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EUROPE IN CRISIS

MS. JOHNSON: Good morning. My name is Jennifer Johnson, and I'm a 2016 Aspen Security Forum Scholar. I'm delighted to introduce today's opening panel, Europe in Crisis. The migration crisis is reshaping the face of Europe, literally, and it poses a grave security challenge to the continent, the region, and the world. What more can be done to address the problem of a near biblical dimension, and what has the crisis, and other political, economic, and military shocks affected the decades-long project of European integration, and what are the security implications of these effects.

Moderating the session is Michael Crowley. Michael is POLITICO's senior foreign affairs correspondent covering foreign policy and national security from Washington. Prior to joining POLITICO in October 2014 Michael was chief foreign affairs correspondent for *Time Magazine*. He's reported from more than a dozen countries, including Iraq, China, Israel, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Lebanon, and Ukraine. And with that, the floor is yours, Michael.

(Applause)

MR. CROWLEY: Thank you. Thank you so much for that introduction. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us on a Saturday morning. This panel ought to wake you up, unfortunately, because we are, indeed, as you mentioned, talking about a crisis of biblical dimensions. To put in other terms, EU Chief Donald Tusk has called this an existential challenge to Europe and the European Union. The number of asylum seekers in Europe doubled in the year 2015 to a record 1.26 million, according to the EU, and those numbers are not abating. One-third of those were Syrians. To give you some context, this is not an exclusively Syrian problem, and we can talk about that, but refugees are also coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, North Africa, and elsewhere.

I probably don't need to lay out for you the

political, social, and security challenges that this crisis entails, but those will be the subjects of our panel today, and we will talk for a bit, and then take your questions, which I look forward to.

Let me quickly introduce our panelists, and we will dive right in. Starting at the end is Peter Westmacott, who is former Ambassador of United Kingdom to the United States, department that post in January. Formerly, he was also an ambassador to France and Turkey. He has recently finished a semester at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and is now back in London.

We have Gilles de Kerchove, who is Counterterrorism Coordinator for the EU. Marie Harf is senior advisor to the Secretary of State, John Kerry, for Strategic Communications. Among the subject areas she focuses on specifically is refugees. And before working at the State Department some people may not know Marie was a CIA officer. And to my right is Peter Wittig, who is Ambassador of Germany to the United States, now based in Washington, of course.

Let me start with you, Peter Westmacott. I think Brexit is a topic on everyone's mind here. And although there were clearly many driving factors there, and we could do an entire panel on it, my question for you is what role the refugee crisis played in the Brexit vote? Would there have been a Brexit were there no refugee crisis? And what might that tell us about what is yet to come elsewhere in Europe? What lessons could other European countries draw about the impact of the crisis on the Brexit vote?

MR. WESTMACOTT: Thank you, Michael. Thanks for having me on the panel. I think it's worth remembering that the referendum on whether the UK should stay in the EU or leave was called for reasons which had nothing whatever to do with migration crisis, and refugees, and so on. It was actually something which the Prime Minister somewhat reluctantly called, because it was an attempt to end once and for all the endless debate which goes on in the United Kingdom, and whether we are part of the European Union or whether we're not. Europe was what

eventually did for Margaret Thatcher. Europe was what eventually did for John Major. And Europe was a divisive issue within the conservative party. So it was an issue about laying to rest this issue for good. That was the logic at the beginning.

Now fast-forward to the time of the referendum vote, and, of course, the refugee and migration issue was a big part of the debate that was raging in the United Kingdom at the time. There were a number of issues. One of them was sovereignty, this kind of idea that we should take back control of our own affairs from all those unelected, unaccountable officials in Brussels. And some of it was about economic issues. Some of it was about Britain's place in the world, and why can't we be more independent, and on our own, and make more of an impact all by ourselves. Some of us thought that was a somewhat misguided concept. But, you know, there were a lot of issues there.

