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AMERICA FIRST

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Bob Rose: Good morning. My name is Bob Rose. I'm a member of the Aspen Institute Homeland Security group, as well as DHS' Homeland Security Advisory Council. I'm delighted to introduce our next session entitled, "America First."

Since the end of World War II, America has been preeminent global power serving as champion, leader and protector of international order. However, the words and actions of citizen, candidate, and now President, Trump have called this role into question.

"America First" is a slogan at the heart of this administration's policies. We have a distinguished panel of experts with us today that discuss what it means to be America in today's world.

Our moderator is Founder and Editor-at-Large of the Weekly Standard, William Kristol ... himself, a renowned expert. Mr. Kristol is a Harvard PhD and a leading conservative voice in American politics. Ladies and gentleman, please join me in welcoming William Kristol, who will introduce the rest of our panelists. Thank you very much.

William Kristol: Thanks, Matt. It's great to be here. I will be extremely brief. People always say, "These panelists are so distinguished, they need no introduction." And then they promptly give five minutes of introduction. I really am not going to introduce them. You know who they all are.

I'll just say one thing. I think what's great about all of them, all of their work over the years ... they have strong points of view. They've been active in politics, obviously in Jane's case, and Hugh to some degree; and a columnist in Tom's case; an ambassador in Peter Westmacoff's case.

But they're all analysts. They don't simply have opinions. They actually look at the situation and try to think through what has happened, what is happening, what will happen. And I think that's honestly the best use of our time here, is to try to ... for whatever it's worth ... give you our sense of where we are in the world, and where we might be going. We all have our views and we can get into that if you want, but I suspect that's more obvious and less interesting.

So my question's a broad one. I'm really shaping it by all the questions, all the discussions I've been in so far at Aspen. Which really are ... How do stand? How much of a crisis are we in? Do we have problems? Or do we have a crisis? Is the breakup of the liberal world order of the last 70-75 years imminent? Or is this just another little rough patch? Or maybe it's not even such a rough patch. Maybe it's a good patch that we're going to come out of it stronger.

So I'll frame this broad question, let them go in alphabetical order, ask each of our panelists to talk for three to five minutes on that. And then we'll go back and forth some, and then take comments and questions from you.

Tom Friedman.

Tom Friedman: Bill, thank you very much. Great to be here. Let me do a small point, a lightning-round point about Trump and where we are right now, how I look at things and then try to frame what I think is the larger context.

My general approach to writing as a columnist about Trump is that, some things are true even if Donald Trump believes them. So, be very careful as an analyst when you write about this stuff. I believe there is a method to his madness. I believe there is sheer madness to his method. And I believe there is sheer method, plain and simple, to some of the things he does. And as you write about him, I think you have to sort out those three things, and that's what I try to do.

Let me step back though and give you at least my frame for this moment more broadly, in American politics, but also global politics. The question I've actually been exploring in my column is ... some of you may have seen ... is why are political parties all over the industrial world blowing up? They're actually all blowing up at the same time.

The Republican party has blown up. It was a party that used to stand for free trade and deficit protection. It's completely flipped on that under Donald Trump. The Democrats have blown up but they're not in power now, so you can't see the full fissures.

Peter will tell you how both the Tories and Labour in Britain ... Labour's going back to being a quasi-Marxist party. The French party blew up so much that we have a president in France today who comes from a party that never existed, three years ago. You can go, really, down the whole list.

This is not an isolated incident. So what's going on? I think what's going on is, if you look at parties in the industrial West for the last 75 years, at least, they were all built around five, basically, binary choices.

Capital versus labor.

Big government, high regulation. Small government, low regulation.

Environment versus industry. What were my others?

Social norms to be banned and social norms to be embraced ... gay marriage, abortion.

And lastly, free trade, open to the world. Protectionism, more closed to the world.

These are the basic five binary choices that all these major parties in the West were built around. And those binary choices could actually define politics for 70 years, because the world was much slower, I would argue. And the pace of change was much slower. And they kind of shifted between the two.

