in Washington. And although there is quite a bit of commonality between the positions of Governor Romney and President Obama, as Peter has pointed out, there are also clearly many points of differences when it comes to grand strategy. Can the panelists address what are the differences we're likely to see between a Romney grand strategy and/or an Obama grand strategy?

And, Colin, can we start with you?

DR. KAHL: Well, first of all, not an unbiased observer of this, I don't know what Governor Romney's grand strategy is. That's not a critique. I just don't know. He hasn't taken the opportunity yet to flesh it out.

I think there's a unique challenge on the Republican side of the House, which is – and maybe some other folks up on the panel have an inside view on this – I don't know what it means to be – what Republican foreign policy is at the moment. I mean, you have Tea Party – which is the extreme version of restraint. I'm talking – it's basically neo-isolationism. You have the remnants of a neo-conservative strand, which is very heavy on interventionism in a military context. And then you have I think kind of a middle ground, kind of a George H.W. Bush or maybe second-term George W. Bush, the kind of Scowcroft – but I don't know how much voice that has. And so I don't know how to compare the two.

So I think if Peter's right, which is that there's a lot of continuity at least between the last couple of years of the second George W. Bush administration and the Obama administration, I do think that there is a degree of consensus between the kind of realist piece, the pragmatic realist piece of the Republican foreign policy establishment and what I would call kind of a neo-liberal institutionalism piece of the Democratic establishment. There's a lot of area for bipartisan foreign policy in that space, a lot – on counterterrorism, on dealing with Iran, on dealing with making China a responsible stakeholder. There's a lot of space in the middle for a pragmatic partnership between the two parties.

But if you're starting to talk about kind of the tea party aspect on one side or folks who are very prone to interventionism, whether they be liberal interventionists on the Democratic side or neo-conservatives on the Republican side, I don't know that there's much space for a bipartisan framework within that.

So my guess is that it will be somewhere in that middle no matter who is the president next time, but I'm guessing because we don't know exactly yet what Governor Romney would or wouldn't do.

MR. FONTAINE: Anyone else want to jump into that fray?

DR. KAGAN: You know, there's a – I'm not saying (your talk ?) is that, but there is I guess a bit of a cartoonish quality to some of this stuff. I mean, I don't know what this militarist interventionism since Anne-Marie and I both want to do something in Syria – and I don't actually think that we're in a minority even in the foreign policy establishment. I think in fact probably we're in a majority. And I also think there are many people in the Obama administration who wish they could do more. And I actually happen to believe that if we were not in an election season now, we would be doing more. I don't see any reason why President Obama has a doctrinal opposition to doing more in Syria after what he did in Libya.

So I really – I hesitate to break things down so neatly. I also – I don't know whether – when you were saying there's an isolationist wing, an interventionist wing and a –

(inaudible) – realist wing in the Republican Party, I would say you could say the same thing about the Democratic Party. There is a left –

DR. KAHL: Except that we have an administration.

DR. KAGAN: Well, the great thing about having an administration is that you have a policy as opposed to looking at an opposition which doesn't have a policy. If I've looked at the Democrats during the Bush years, I don't know what policy they have. That's the way it works and that's the way things work.

I guess I would also say I wish I knew for sure what I thought the Obama worldview was on foreign policy, because I would say we've gone through three distinct phases of Obama foreign policy. Obama foreign policy one was not Bush. Obama foreign policy two was the world's complicated and maybe I need to increase the number of troops in Afghanistan, kind of I would say neo-con light. And Obama three is, I'm in an election season, I don't think the American people want to do anything. I don't think it's at all clear what the Obama approach is. I don't say that as a criticism, by the way, because I think these doctrinal things can get overdone.

But let me just add one final point. I do think there is enormous continuity in American foreign policy, and people thought when they elected Barack Obama that they were going to get a radical departure from Bush, and they didn't, okay? That's just not what happened. And you're not going to get a radical departure next time either. The most stunning thing about American foreign policy when you think about it is the continuity.

DR. FEATHER: So to me the most interesting thing on this topic of Obama grand strategy is the dog that didn't bark, because if you were predicting – in fact, I think we were probably in this room in 2008, you would have said that President Obama, if he got elected, would change grand strategy in the following way: he would elevate a concern to the top rank priority commanding all national resources, all elements of national power to deal with it, the way President Bush had done on the war on terror and the way predecessors had done on confronting rogue states with WMD. And that was candidate Obama was saying climate change warrants that level of commitment of presidential resources, presidential time, et cetera, et cetera.

And that's not what the administration did in the first – in its first time up. And now, would President Obama's second term be devoted to elevating climate change? If he did, that would be a profound change in American grand strategy – and if he fully resourced it as well. But that's not what he's talking about on the campaign trail. And I don't sense – I think we're probably further away from that today, in 2012, than we were in 2008 when we were sitting in this room. So I think that is an interesting grand strategy change that didn't happen.