But when it came to the vote I think it is right that this issue of migration was a big issue. There was a lot of misunderstanding around free movement. Free movement, of course, being one of the obligations of a European Union member state that any other citizen in any other part of the 28 member states has the right to come and live, and work, and visit any other country in the EU. And if we left the EU, there would no longer be free movement of labor. Part of the debate was that somehow all these millions of people coming from the rest of the European Union were taking away jobs or were diluting the population of the United Kingdom, and so on. In fact, it was a largely, I think, dishonest argument, because free movement of labor was a plus to the British economy, and free movement of labor is a plus to the British people. We've got at least 2 million Brits who live elsewhere in the European Union, and maybe 2 or 3 million other citizens in the European Union who live in the United Kingdom.

And insofar as there was concern about migration, immigration from other parts of the world we always had national powers to control that migration if we wished to do so. Tiny little example. London cabbies,

the iconic part of London culture voted apparently 85 percent to leave. You ask them why, they say because immigrants are taking away our jobs and undercutting our fares. Well, why are London cabbies losing business? (a) London cabbies have become too expensive, (b) there's new technology. Globalization, one of the many issues that was out there, was one of the anxieties, I think, that made people vote as they did. And Uber was coming in and making an alternative offer available to their customers. And the third point, honestly, is that insofar as Uber drivers were immigrants from other countries, they weren't coming from the European Union at all. They were coming from a number of other countries, over which we had natural control for immigration, if we wished.

So it was an issue. It was exploited by the leave camp as being an issue which the United Kingdom could take back control over its own borders, its own people, of freedom of movement of labor. I think it was somewhat misleading, but it was part of the debate, you're absolutely right, along there with sovereignty and the idea that somehow European courts overrode British justice, and people didn't like that idea either.

MR. CROWLEY: Yeah. But there is surely a sense, of course, throughout Europe that these countries are being overwhelmed by the refugee flow, that their very identities may change, and, of course, that this is posing a grave security risk.

Ambassador Wittig, let me ask you about this. There have been four terror attacks in Germany just in the past two weeks, I'm sorry to say. I've seen reported that three of them were carried out by asylum seekers or refugees. Correct me if that's mistaken. Chancellor Merkel's response to this has been to reaffirm her essentially open-door policy, not totally without limitations, using the slogan, "We can do it." She's called on people to aspire to their best value, helping people in need. At the same time there was a recent poll conducted by YouGov, which showed about 66 percent of the respondents did not support her position. There was strong skepticism that this is the right policy for Germany.

Can Chancellor Merkel survive this? Can you talk about the pressure she's under, and how, particularly if there is a continued drumbeat of attacks like this, how that can be a tenable position, giving the passions, the political passions that Ambassador Westmacott's country has demonstrated the impact of.

MS. WITTIG: Yeah. Thank you for that question. Let me, before I answer, briefly comment on the Brexit issue, because it's one of the most consequential decisions I think in the history of the European Union. And we are also on the receiving end of that. It is probably a watershed moment in the history of Europe, if you will, but it's not a catastrophe, and not the end of the European Union. We, of course, would've liked the UK to remain in the European Union, with that great tradition, so much bringing to the table, and the second biggest economy in the European Union. But now we've got to respect that decision of the people. What is important now, also, for the European Union, for the sort of the 27, is to get clarity on where Brittan wants to head. And this is what my chancellor said very clearly. While we understand that the UK now is going through a phase of soul searching and finding the right path out of the European Union we need clarity of what it wants, and we need the beginning of a negotiated orderly process of an exit. Because if we have a protracted phase of uncertainty it will hurt the economy, as we all know, and it will jeopardize the political stability. So while we are supremely interested in having friendly and as close as possible relations to the UK outside the European Union we need a process that starts sooner than later about the exit and the arrangements.

As I said, this is a challenge also for the 27. We need to kind of redefine the European promise. We know that many countries have your skeptic movements. That's a challenge for us. And we've got to meet that challenge, and coming up, if you will, with a new narrative of the European Union.

Now the refugee crisis feeds into that. And your question about the echo of the latest terrorist attacks. Yes. It has been a shock, has come as a shock

to Germany. We had four or five attacks within a week. Germany had been miraculously spared of terrorist attacks, so it was in a way very likely that such terrorist attacks would haunt us one day. Now it happened. Not one single pattern. Only two out of those four or five have an ISIL, ISIS connection. All perpetrated by lone wolves, radicalized young men, some of them with mental issues, some of them socially unstable and marginalized. It just shows that, you know, Islamist terrorism comes in new forms, and is looking, new targets. So a kind of new pattern.