I think what has happened ... the reason all these parties are blowing up ... is that we're in the middle of three climate changes at once right now.

We're in the middle of a change in the climate of the climate. We're going from what I call "later to now." When I was growing up in Minnesota in the '50s, "later" was when I could clean that river, purify that lake, rescue that wolf. I could do it now, or I could do it later. Today, "later" is officially over. Later will now be too late. So whatever you're going to change in the climate environment, you better save it now. That's the climate change.

Where's the change in the climate of globalization? This is most profound right now. We've gone from an interconnected world to an interdependent world. And in an interdependent world, you get a geo-economic inversion. First of all, your friends start to be able to kill you faster than your enemies. If Greek and Italian banks go under tonight, or had gone under last night, this room would be half-full. Greece, Italy ... wait a minute, they're in NATO. They're in the EU.

In an interdependent world, they can kill us, okay? In an interdependent world, your rivals falling becomes more dangerous than your rivals rising. So if China took six more islands in the South China Sea last night ... personally, don't tell anybody ... couldn't care less. Had China lost six percent growth last night, this room would be empty. That is a climate change, okay.

And lastly, we're going through a climate change in technology. Machines are acquiring all the attributes of human beings ... the ability to think, reason, analyze, manipulate, even drive.

So we're going through three giant climate changes, which are changing several ecosystems. They're changing the ecosystem of work. The American middle class that these two parties were built on all these years ... were built on something called the high-wage middle-skill job. You could have high wage with middle skills.

Today because of what's happening with machines, there is no such animal in the force. There's a high-wage, high-skill job. There's a low-wage, low-skill job. But the foundation of the American class, the high-wage, middle-skill job has disappeared. That's creating a climate change in education. We're going from days when Bill and I could go to four years of college, and then dine out on that for 30 years ... to now where you have to be a life-long learner.

And lastly, we're seeing a change in the geopolitics, in the ecosystem of geopolitics. The key divide in the world today is no longer east-west-north-

south, communist-capitalist. The key divide in the world today, I would argue, is between the world of order and the world of disorder. And the basic dividing lines is the Rio Grande over in our part of the world. It's the Mediterranean over in Europe and Africa. And basically what's happening is there are millions of people trying to get out of the world of disorder, into the world of order.

Well all of this, I would argue, requires something very different from the binary choices that these parties were all built on. I'll give you a small example. If I were a steelworker in Pittsburgh, who Monday through Friday, I'm a member of the union ... I'm of the steelworkers Monday through Friday, but on Saturday I drive for Uber and on Sunday I rent out my kid's spare bedroom on Airbnb. Are my interests with capital, or are they with labor?

All of this is being completely mixed up, and it's the inability of these parties. Last thing I'll simply say is, I have a motto of life: "Wherever there's oil, there's trouble." Wherever there's oil, there is trouble. Okay, because oil allows you to basically insulate yourself from adaptation.

And when you're in the middle of multiple climate changes at once, we have a huge adaptation challenge at the individual, community, corporate, and governance level. And both these political parties, through contributions, have access to oil. They will be the last to change, but they are blowing up.

William Kristol: Tom, thanks for that. Many thought-provoking things there. Jane, how worried are you?

Jane Harman: Well first, I could listen to Tom forever. But I haven't decided if he's an Op-Ed writer or a rap artist. And speaking of words, a plug for Ann Friedman ... the important Friedman, Tom's wife ... who is opening a museum in Washington, or it's been inaugurated, called Planet Word. And words matter.

So to your first question, Bill, about "America First." Pardon my voice, folks. But I guess I've been yelling at Hugh for a day or so. I actually like you. But the term "America First" was used by isolationists in World War II. And it doesn't fit our politics now. And it shouldn't be used, I think.

One of the Scholars at the Wilson Center, Aaron David Miller, says really the foreign policy of this administrative is "Trump First." And that may fit it better than "America First." But I think if we're going to talk about "America First," we ought to talk about American values first, not the way it's being talked about.