DR. KAHL: Can I just say one thing? Peter, you made the point earlier that too much of grand strategy can devolve into Iraq, into a conversation or a philosophical disagreement about Iraq. But we shouldn't also pretend that it didn't exist. Iraq has been the central foreign policy issue of the last 20 years. We fought two wars and we had 10 years in the middle of kind of a war with them.

And the reality is, even though there's a great deal of, I think, agreement between the latter half, the last couple of years of the George W. Bush administration and this administration, they are night and day as it relates to the first term of the Bush administration. We shouldn't pretend that the same voices who got us into the most disastrous war in the last 30 years aren't still vocal voices within the Republican Party and are –

DR. KAGAN: And in the Obama administration. I mean, are we really going to make that comment when the secretary of state in this administration voted to go to war in Iraq and the vice president of this administration voted to go to war in Iraq?

DR. KAHL: Well, I think they should be called out for criticism too.

DR. KAGAN: What did they do? Oh, and I'm sure you're doing that on a daily basis. (Laughter.) But the notion that Iraq at the time was a great dividing line in American foreign policy is baloney. The vote in the Senate was something like 77 to 23. And I can name you Democrats would set your hair on fire if you remembered who voted for this war: Chris Dodd, Tom Harkin, you know. But, yes –

DR. SLAUGHTER: But, critically, the president didn't. It actually was kind of a dividing line in Democratic politics.

DR. KAGAN: He wasn't in the Senate. It was very convenient.

DR. SLAUGHTER: He wasn't in the Senate – yes.

MR. FONTAINE: Very convenient. Let's –

DR. SLAUGHTER: Could I talk about what the Obama grand strategy is since we've had a –

MR. FONTAINE: Yes. And then we'll go to the audience for some questions.

DR. SLAUGHTER: – distorted by both sides here. (Laughter.) Actually, it would be helpful maybe to read the national security strategy of 2010 since I have one of the

authors of the grand national security strategy of 2006 on my right in many ways.
(Laughter.)

The grand strategy of the Obama administration is order building, which means enmeshing rising powers in global institutions and norms and expectations. It's engagement but it's engagement actually by building institutions. That's what you just heard from Assistant Secretary Campbell. That has been a focus with China and particularly in East Asia, but also with India. Ultimately, our strategy in Afghanistan has to include building some at least basis for a central Asian institution probably that extends all the way to Turkey. That's what we've been doing in Africa. That's what we're doing in Asia.

But it's not just because we like multilateralism. It's because in a world with multiple powers, you have to have norms and expectations and the ability to work with these institutions, plus a much more selective and individualized use of force.

So, obviously, we've just seen the president wants to get us out of major land wars and into capabilities where we can use targeted, selective, cheaper uses of force. You may disagree with that, but it is a grand strategy.

I will agree that there has been – there's a lot of discontinuity with the first Bush administration, huge discontinuity. That was primary and unilateralism. This is neither primacy nor unilateralism, although we are determined to maintain our military preeminence.

But through the second Bush administration, there was a lot of continuity. And actually, Secretary Clinton said so, when first in the State Department, she said, the first Bush administration was anything but Clinton. We are not going to anything but Bush. And we built on a lot of things actually that I think Secretary Rice in the second Bush administration actually did finally start building.

DR. FEVER: Can I just – 30 seconds –

DR. SLAUGHTER: You're going to disagree with me after I praised you?

MR. FONTAINE: Thirty seconds and then we must go to the audience.

DR. FEVER: So one area where there's going to be continuity, whether it's President Romney or President Obama's second term and that is that the world is not going to accept the drone strike campaign at the level that it has over the last few years.

DR. SLAUGHTER: I agree.



DR. FEAVER: So if President Obama gets reelected, his preferred method of war is going to be subjected to the same kind of international pressure that the land wars had been in previous terms.

MR. FONTAINE: All right. Thank you. And here I was concerned there would be too much agreement in this panel. (Laughter.) And I can breathe a small sigh of relief.

Let's go to the audience for questions. Please identify yourself. Keep your question short and succinct so that our panelists have maximum amount of time. Yes, sir. Right here. There are microphones that will be coming around.

Q: Anne-Marie said that this era would not be known – I'm Joe Bosco, formerly with the Defense Department – this era would not be marked as the rise of China era. Bob Kagan indicated he's relatively optimistic about the future of U.S. foreign policy. Given the developments in China in foreign policy, and human rights, and trade, do we have any basis for optimism that this will be an era that will not be marked by some kind of a calamitous relationship with China?