Now what did it do to Germany. I think so far the reaction has been fairly measured. There's no panic. I think people are fairly happy with the response of the security authorities. Some people make a connection between the refugee crisis. That's only partly correct. Only one perpetrator was a refugee, but a refugee that came in 2014, not in the latest wave. You called it a poll. My sense is that the bulk of the population is still standing behind the Chancellor's refugee policy. I think it was a moral and a political decision. A landmark decision emanating out of our tradition of the liberal asylum law. Mind you, we have one of the most liberal asylum laws in Europe. As a result of the Nazi rule the founders of our post-war constitution decided, since Germany had been responsible for so many refugees, we wanted to be, you know, do it the other way. So that was our tradition.

I think what is important to communicate, you know, to an American audience, but also to us Europeans, there is no single lever to pull in this refugee crisis. There's no wall to build. We are surrounded by nine countries. Europe is at the center of two fragile regions. The Middle East in flames, in shambles. North Africa, extremely fragile. So there is a whole set of measures, and our policy of refugees has to address the complexities, prevention, of course, persecution, but also measures of information sharing and international cooperation, but we'll talk about that later.

MR. CROWLEY: Yes. Thank you. And we can come back to what can be done about the root causes. Gilles,

but that's a nice transition to the security aspect, and as a security proposition, how the EU is responding, and what more can be done. It must be a completely overwhelming challenge at a time when you already had so many potential threats to monitor of citizens of these countries. Now in come millions of people about whom you know essentially nothing. Is the system totally overwhelmed? What is the response? What needs to be done to get your arms around it? Is that even possible?

MR. de KERCHOVE: Okay. If you'll allow me, I would like also to say a word on the Brexit, just to say that the British had a full opt out on migration and asylum. So it was completely predicated on false argument. That was the free movement of citizens from Europe. And that will be at the core of the negotiation between Britain and the EU, because if they want to get access to the internal market, they will have to accept free movement of EU citizens as well.

The title of the panel is crisis with an S, and, indeed, we are confronted too many crises. A migration crisis and a security crisis. And I would say a legitimacy crisis, because in a way people had the feeling that Europe was not providing either sufficient control on migration, nor sufficient security. But I think we have to be extremely cautious not to mix up the two crises, and it's very important. There is some link, and I'll come to that, but it's two different subjects.

First, migration. Here too, we have to distinguish between asylum and migration, economic migration. We, of course, very much welcome the position of Germany to open the door to those who need protection. That's all not only legal, but our moral obligation. That's people who are suffering. Half of the 1 million plus who came to Europe were fleeing from Syria, 250,000 from Afghanistan, and only 150,000 from Sub Sahara.

So the second one is the impact on security. Frankly, the security of Europe is very -- the threat is very diverse. We have a lot of people who get radicalized who have no contact with ISIL, who have not been abroad, and just get radicalized, many on the Internet, and that's

(inaudible). And so, I would say the migration impact is in a way marginal. We have to distinguish between different situations. The case of Abaaoud or Abdeslam. EU citizens from, of course, Moroccan descent, but EU citizens going back and forth to Syria, and able to sneak in and use the migration flow to hide their travel. Why? Because Europe these last two years has worked hard to be much more strict at the border, in the airport with, and I can develop what we have been doing these last two years, so they try to use this migration flow.

The second case is, indeed, third-country nationals, like the one we found near the (inaudible), were sent by Daesh. They were directed to mount an attack, particularly in Paris, and so on. They, too, using the migration flow.

And the third one is, indeed, among the many, many asylum seekers, some may be either inspired or disillusioned, that happens, because you don't integrate in German society overnight. And you have also some Salafist organization, there are nearly 8,000 Salafist active in Germany trying to build on this disillusion, try to recruit them. I think the minister of the interior of Germany said that they only have 59 cases where the police is trying to investigate link between migration and terrorism. Fifty-nine out of 1 million, let's be honest, it's pretty marginal.