On to world order, and whether it's frayed, or whether it exists. It's frayed. It's not over but it is frayed. Another former Wilson Scholar named Charlie Kupchan, who was on the National Security staff for Obama, has said that Trump asks all the right questions. He just has the wrong answers. And it is true that a lot of our regional alliances need ... and the U.N. ... need to be modernized. In many respects, they're quaint.

The Security Council system at the U.N. doesn't work because one country can veto, and we always know who will veto, and then nothing basically happens at the U.N. So should we modernize the U.N.? Yes. Should we modernize NATO? It is being modernized. Should we junk our regional trade agreements? No. Should we find a way to work with competitors like China and Russia? Yes. Is throwing out TPP the way to do it? No. Is refusing to join the Asian Infrastructure Bank the way to do it? No. Is this whole new tariff system in the world the way to do it? No.

So I'm saying that there are many ways in which, to coin a term from the healthcare fights that Congress had ... We should mend it, not end it. And that would be a better approach, it seems to me, to world order. But Tom mentioned political parties and that is something close to my heart. My view is that Congress was working perfectly, until I left. And I know-

William Kristol: That's kind of a Trump-y statement. I must say. You know?

Jane Harman: That's "Jane First."

But actually I left because Congress was so toxically partisan. And I couldn't stand it anymore. The business model of Congress now ... this applies to both parties ... is "Blame the other side for not solving the problem." Because if you work with the other side to solve the problem, you are bipartisan, which makes you target practice in your primary. And sadly, for both parties, avoiding big primary fights ... I didn't seem to know how to do that, I've had them ... is something you really want to do. Because then you get re-elected if you don't have a big primary fight. and you're in a district that leans strongly one way or the other.

Of course I was in a district, for a long time, in the center. But anyway, my point is the political parties, the system that they employ in Congress, is broken. And that is a huge problem because our separation of powers is now two powers ... it's the Executive, which has claimed broad executive authority ... not starting with Trump, starting with George W. Bush, continuing under Obama and now on steroids in the Trump Administration.

So it's the Executive Branch with basically unchecked authority, and the Courts which are at this point, depending on how you see this, playing a different role ... or are about to play a different role ... than they have in the past. And Congress is the incredible, receding branch and can't get almost anything done. And you just heard that in the last panel, the endless request for Congress to change outdated legal authorities. Forget about it. At least forget about it through this mid-term election.

So, what does that mean? It means a lot. It means that our democracy in this country isn't functioning the way it should. It isn't healthy, the way it should be. And what do we do about that? Well most people have talked about that:

Everybody vote! Pick your side, doesn't matter. Pick a side, but pick candidates in either party or a third party who actually want to solve problems.

Because if you do that, that's a good start on reclaiming the democratic order in the United States and having the team that can fix the fraying world order.

William Kristol: Thanks Jane. Harmond-Hewitt, that's the ticket for ... the bipartisan ticket for 2020.

Jane Harman: Ah, yes. You got it.

William Kristol: Hugh?

Hugh Hewitt: Jane and I have been ... I've been interviewing the congresswoman for 25 years, since I was working at PBS in Los Angeles. It's always charming to be with her. I won't take much time but the way that Bill framed it: How are we on a scale of one to ten?

I said, "I think it's lights-going-out all over Europe time." And Tom mentioning world order versus disorder, three quick thoughts.

We're all missing Charles Krauthammer, right? We all do. In his wonderful book, "Things That Matter," he has an essay, "Why have we never been contacted by intelligent civilizations somewhere else?" And he posited the answer, if any of you can remember ... Because eventually intelligent civilizations destroy themselves, because of the ability of technology to outpace the ability to control it.

This morning I interviewed Secretary Pompeo on my radio show. While you were all asleep, I was working four to seven this morning, doing my show. So if I nod off, that's why. But I asked him, in reference to Helsinki, do we know with great certainty who attacks us?

Because, the reason it's important for the president to articulate it is, we have to deter other people from attacking us. I've been trying to get people to understand why it was so traumatic for the president not to name Russia specifically. It's because it's important that all bad actors in the world know that we know who they are when they attack us, so that we can respond.