DR. FEAVER: I'm more worried by China's weakness in the medium term than China's strength. I think in the long, long run, a China that is as militarily strong as it has the potential to be economically would be a profound challenge for the U.S.

But before we get to that world, China has to manage an amazing array of internal challenges that could break up in very messy ways. And so if I were to say what do I worry about over the 20 to 30-year horizon, it's China's internal problems spiraling out of control, even more so than China becoming the dominant hegemon. But maybe Bob and I disagree on that.

DR. KAGAN: Look, I mean, when I said that I was optimistic, I was saying only compared to the past, so the past is an ugly past, and I'm not optimistic that we are going to be able to move ahead even with China hitting some major speed bumps. I don't think we're going to be able to move ahead without some very challenging moments with China.

If you look at again history, rising powers – you have about a one-in-three chance of a rising power entering the international system without conflict. Mostly it doesn't happen. Mostly there is conflict as the world makes a rude readjustment to the rise of a new great power.

What gives me some confidence is that right now, if the United States plays its cards right – and this administration and Kurt in particular have been doing an excellent job of this – China is ringed by very powerful nations with a very – even more powerful nation in

the background which is unlike the case of Germany, which really was able to – (inaudible) – its neighbors without anybody really in the distance.

And so I think it's manageable, but let's not be sanguine about it. These things generally don't end well. I'm hopeful that we are smart enough to pull it off and have it end in a happier way.

DR. SLAUGHTER: I'd just add that I agree that it's – we need to worry most about Chinese weakness and instability and rising nationalism among the young people and a move in which China decides to do something external to distract from internal problems, which we've seen very often in history.

But I strongly recommend to all of you Jim Fallows' new book called *China Airborne*. Jim is one of the best observers of China. And his point is that China has lifted hundreds of millions of out of poverty from weak, low-level farming jobs to low-level factory jobs. They now want to join the world's ranks of being able to manufacture major airplanes. They want to be Airbus or Boeing. He basically argues this party and this system is unlikely to be able to get them to that next level. And I encourage you to read why, because I think that really shows you they've done very well getting to this level, but the next set of challenges are enormous.

MR. FONTAINE: Thank you. Yes, sir. Over here.

Q: Hi. I'm Richard Kraus (sp). I have a question specifically about something Dr. Kahl said, but it relates also on China. Dr. Kahl, you mentioned that the drawdown of American forces in Afghanistan is the enabling condition for any pivot of forces to East Asia and the Pacific Rim region.

And I'm curious about this, because it seems to me that in all likelihood – my question would be: do you foresee in the near future, in the next several years military crises in East Asia that are going to require American forces? And I ask that because it does seem to me that there are a lot of crises that I could see brewing in Western and Central Asia that would require American forces, or at least might benefit from American forces staying in that region, even if not in Afghanistan itself? So just are there – sorry. Are there crises you see brewing in Eastern Asia?

DR. KAHL: Not an East Asia guy. I only handle the easy countries at the Pentagon, Egypt through Iran. (Laughter.)

So I think we have to be very clear about what our posture looks like today. There's something like 100,000 forces in some combination between Afghanistan and the Central

Asian facilities that support that war. And then there are another 40,000-ish in the Gulf give or take on any given day.

I think what the drawdown in Afghanistan does is allows us to reset the military a bit, to regenerate our strategic reserve. It's not like all those forces are going to be flowing into the Pacific.

I do agree one thing very much that you said, which is that I don't know that – if you actually look at the contingencies that are most likely in the next couple of years, many of them do originate basically where the contingencies have already been occurring. And that is in the Middle East and that part of the world.

And I obviously – you know, probably – the possibility of a major contingency with Iran I think is not trivial. We have – CNAS has a new report on the Israeli-Iranian rivalry and the dimensions that a nuclear weapon – the effects a nuclear weapon would have on that rivalry.

But Israel could take action against Iran sometimes in the next year. We could get sucked into the vortex of that very easily. There could be an American contingency with Iran at some point in the next couple of years. I don't envision an Iraq style event, but it could very much be a destabilizing moment for the Middle East, which would keep a lot of those forces tied down.

I don't envision an Iraq-style event, but it could very much be a destabilizing moment for the Middle East, which would keep a lot of those forces tied down.

Iran could slip across the line and develop a nuclear weapon, which would tie us down in the Middle East with or without a contingency because of the enormous requirements in terms of trying to deter Iran from – not from actually – I think deterring them from actually using the weapon would not be all that difficult, but deterring the kind of more aggressive foreign policy they would follow them having a weapon would be more of a challenge.

So I think no matter which way you go, unless you have a diplomatic outcome, which is why I think the administration has invested so much in that outcome, either a nuclear Iran or a contingency with Iran, both ties us down in the Middle East and makes it more difficult to pivot some of those forces to Asia.