So how do we address all this? So we've been working hard to improve the way, first, we control the flow of migrants. Second, how we police the border much better. And three, how we share data and information inside Europe. On the first one we have been -- I must say, you can criticize the deal we have had with Turkey, but pretty effective. We moved from 1 million last year to 250,000 this year. We really don't have refugee crossing the border of Turkey coming to Greece, and going to Europe through the Balkans. Most of them now come from Libya and a bit more from Egypt. So this is quite important. We have improved a lot, the control at the external border. We have now transformed agency for border management called Frontex into something more executive, much more effective. We are in the process of

changing the rules on asylum, and we have improved, with the agency cooperation, in what is called the hot spot in Greece, on the island, in Italy -- Southern Italy to fingerprint people to try to identify these people. So that's one step.

And inside Europe the cooperation between the law enforcement community, the intelligence community has improved significantly, but I come back later on to that.

MR. CROWLEY: Yeah. I think maybe we can come back to that. But Marie, let's go to you. Obviously, our focus here is on what's happening in Europe and the effects on Europe. But you are the representative of the U.S. Government here. And I know you can't comment on the campaign, but anyone who's been paying attention will know that this refugee crisis has helped to shape our political debate, our presidential campaign debate, and at all levels, indeed, we've talked about the state level. So how has the refugee crisis affected policies and politics in the United States? This is an issue for America, even though the number of refugees who have actually come into America is relatively trivial compared to the flow in Europe.

MS. HARF: That's true, and I won't start off by commenting on Brexit. So I'll save that --

MR. CROWLEY: Great.

MS. HARF: Being the American on the panel.

MR. CROWLEY: Okay.

MS. HARF: But I think what's been interesting is the European migration crisis from Syria, if anyone knew anything about it in the United States up until last November it was either the photos of the children washing up on -- it was these horrible -- it was the humanitarian piece of it. And we, if anything, got criticized by outside groups, by advocates on this issue, that we were taking refugees too slowly, and that we should be taking more. And we were getting quite a bit of pressure from actually both sides of the aisle, and across the political

spectrum to take more. And what was interesting for me is all of that changed in November virtually overnight. And that was after the attacks in Paris.

Until that point people in the United States either weren't paying attention or just felt from humanitarian reason to care about the refugee crisis. But after the attacks in Paris, within a week, we had 30 governors come out in the United States and say we will refuse to take refugees in our states, which is an extraordinary statement, one that they actually can't follow through with practically, because refugees are admitted by the Federal Government, and once they're in the United States they are free to live wherever they would like. But overnight it became a political hot button issue here.

And whereas refugee policy, even during this first years of the Syria crisis, has been largely driven on a bipartisan basis, that people from religious organizations across the spectrum, from the right, from the left have supported the moral and humanitarian reasons for supporting refugees. And we do that, not just with accepting some here, but we're the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to groups like UNHCR, and others. Overnight it became a political hot button issue. And these governors started putting out these statements. Congress started acting, trying to act, to see if they could influence this debate.

So whereas a week before we were taking heat for not accepting enough, we were in a position where we were fighting just for the 10,000 we wanted this year. And we are on track to bring in 10,000 Syrian refugees in this fiscal year, because we've ramped up our efforts, but that is a drop in the bucket, in terms of numbers. You're absolutely right. So what we've seen throughout this past few months, without getting specifics here in terms of politics, is a fear in the United States about what is happening in Europe. And I have a good example from a few weeks ago that I think is illustrative, that when this awful attack happened in Munich, which was tragic and terrible, U.S. cable networks covered it non-stop for four hours as breaking news when there was really no news

breaking after the initial attack, with taking no breaks, and not focusing on anything else.

The same day there was a much larger attack in Afghanistan that did not even make it onto the news, any of the cable news. So it perpetrates this fear in the United States about what's happening in Europe. And like my colleagues have said it brings migration, and CT, and terrorism into the same bucket in people's minds here, where you now have people contacting the State Department saying, 'Is it safe to travel to Europe,' which is extraordinary to me.

So we have tried, as the State Department, against the backdrop of a very divisive political campaign, which we stay very, very far away from, to continue to do a few things. The first, to bring the refugees in that we can, and to keep fighting for the ability to do that. And to keep fighting in these states where governors have spoken out, to saying we need communities where refugees are welcome. Because while they can't prevent them from coming to their states, we're not going to send someone fleeing persecution to a state where a governor says you're not welcome. We're just not going to. It's not how we work here.