That's the reason for the upset among National Security conservatives, at the ambiguity. The Secretary responded, "We're very good. We know most of the people who attack us." That's not good enough. If you get your David Sanger book out, you won't be able to sleep if you just read the epilogue about the nature and number of hostile powers that operate in the cyber-world, on behalf of the party of disorder that Tom referenced.

Because disorder is profitable for them, and we are the party of rules, and rules work for us. But they don't like our rules. So there are, literally, thousands of people and at least a half dozen state actors, who wish to disrupt and destroy our system. Secretary tells me, "We know who most of them are." But if we don't know who all of them are then we literally stand on the edge of disorder.

I'll close mine with this remark: Last night, Director ran a very effective presentation ... I agree with him ... I've worked with the FBI on and off for years, and the Department of Justice, and the White House, and outside of it. There are 37,000 members of the FBI ... that sounds good. There are 350,000 F1 visa-holders from the People's Republic of China in the United States.

So if we assign 10 to each member of the FBI, to monitor whether or not they involved as agents of influence in the United States, as we routinely prosecute them to be. That's already all of the assets of the Bureau, devoted to one country's potential agents of influence in the United States. I'm not proposing we stop that. I'm just proposing scale.

And we had the Vice President of Facebook proposing we stop that. I'm just proposing scale. And we had the Vice President of Facebook tell us they have a billion visitors a day. In my mind, I immediately go to the Spanish flu and the epidemic ... it's coming up on the 100th anniversary ... 60 million people killed, without anyone having any kind of defense.

The velocity, and the rapidity, with which bad information moves and with which actors can attack us leaves me very concerned ... that while I'm personally very happy, and anyone who's in this room is doing very well, that we really don't have any idea how dangerous it is right now.

William Kristol:

This is wonderful. You come to Aspen for, really, a stimulating conference. Beautiful weather, beautiful environment. And then you leave, go back home and you can't sleep for weeks. It's really a great situation here. They should advertise that: "The Aspen Security Conference." Subhead: "Come and enjoy, and then don't sleep for months afterwards."

Peter Westmacott was Her Majesty's Ambassador to Washington, to the United States, from 2012 to 2016 ... did a wonderful job, distinguished career before that. What are your thoughts, especially perhaps, on the U.K. and Europe, obviously?

Peter W.:

Well taking a leaf out of Jane's book, I have to say that when I was here the special relationship was in great shape. And since then, I don't know what's gone on. A couple of points before we get into the discussion. And thank you so much for having me in this amazing group.

One is that, in the U.K., I think there was a sense that the election of Donald Trump ... whatever one may have thought of him as a candidate and the rest of

it ... was tapping into something which was much bigger than America. There were elements of nationalism, populism, rejectionism, people lived in fly-over country, people who were sick to death of existing political elites ... which was similar to some of the reasons that people voted for Brexit in the United Kingdom; why a number of people have gone for new political parties, or new individuals, in other democracies.

Some of those democracies, now, are being hijacked by strongmen who are delivering in a way that traditional political parties ... on the one hand this, on the other hand that ... are not delivering. And so, hearing from Donald Trump as well, "I love Brexit. It's thanks to the Brexit vote that I'm being elected. I'm Brexit to the power of three."

This went down quite well, not just with people in the United Kingdom who had voted in Brexit, but also with the government which ended up with ... what we call in our rugby parlance ... the hospital pass, of having to make a success of what I regard as this misguided decision by 38 percent of the electorate in the United Kingdom to vote for leaving the European Union. And so, for Theresa May, for example, who found herself almost by default as Prime Minister of the United-

PART 1 OF 3 ENDS [00:19:04]

Peter W.:

For Theresa May, for example, who found herself almost by default as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom shortly after that referendum, when David Cameron resigned and everybody else killed each other off in a scene from Julius Caesar, she was there and she had to do something with this particular issue. She grabbed onto not only the traditional way in which British prime ministers say, "We've really got to have a great relationship with the new guy in the White House." So she got into the Oval Office nice and quick and was pleased to get there, rightly or wrongly offering a state visit, taking Her Majesty's name in vain right at the beginning, which has remained a matter of some controversy ever since. Also, because Donald Trump saying, "We're going to have a great new squeaky, shiny free trade agreement within days of the United Kingdom leaving that terrible organization, the European Union." This was, in a sense, manna from heaven, or manna at least from Donald Trump, for a government which had a few problems there.