The only other thing is we also don't know what we don't know. We don't know the trajectory that Syria is going to take. A Syrian civil war that spills over into Turkey or Jordan, or Iraq or elsewhere could create unforeseen consequences. What if there's a major homeland strike committed by al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen? That will very

much change the character of American counterterrorism operations in Yemen, and do you get a repeat of Afghanistan? I don't know. I think there would be some reluctance to do that. But, nevertheless, if there's a major homeland strike and it happens from anywhere, it's most likely to happen from Yemen. So there are things that could happen which could dramatically change our desire to shift in an eastward direction.

MR. FONTAINE: Thanks. Let's go over here. Yes, sir.

Q: Andrew Pierre (sp). The election is not far away, but it strikes me that there are two issues in particular which could really blow up our foreign policy debate between now and the election.

One was just mentioned – Iran. Israel could sort of be the source of a difficulty, let's say, for us and blow up that question in a major way. And the other is the global economy where there is a possibility that the euro zone will collapse or seriously deteriorate with enormous impact upon the American economy.

So I would be interested in the views of anybody on the panel, or the panel as a whole as the extent to which we may have some dramatic changes in the coming months and what their impact could eventually be on the American election.

MR. FONTAINE: Bob, you want that – please.

DR. SLAUGHTER: I'm not – somebody else talked about Iran. I think with Europe, absolutely. The president's fate really is not in his own hands in many ways. Indeed, I remember when the Greek crisis first hit in April 2010, U.S. recovery was going very nicely. We really thought that we have done a lot of what we needed to do. Even housing looked like it was getting better and, kaboom –

DR. FEAVER: The private sector was doing better.

DR. KAGAN: It was doing fine. (Laughter.)

MR. FONTAINE: All right. All right.

DR. FEAVER: I'm wrong. That was wrong. That was so wrong.

DR. SLAUGHTER: That was very, very bad. (Laughter.) Impossible.

DR. KAHL: It was doing fine in October of 2008. (Laughter.)



DR. SLAUGHTER: Right. It was wonderful. Thank you, Colin. Anyhow, the point being it really – then we dumped ourselves back into what looked like for a while was going to be a double-dip recession and once again could be.

And I was in Berlin a week ago, in Germany – obviously – in Berlin with 80 top European foreign policy leaders and it was absolutely grim. And one of the things that worried me the most was a young – a German woman said to me, I didn't realize it could feel so bad to be a German in Europe again. That's not good. That's not good in multiple ways. But the point being they're not at all certain they can pull this out, even with the most passionate supporters of the European project. And yes, and that will be far more important than anything the president can do on the campaign trail.

DR. FEATHER: And I would just add that Europe has been a bipartisan project of the United States for 60 years or something. So while its impact on the campaign will be exactly as Anne-Marie describes, that doesn't mean that opponents of President Obama should be rooting for European failure. That world would be a very, very messy world that the new president, President Romney, would have to manage.

And so I worry about it, not just for the impact on my 403(b), which is much smaller than your 403(b), that it will be bad from a foreign policy point of view. (Laughter.) It will be a problem for a Romney administration. So we should not be rooting for it.

MR. FONTAINE: All right. Is there a non-403b question? Yes, ma'am. Here in the aisle. There's a microphone right here.

Q: Hi. I'm Sheila Ronis from Walsh College. My question is for Dr. Slaughter regarding a networked world. And I wonder if you can tell me how do you ever create coherence in networks that are especially informal networks but that have enormous – you can influence those networks perhaps, but you almost never can control them. And I guess my question is: how do we as a nation engage and do we use the element of power from government or do we use different elements of power to engage?

DR. SLAUGHTER: The answers to those questions are in a book I'm trying to write and that many, many, many people will be writing. In many ways, I think this is like the outset of the arms control industry at the beginning of the 1960s and '70s, exactly how you – that was all about how you manage relations with an adversary without blowing each other up, and deterrence and the way all that worked and we use game theory and many other things to answer those questions. Well, we have similar tools today.

But the first thing to say is it's incredibly messy and can't be controlled. So if any of you have seen the national strategic narrative that Captain Porter and Colonel Mykleby wrote – they both worked for Admiral Mullen – they basically said, look, we're in the world

of open systems where command and control doesn't work. Credible influence does, and how you develop credible influence and networks, what kinds of networks.

As I said, one of the central insights of network theory is you don't have to be the central actor but you must at least be connected to the central actors. So think about this in your own life. We say somebody is powerful. They have connections. If you're connected to somebody who has connections, it may not be quite as good as being that person, but that's how you enhance your own power.