So we're trying to do that, but we are also, and I think this could probably segue into the next part of the conversation, working increasingly with our European partners on things like information sharing, on intelligence sharing, on border security, on working with them to help as they are dealing with this crisis in their countries. And I think that's been something that's an ongoing effort, and I think we're trying to make even more progress on.

MR. CROWLEY: Thank you. Time is flying and we're about ready for questions. Let me just throw out one more question. Let's handle this one quickly, and hear from the audience. But it seems to me that a very significant development, as far as this issue goes, is the failed coup in Turkey, which may be jeopardizing a very significant deal that was struck in March, in which Turkey would absorb refugees who would come in to Greece, I

believe, particularly, in return the EU had pledged to reenergize the process of potentially admitting Turkey into the EU, but given the crackdown that has followed the coup, violations of civil liberties, press freedoms, and now talk that Turkey would reinstitute the death penalty, which I think is a deal breaker for EU membership. Ambassador Wittig, maybe I will just ask you, and anyone who wants to jump in very briefly to talk about how concerning this is, and then we'll go to questions. So please, brief answer from you, and anyone here who really wants to chime in.

MR. WITTIG: Well, we followed that development in Turkey very closely. We came out, as other member states of NATO and others, very firmly at a very early stage in condemning the coup, and underling our support for democracy in Turkey. The reaction of President Erdogan and the government has been somewhat disconcerting. We warned that in the effort to clear up this coup that Turkey would be well advised not to jeopardize, to cast away all standards of the rule of law. That's an ongoing concern.

MR. CROWLEY: Is it jeopardizing the deal? Do you think that the refugee deal could unravel over this?

MR. WITTIG: Not so far.

MR. CROWLEY: Okay. Sorry to interrupt, because with the --

MR. WITTIG: Sure.

MR. CROWLEY: -- interest of time, Gilles wants to weigh in.

MR. de KERCHOVE: Just to say that the Turks have been really shocked by the coup, and we have to acknowledge that. And we have to express all of the condemnation of the coup, and at the same time reaffirm the importance of human rights and fundamental values. But we have to keep this partnership very strong. We need it for migration. We need it for counterterrorism. One of the challenge we are faced with in Europe now is the

return of foreign terrorist fighters. We have hundreds of Europeans who are still in Syria and Iraq. Let's suppose that the conflict there comes to an end. Will we repeat the mistakes of Afghanistan, where we left hundreds of mujahideen that we had supported into the wild, and that created a lot of problem later, because they triggered the problem in Nigeria, they went into a sort of tourism mujahidism all over the world. So we have to handle these returnees. We need the Turks just for that. So we need it for migration, for terrorism, and for the balance --

MR. CROWLEY: It's going to force some tough choices if the crackdown in Turkey continues in a way that offends the EU sense of political and social values. Questions? Right there. Go ahead.

MR. OWEN: Charlie Owen, from Duke. Ma'am, how come --

MR. CROWLEY: Microphone's coming.

MR. OWEN: Two quick questions. Ma'am, you kind of ridiculed people who called into the State Department and asked if it was safe to go to Europe. State Department has a travel warning for Europe. Maybe that's why -- could that be a reason why they're calling?

Secondly, do you think, or does anyone on the panel think that any number of the Syrian refugees, if they are organized, trained, and equipped by the West, would they go back and fight for their own freedom, and solve the problem that is generating, I think, the refugees.

MS. HARF: I'll state with the first question. If it sounded like ridicule, I did not mean for it to. It was merely an observation that in my time in the U.S. Government, both at CIA and the State Department, we had not been getting these kinds of questions. Because people in the general American public weren't -- I mean I would love to think most Americans read our travel warning. I am probably realistic about that. But I think that I have seen a large uptick in Americans and study abroad students who reach out to us and say based on what they see coming

out of Europe, we know they're getting all these migrants, we know they're getting all these refugees, we don't think -- you know, we're dubious about the screening, and is it still safe to travel there? And I do think that the uptick is indicative of a conversation going on back here about the migration crisis. That's not a value judgment. It's just a fact. So I don't know who wants to take the next question.

MR. WITTIG: Maybe Gilles.

MR. CROWLEY: Yeah. Go ahead.

MR. WESTMACOTT: I would say very briefly, your question is a reminder that we're never going to make any real progress in solving this migration and the terrible refugee crisis unless we can focus on the upstream problem of finding political settlements to the conflicts giving rise to this massive flood of humanity seeking a better and a safer life. I think many of us are very admiring of John Kerry and others who are trying to find a political settlement, more or less as we speak, to the Syrian conflict. I don't think we can reasonably expect Syrian refugees to go back home and rebuild their country until the conditions are better than they are at the moment.

In the meantime we've got to look after these people. There are a number of countries doing a great job. Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraqi, Kurdistan have got millions of Syrian refugees who we all hope will be temporary. We've got to try to give them jobs to do. We've got to try to educate their children, so that when, Inshallah, we find that there is a political settlement Syria is fit to go back to, people will want to, and can take back some skills and some families, and a society that is more or less intact and capable of making a success of that country in the future.

MS. HARF: And that's absolutely right. When we talk about it, the Secretary's efforts on Syria, which are frustrating on the good days, but he is determined to see if we can make progress on some resolution to this conflict, we cannot divorce the two. We cannot divorce the refugee conversation from the conflicts of origin in

our discussions, or in our policies, or in our thinking. And the longer term challenge, because you're right, the goal usually is for refugees to be able to return home to stable communities. Unfortunately, this a generational issue, and for many refugees that won't be possible. So the bigger challenge in some ways isn't security, it's integration. And it's once you have huge communities refugees in some of the countries you mentioned, in the Middle East, but also in Europe, and in places in the United States, how do we integrate these new communities in a way that is welcoming, that is empowering, that helps make sure that once they are parts of our countries, that they are able to contribute in a way, which is the whole promise of fleeing places where they're not able to do so.

MR. CROWLEY: Thank you. Question in the back.

MR. SHAPIRO: Thank you very much. Steven Shapiro, with Business Executives for National Security. A broader question about European security, Europe in Crisis. If you could just address the question generally of the effect of Brexit on European security, generally. In the short term, of course, the UK has announced that its commitment to NATO is firmer than ever, probably will see a boost in spending in that regard, but that's probably a short-term issue. The loss of the seat at the economic table may confuse sanctions with respect to Russia, and a whole host of organizational participation. So I wonder if you could just address the medium term implications for European security as a result of Brexit. Thank you.

MR. CROWLEY: Gilles, do you want to grab that?

MR. de KERCHOVE: Yeah. For internal security, I can respond. There will be an impact, for sure, because first, the Brits were and are still the main driver of the internal security policy. And they are setting the agenda. They are pushing new concept, new approach. If you take only Europol, I think 40 percent of the information comes from the UK. They are leading or co-leading nearly half of the fights on organized crime. And it's interesting, I said before that the Brits were out of the European Union, in terms of migration. They opt out

for security, and then opted in. It's a bit complicated. And the current prime minister, when she was home secretary looked into the file land decided to opt in many of the policies for internal security, because she realized that it was in the interest of Britain and security in Britain. And so access to the Schengen information system. Access to Europol. The European arrest warrant. All this will disappear and that's a bit sad. Of course, we'll try to define arrangement by which we keep as much as possible, and I'm very much in favor of that, Britain onboard, but there will be legal limit to what we can do.

There is one exception. Maybe it's intelligence, which remains outside the EU framework, and where all security service will, of course, keep working together, and I think that will not have a major impact, except if that may be happen, Europe integrate itself a bit more in the field of intelligence.

MR. WESTMACOTT: I would add very briefly that the UK is not only the second largest economy in the European Union, along with France we are one of the two major military capable countries in the EU. We will remain wholly committed to NATO. We have a program for reequipping our own armed forces, strengthening our capabilities, and so on. None of that will change.

I hope not all these things that Gilles was talking about are going to come to an end. There's a lot to be discussed in the negotiations for Brexit. But some of the wonderful thing about Europol, about intelligence sharing, something like 40 percent of the intelligence on counterterrorism within the EU comes from the United Kingdom, or comes through UK agencies. This is too important to security of all our countries to be lost simply because of the result of the referendum. So I'd like to think that over the next year or two, or whenever we begin the Article 50 negotiations that ways would be found of ensuring that we continue to contribute significantly to the security of Europe. And that means not just internal security counterterrorism, and so on, it also means ensuring that Europe is able to credibly stand up as members of NATO to threats coming from elsewhere,

including, I'm sorry to say, from Russia. And so Article 5 (sic) guarantees, and so will remain just as important to the UK in the future as they are today.