So there are lots of things we need to know about. We know that some networks are too connected. Resilience networks are all about disconnecting and developing modular approach so that if one gets knocked out, the whole system doesn't go down. But I'm basically arguing that is the way the U.S. has to start thinking about the world and has to think not just about government networks but, again, how do we mobilize the private sector, the social sector where the U.S. has unparalleled assets so this is in the end good news, but there are a lot of very important insights and details for working out this strategy.

MR. FONTAINE: Great. All the way in the back.

Q: Oh, hi. Jeffrey Hunker from the University of California Davis. I want to note on this notion of networks, but also in the context – there has been some speculation by scholars other than myself that some of the bedrock assumptions for our national security strategy are going to be threatened in the future, specifically the role of the U.S. dollar as a reserve currency.

And maybe on a more technical plane, the choices that are made in terms – the technical choices that are made in terms of keeping global information networks open and free of restrictions and the like, which is a consensus based technical process, but one where countries like China, as they get more influence, may also have more influence in that process.

I'm just curious as to the – these are long-term trends, but I'm curious as to the panel's perspective on how some of these longer term threats to kind of what we take for granted in our national security strategy might influence what happens over the next decade.

DR. SLAUGHTER: On the reserve currency, I'm not experienced enough. I would still be betting on the dollar though. Certainly, I'm not betting on euro at the moment and I really don't see a competitor for some time. So I can't say more than that.

But your point about open information is absolutely critical. We are – you know, Secretary Clinton gave the first Internet freedom speech. She basically said – and the Obama administration has said, in future, the line between democracy and non-democracy

is increasingly the line between open systems and closed systems, open, transparent flows of information.

And we are now looking at countries – Iran, China – who are basically going to try not only to seal themselves off and create national intranets, but to take over international institutions, like the International Telecommunications Union, to develop rules for the Internet that would then allow that. And that is a critical battlefield for us. Our economy, our educational systems, our innovation, our creativity, our values, all depend on maintaining an open global information system with cyber security protections and other protections. I mean, it's obviously not simple, but that battleground is one that we are all – we're seeing take shape and it's going to be enormously important in coming decades.

DR. FEATHER: And I would just add that one of the differences between the last 30, 40 years and the pre-World War I period that was – we discussed before is this has been upheld principally by the U.S. willing to be a public goods provider.

So all of the things you identified, the U.S. got a benefit from it to be sure, but the U.S. was willing to shoulder the public goods provision assignment and thus provide security for people who might have been able to provide it themselves if we weren't there, but we're providing for them and providing this as a public good.

That created much of the positive developments that Anne-Marie is describing and I think we will miss it profoundly if we embrace retrenchment, embrace sort of America as a weaker power – this will be great because we won't be wasting our resources abroad. I think we will actually find that in that world, where America is not leading, that American interests will be harder to preserve, ironically enough. So there is a value to the world, but also to the United States that comes from being the leading power.

MR. FONTAINE: We have a Twitter question right here, speaking of networking.

DR. KAGAN: I thought it was a peace sign. I thought it was a dove.

Q: This is a question from Nick Prime (sp), who's Tweeting from England today. He was hoping that you could address the role of the Obama administration's drone strategy and what sort of pressures will be applied and will affect that going forward.

MR. FONTAINE: Who wants to take that?

DR. SLAUGHTER: I will. In fact, I was frightened that last week I made the point I'm about to make and somebody looked at me and said, boy, you're courageous. If that's true, we're all in trouble. So I totally agree with Peter –

DR. FEATHER: That is courageous. (Laughter.)

DR. SLAUGHTER: That's courageous. Very. After this, Peter and I are going on the comedy circuit.

You know, I totally understand why President Obama makes the decisions he makes on drones step by step, person by person in light of where we've been. And I do believe that a world in which, in the end, you can target individuals rather than having to invade countries is probably better all said, but only if there are very careful rules and institutions around it.

This reminds me of when the United States – not that I was alive, but when the United States was the only power to have nuclear weapons. What we thought was possible looked very different than when the Soviet Union and, of course, then other countries got nuclear weapons.

But nuclear weapons are hard to get. Drones can be built by individuals. The New America Foundation built one. Frank Fukuyama built one. We do not want a world in which we are saying, hey, it's fine. We can decide who a drone can take out. We will suffer enormously for the consequences of setting that precedent.

And I profoundly hope that President Obama, when he is reelected – and I will still say “when” – will get ahead of the curve and realize we have to create international rules, even if they were to restrain us, as the international rules we adopted after 1945 restrained us, they restrained us in ways that still made the world better and safer for all of us. (Applause.) I guess it was courageous. Only a few people will even clap. I don't want to be in a world where China gets to decide whom to target.