MR. CROWLEY: I wish we had more time to talk about NATO, which is so interesting. Okay. I see a couple -- you, and then we can go to you.

MR. TRILL: Bill Trill (phonetic), of Canada. To the subject that we're discussing, Europe in crisis, a simple question: Is Europe really in crisis, by definition, or are we just in a transition moment, but we are not creating a crisis by simply saying "Europe in Crisis." Is it truly a crisis, or is it just a moment in history?

MR. CROWLEY: Well, I -- can I start, and then we'll go to you.

MR. WITTIG: Me?

MR. CROWLEY: Yeah, please. Go ahead.

MR. WITTIG: Thank you. Where we've seen an unprecedented proliferation of crisis over the last two or three years started with the Russian challenge over the annexation of Crimea. Then came the Greek debt crisis. And then we have the refugee crisis. Brexit, and now terrorism in Europe. So I think you can speak of a crises in a multiple form. I believe what's the order of the day is to strengthen the resilience of Europe, of the 27, UK is still a member, and I hope we will manage to bring home a message. And that is the European Union is not just an economic club, where we are doing horse trading about, you know, financial resources, et cetera, contributions. In the end, it's a peace project. It's the most successful peace project in the history of Europe. It has managed to eradicate war and conflict in that zone of 28 countries in the heart of Europe. And I wish people that are engaging in Europe, in that criticism against the European institution, the overblown bureaucracy, et cetera, et cetera, would realize that in the end this has secured peace, stability, prosperity in Europe in an unprecedented forum. I think that is the message we've got to drive

home to our citizens.

MR. CROWLEY: Powerful case. Gilles, go ahead.

MR. de KERCHOVE: I fully agree. Crises are a unique opportunity to make progress. Remember when we set up the European community at the time was first to make a Third World War impossible, but it was in the context of the Cold War, the fear of the Soviet Union at the time. We're in a world where there are more and more crises, an illusion to believe that there won't be crises any more. So we need to go ahead, and heads of state and government will meet September, 27 of them, not the 28, unfortunately, to look into this, and most likely internal security will be one topic they will discuss, and where they will explore all to go ahead to integrate even further.

MR. CROWLEY: Somebody over there. Yeah?

MR. SCHOON: Hi. My name is Glen Schoon (phonetic). I serve as a strategic security advisor in Europe. I was curious, you all mentioned the issue of the media, the discourse in the media, and the framing of issues, and particularly regarding the refugee flows. Do you think there should be more of a strategic effort on the part of governments in Europe, either separately or together to engage the media about these things? And I'm asking it in part, because of what you said, ma'am, on the cable networks. I was one of those people called by CNN. So I went on air about ten minutes after Munich started. But I was trying to bring across the points that the Germans are doing it well. What we don't know yet -- in other words, I was trying to give some reason of why we're going it okay. I'm wondering if you could comment on that.

MS. HARF: Maybe I'll start, and --

MR. CROWLEY: Yeah.

MS. HARF: -- then pass it off. I think a few things. I think that we have tried and European governments have tried to -- one of the best ways to talk

about the refugee crisis, especially for Americans, which is the audience I know best, is to put a human face on it. If there is a refugee in their community they'll say, "Oh, I like that family, but," so we try to put a human face on it. But I think part of what's frustrating, and this speaks to your point, and thank you for going on cable news and adding some wisdom to this conversation, is when you have an attack, and the conversation in the press, particularly here in the United States, immediately turns to refugee policy. It then, by extension, crowds out all the other policies we should be talking about, whether that's CVE, whether that's information sharing, whether that's what the Europeans are doing to make sure that even though they are inundated with these historic levels of refugees from Syria, they are doing things to improve the screening and the security.

So I think the instinct, at least here in the media, is to go to the darkest corner of the room, and to focus on what is a political hot button issue. But in doing so really deprives us of a real conversation about how we keep Europe safe, how we keep our country safe, not to mention here in the United States, where the worst attacks we've seen are Americans, are homegrown, and we can't even get into a conversation about CVE and community efforts. We can't even get into a conversation about why terrorists shouldn't be able to buy guns, right? Because we go to the refugee issue. So I think anything, our government, these governments, other agencies, other experts can do to broaden the conversation about refugees, and get to the bottom here, actually it would be helpful, but it's hard.

MR. CROWLEY: We're almost out of time. Gilles, I know you wanted to weigh in on it. I just would add, and maybe this is an iteration of something you've already said, but another person who does communications in this Administration said to me, with frustration, recently, "We're at the point now where every attack in Europe is covered like an attack within the United States." So it's live on CNN wall to wall. The difference between San Bernardino and Paris is really -- Paris was so enormous and horrible --

MS. HARF: Absolutely.

MR. CROWLEY: -- you can't second guess that. But I think you all take the point that an attack in Europe psychologically almost is equivalent to an attack in the U.S.

MS. HARF: It matters more, I think, to American audiences, because of our ties to Europe. I don't think it should, but I think that's the reality. And with Paris, that was the first time there were real rumors out there about a huge attack, and possibly some being refugees. And that's why literally over night the conversation in the United States about refugee policy in Europe shifted, and we had to react very quickly to respond to that.

MR. CROWLEY: Did you want -- can you say something?

MR. de KERCHOVE: Oh, just it's a very good question. There is a debate in Europe as to whether the media should tell the identity --

MS. HARF: Right.

MR. de KERCHOVE: -- or show the picture --

MS. HARF: Absolutely.

MR. de KERCHOVE: -- of a terrorist, because it may have an impact in feeding this process itself. And we have seen two different attitudes, one in Germany, one in France. So that's one, where --

MS. HARF: That's right.

MR. de KERCHOVE: -- I fully agree, government should be more strategic in their communication. I will stop here.

MR. CROWLEY: Okay. Thanks. One more. I'll go with you, and let's make the answers quick, because we're down to the last couple of minutes, please.

SPEAKER: I recognize this is a security forum, and refugee issues. Take me locally. Has the EU bureaucracy heard what happened in Brexit regarding overreach from the Parliament, and the commission, and what have you, regarding, like happened in UK, to how much steam can I use on my heating iron, the local issues that affect the guy on the street and the guy that lives in the small villages. Has somebody said, "Hmm," has been declared, "what have we done?" And is anybody thinking about the overreach of the European bureaucracy? That's what happened to Brexit.

MR. WESTMACOTT: One very quick comment from the Brexit side, and then the others can respond to the substance of it. Two indications of -- I think the question you are asking is a very important one. One, a number of French and German politicians around the time of Brexit said to me, "I wish you weren't holding this referendum. If this referendum was being held in almost any other member state of the European Union at the moment the answer would be no, would we leave." In other words, the more Europe is not perceived by people across the European Union as part of the answer.

And the second point is that one French politician said to me, "We missed a big opportunity with Cameron's speech, when he launched the process of the Bloomberg Center on the 23rd of January 1013. We all focused on the demand for better terms of membership for Britain. I wish we had focused more on the other half of the speech, which was here's why the European Union needs to reform itself for the sake of all its own citizens in terms of transparency, competitiveness, and addressing the internal crises." So I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done in the EU, if you're not likely to have similar movements in other member states, apart from the United Kingdom.

MR. CROWLEY: Ambassador Wittig?

MR. WITTIG: Well, I think it's important for the politicians in Europe to read the writing on the wall, and the discontent in large swaths of the population in

many countries of Europe. By the way, a referendum in Germany would have had a clear outcome in favor of remaining. But I think we also have to counter that narrative that Brussels is responsible for everything that goes wrong in every single country. That is simply too easy. We've got to reform, and we've got to do better on the expectations of our citizens, but Brussels is not the culprit, the scapegoat for everything that sometimes the elites in those countries are doing wrong.

MR. CROWLEY: Okay. I think we are out of time. Thank you for the good questions. Thank you to the panel for a great debate.

(Applause)

MR. CROWLEY: Had a lot to tackle. Thanks for coming.

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