DR. FEATHER: Anne-Marie spoke to the international side of it. There's another unfortunate aspect of the last several weeks, particularly the last several weeks of news stories is that it has taken something on which there had been strong bipartisan support and brought it into a partisan fight in a way – in part because the leaks seemed to be designed to make the president look stronger than his political opponent, and the way – or the anniversary of the Osama strike was handled – all those things were like spraining the ankle of bipartisan support that had been up until now pretty strongly supporting President Obama on this aspect of the counterterrorism warfare.

And I hope that the administration can take the steps to get that aspect back – reined back in and controlled, taking it away from partisan warfare and more into the bipartisan place it had been before. I worry about that though. It's maybe too late for that.

DR. KAGAN: I don't think it's partisan opposition to the use of drones. There may be partisan opposition to intelligence leaks, but not – I would say – I would be very surprised if the American people are fundamentally opposed to the use of drones to kill suspected terrorists.

DR. FEAVER: No, no, no. Not there, but the revelations that Axelrod's in the room picking – those things – those aspects produce questions, raise questions about the partisan nature of what should otherwise be a non-partisan activity. That's my point.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Are you trying to suggest that who was chosen was chosen for partisan reasons?

DR. FEAVER: I'm saying that – anyone I know who worked in the –

DR. KAGAN: You're trying to create bipartisan harmony here and you're failing now.

DR. FEAVER: I'll stop then. I'll stop. I'll stop.

MR. FONTAINE: All right. Let's go to the next question here, right here on the aisle.

Q: Don Warren, former deputy assistance secretary of defense. Thank you for an absolutely engaging panel so far. Since we're rethinking U.S. security, what is the role of the Law of the Sea Treaty in rethinking that strategy?

DR. KAGAN: Anne-Marie, that's you again.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Don't we all agree? I mean, this is the Law of the Sea Treaty that the Bush administration has tried to pass. The Law of the Sea Treaty; the Obama administration wants to pass it. This is exactly an example of where, as I said, order building.

We desperately need to pass it ourselves precisely so that we have greater strength in reining in others on agreed rules on the law of the sea, and that's a very good example of where essentially we will be constrained in some ways, but the gains that we get from constraining ourselves far exceed any losses.

MR. FONTAINE: Let's see. Yes. Way back there.

Q: Hi. Ash Jain from the German Marshall Fund. I wanted to ask the panel about Russia. We haven't heard much about it in this discussion so far and if we're thinking

about strategic challenges ahead. Bob, you've talked a lot about the great power autocracies and China and Russia together posing these kinds of challenges to U.S. goals, particularly in forging an international liberal order.

So I'd like to hear the panel's thoughts on how do we deal with that challenge, are we going to see Russia and China increasingly cooperating in the way we've seen with regards to Syria, for example, in the past?

DR. KAGAN: Well, there's a long pattern of them cooperating on these issues, not because they're in love with each other and I'm not anticipating any great Russo-Chinese, sort of Sino-Russian alliance – that's not the historical attitude towards each other – but they have – as autocracies, they have consonant interests in not helping democracies overthrow other autocracies, entirely understandable from their point of view. I think that that is one of the challenges that we face.

And Anne-Marie mentioned another one. You could have included Russia as one of the countries that would like to control the Internet, especially now. So if you look at a lot of elements of what we like to think of as the liberal international order, one of the reasons that I think we need to work more closely with Europe, that I hope will ultimately be healthy, is that we are great partners in being able to push back against some of that.

And I think that includes areas of – you know, when you get into right to protect issues and you start upsetting Henry Kissinger's wonderful Westphalian order, that we are not in fact in favor of that Westphalian order and the Russians and Chinese are up to a point when it has to do with them. So I think that that is a great challenge.

And, you know, I think that Russia has a funny way of posing geopolitical challenges when you least expect it. People talk about how Russia's collapsing. My view is that Russia's been collapsing for 400 years – (laughter) – but they never really cease to be relevant. And they are still very relevant. And we've been in a – since the Georgia invasion, we've been a fairly quiescent period. I'm a little worried about where the direction of the Russian domestic politics is going. I think it's possible Putin will decide that this democracy charade is only taking him so far and enough is enough.

And I think that will have ramifications on his foreign policy as well. He's already in the business with China to his east and Central Asia and radical Islam to its south of telling the Russian people that their big problem is NATO. And that's obviously for domestic purposes, which I think – unfortunately, we may start seeing more of.

MR. FONTAINE: We have another Twitter question here.

Q: This one comes from Whitt Miller (sp) who asks: where does Africa factor into the strategic outlook of the United States, especially considering the growing Chinese investments on the continent and terrorist havens there?

DR. KAHL: Look, I don't know that any of us are Africa specialists, but that in and of itself says something. You know, Africa has been on the margins of our foreign policy not because we don't care about what happens to people there, but because Africa has seemed less central to our interests than, say, the Middle East or Asia or elsewhere.

But I think what's interesting is that a lot has gone on Africa in the last decade or so to include enormous progress in democracy and improved governance. They're still a long way to go, but there's a lot of progress. The ability of African states to cooperate with one another is probably higher than it was before. They're still beset by humanitarian challenges, by civil and ethnic challenges.

I also think obviously it depends which Africa are you talking about, right? I mean, if you're talking about North Africa, then, of course, North Africa is at the center in a way it hasn't been in a long time because it's at the leading edge of the so-called Arab spring.

So I think Africa – it's important and there are challenges that emanate there and opportunities that emanate there, but my gut tells me it's going to continue to be – relative to the other parts of the world will continue to be somewhat on the margins of foreign policy debates in the United States.

DR. SLAUGHTER: Oh, Colin, I have to disagree strongly. I'm sorry. Look – here we go. But Secretary Clinton came to power saying she wanted to elevate development as an equal pillar of democracy with defense and diplomacy. And one of the big things that President Obama has done, actually building on George W. Bush's legacy, who also privileged development hugely and doubled foreign aid –

DR. KAHL: But only in his second term.

DR. SLAUGHTER: No. He has his – he has issued the first national development strategy since John F. Kennedy. Development has become increasingly important for us for all the reasons of security reasons as well as economic reasons.

And, actually, Secretary Clinton has been to Africa a number of times. We're much more popular in Africa, largely because of PEPFAR and because of what George W. Bush did. I think Africa is very important in our foreign policy, but we're in the Center for a New America Security and we still have a more traditional definition of security. If you expand the definition of security, Africa is very, very important, also because of the Sahel, another very worrisome area in terms of terrorists.

But I want to end on a good news note. You know, lots of Africa is growing. And the parts of Africa that are growing are growing at 5 or 6 percent. There are large parts of Africa that are going to actually leapfrog the rest of the world in terms of new technologies, precisely because they're building now. And it's – I actually think in a world where resource constraints and climate induced resource constraints are going to become increasingly important, our relations with lots of individual African countries are only going to become more central.

DR. KAHL: But everything can't be central at the same time. There's no doubt that Africa's importance might be increasing for reasons actually – some reasons that were mentioned by the question of (none ?) on the panel so it's not just geopolitical competition with China but geopolitical competition with Iran, which is also crawling all over Africa.

So I think Africa's relative importance is going up, but it's difficult to describe Africa as such as higher on the priority list than Asia or Europe or the Middle East. So they all can't be central or the term central doesn't have any meaning.

I think what is incumbent upon any – in this fiscal environment, in this environment of political exhaustion is to set priorities. And what's interesting is if the argument is that Africa is a center of development priorities, well, then that's – I think that's a perfectly legitimate argument and perhaps it should be. If the argument is that it should be the center of our geopolitical or geostrategic priorities along other continuums of national power, then it's hard to make that argument.

DR. SLAUGHTER: I would say our foreign policy is now diplomacy, development and in defense, and in all – particularly in development, and I would say defense where we're putting a lot of – building a lot of assets, Africa is actually – let's agree to say much more important than it has been.

MR. FONTAINE: Great. We're just about out of time, but I want to end on a question that broadens some of which was said on Africa. And that's to look at what the opportunities are for American foreign policy over the next couple of years.

Just a couple of years ago, most people never could have imagined that one regime after another in the Arab world would fall and despite all the problems that these new democracies are having, that democracy would start to break out in a number of these countries. But what are the kind of opportunities that we might be able to seize as a country over the next couple of years that we're not paying attention to now? Does that say it all?

DR. KAGAN: When you added that we're not paying attention to now.

MR. FONTAINE: All right.

DR. FEAVER: And no one's ever thought of before.

MR. FONTAINE: All right. Let me rescind – (laughter) – that only you have paid attention to. Let me rescind the “haven't paid attention.” What are the opportunities over the next couple of years?

DR. KAGAN: Well, I guess – I mean, just to state an obvious one that everyone has already thought of, I think that what we term the rise of the rest is mostly an opportunity for the United States. I would say that the burgeoning economic and other kinds of influence of countries like Brazil and India and Turkey are not only opportunities but things we really should pay a lot of attention to, not in any at the – or Indonesia, by the way, which Kurt also mentioned – not at the exclusion of traditional alliances, but in addition to them.

I think that given their basic agreement and sharing of our common values, I think that although they're going to have their own specific interests based on their localities and their history, they have – we have an opportunity to find more powerful partners in important parts of the world.

And that is something I would say should be a fairly high priority of really trying to include and work with countries like Brazil, India, Turkey and Indonesia, and take advantage of the fact that they are growing, because the problem with the post-American world scenario is it assumes that the rise of these powers is a subtraction from American power and influence. I think it's an addition. But we do need to work at it to make sure that it is.

DR. FEAVER: And I'll mention something that takes us far afield from traditional security and into Anne-Marie's world of networks. Part of the genius of America is that we solved – it took us a while, but I think we solved the question of religious pluralism, of deeply faithful, devout people living side by side with people who disagreed with them. And that is something that the world needs very much.

But it also makes us an attractive model for large parts of the world where there is a revival going on. There's a Christian revival going on in South America, in Africa. There's the reverse wave of missionaries from Africa to Europe. China is one of the most vibrant Christian nations in the world at the individual level. So these are all attractive developments that fit very well with the American understanding of how to live a good life side by side with others.

And so I think there's an opportunity for the United States to embrace that and to practice religious pluralism that doesn't require you to leave your faithfulness at home. You can take it into the public square but still be tolerant. So that's an opportunity.

DR. SLAUGHTER: I'd just say first of all plug for CNAS – in a town that is so partisan and divided, you've seen lots of agreement and disagreement here that is not on partisan lines.

But two big opportunities: one, in a world of regional organizations, it's so important that everybody may not like us but they dislike somebody else more. In every regional organization – think of the OAS, a lot of people may not love us, but they're really not crazy about Brazil when Brazil's next door, or whether it's in Africa with the big African countries or if it's in Asia, as we heard, people may worry about us but with China right there, they definitely want us in there. Similarly with Turkey, with the middle powers. So a world that is divided into regional organizations where there are a couple of big powers in each one, we look like a really good, honest broker and that's a really important asset.

The last thing I'd say is look at the demographics of the world. Look at the enormous youth bulge. To those young people, they don't love us. They often hate us politically, but they see us as the world of Google, and Facebook, and Apple, and Amazon, and Tumblr, and Flickr, and Reddit, and Digg, and Twitter – and I could go on and on and on. That is a huge –

DR. KAGAN: Could you?

DR. SLAUGHTER: You're the one who thought that was a peace dove. You should just be careful. (Laughter.)

DR. KAGAN: I can't. I definitely can't.

DR. SLAUGHTER: You know, that is a huge asset for us. In a networked world, we are the center of innovation and creativity and entrepreneurship and opportunity, and we need to be building on that.

DR. KAHL: I think the huge – I think both our greatest opportunity and our greatest challenge is how to manage partnerships, because where I think Marie is dead on is that the world is – I mean, it's always been complex, okay? It has been for forever, but the number of relevant actors to our foreign policy I think is higher than it used to be. I think that – and that the – and we're also constrained. We're constrained by the amount of money we have. We're constrained by domestic polarization and exhaustion. We can't do

anything even if we wanted to do everything. And even if we wanted to do everything and we could do everything, it wouldn't have the effects that we wanted.

So we have to seek out partnerships. Sometimes those are with existing allies. Sometimes they're going to be with emerging states that we're trying to make stakeholders. Sometimes they're going to be with international organizations, like the U.N. or NATO. Sometimes they'll be with other regional organizations, like the GCC or the Arab League. Sometimes though they're going to be with private sector entities and public-private partnerships and other times there are going to be with NGOs.

And the good news is there are a lot of actors out there. As long as you open your aperture beyond states that have interests in addressing certain problem sets that we also have interest and that we can leverage unique capabilities to. And that was talked about in the context of Libya campaign. But even as we think about what's the future of counterinsurgency, it's not 170,000 forces in the desert. It's niche capabilities and advisors on the ground and those types of things.

So even if you're just in the old hard power domain, the key challenge though is you can't be partners with everybody at the same time and make everybody else happy.

And one of the biggest challenges we have in managing the Arab spring is how we can reconcile our partnerships with existing states, say in the Gulf, who are monarchies and try to push them gradually towards evolutionary change while still staying on the side of the street? It's very difficult. How can we push the SCAF in Egypt to fulfill the transition there but have any credibility with those on the street? How can we have any credibility period with some of the political Islamists who are rising up in countries where we have 30 years of baggage to overcome?

So the recognition that partnerships are important doesn't mean that it's easy to forge them. And we'll sometimes have to make tradeoffs between the partners we pick and other partners we will end up alienating because we picked those.

DR. LORD: Before we close today, let me remind everybody here in the audience and everybody watching us at home that the conversations we're having today are based on many, many months of research by our research team and by esteemed experts like Anne-Marie and Peter. Five of those reports on reshaping the U.S. military, on Iran, on rethinking U.S. strategy in the Middle East, veterans' employment, and, of course, grand strategy, are in the lobby. All of them are on our website along with papers on issues like the law of the sea convention dawn and the South China Sea. So I invite you all to go and read them.

We'll now take a 10-minute break. Please join us back at around 11:10 a.m. Thank you very much to our panelists. (Applause.) (END)