There was a natural desire to get alongside this administration, get alongside this president, make it all work, and to some extent, see the best of it. Even though, during the months that have followed, when we've had two years of inability, I'm sorry to say, of the British government to work out what it's going to do with Brexit. There have been a series of different policy issues where I've seen the United Kingdom, the United States, but also many other Europeans and many other, if you like, Western democracies finding themselves really completely in a different position. Whether it's climate change, whether it's the Iran nuclear deal, whether it's the future of free trade, protectionism more

generally. Number of different policy issues. Middle East, moving the embassy to Jerusalem without anything in return, etc., where we have found that the relationship is really not as good as it should be.

All that was before ... Just about one week ago now, Donald Trump touched down in the United Kingdom for a visit to the UK after his triumphant visit to the NATO summit. And before his triumphant visit to Helsinki for his bilateral meeting with Vladimir Putin. It's only a week ago. Now, that may not seem very long to you guys, but we've had almost three political meltdowns in the United Kingdom since then on a series of other issues, while poor Theresa May, dutiful Vicar's daughter, is trying her best to keep, first of all, her own government together. Secondly, her own party together. And thirdly, find something that she can take to Brussels and sell as a credible policy for the future of Britain's relationship with the European Union. None of this is proving terribly easy right now.

A week ago, when Donald Trump arrived, and then while he was having a wonderful dinner in Blenheim Palace, the family home of the Churchill family, of course. Then boom, in the middle of dinner, all the alerts went off and everybody saw he'd given an interview to Rupert Murdoch's favorite tabloid newspaper in the United Kingdom, the Sun, saying a whole lot of rude things about Britain, about Brexit, about NATO, and indeed, giving a big puff to the guy who just resigned as Theresa May's main rival for her job, one Boris Johnson. Who was, until a week or so ago, the British foreign secretary. This did not go down brilliantly, it has to be said, in the circles around the Prime Minister, who was trying her best to struggle with this.

Slightly more seriously, where are we with America First? The answer is we've moved from a time when everybody or a lot of people in the powers, in the corridors of government, wanted to make this work, thought it could work, but was being warned by one or two people, your humble servant amongst others, that the whole business of America First and protectionism was not actually conducive to the chances of getting a free trade agreement very quickly with the United States. And indeed, you don't need one anyway because, one- we're much better off if we negotiate free trade agreements with the negotiating power of being part of a block of four hundred and fifty million people in the EU rather than trying to do it on our own. Nevertheless, politically, this was important at that point.

Then, we've moved on to a time when it's much more difficult. I think people were saying, "Well, what do we make of all this?" My own view is that, actually, when you see Donald Trump apparently speaking without thinking, that is actually when he says what he really thinks. I think that all the subsequent corrections, I regard as just attempts by others to mend the damage rather than a correction of what the President actually thought. If we look at what he actually said, that gives us a much clearer idea of what is going on.

I think we've got a series of areas where America First trade, political, economic, social, and other policy, international relations, is making serious trouble for the future coherence of the NATO alliance. People obviously, in the United Kingdom, where Putin has a habit of trying to bump off his enemies on the streets of rural, leafy England, were nervous about a cozy relationship which doesn't appear to offer any concession at all from Putin but offers a certain amount of good will, to put it mildly, from the President of the United States. That worries us. It worries the NATO countries with borders next to Russia. Most of whom would say it doesn't matter whether it's a Czar, a Communist, or a Putin, Russia is always a threat to all of us, and that's the way it is. The rest of us and the rest of you, have to be realistic about that. So people are nervous about that.

Then, the last thing I would say, in a slightly more tech-y way, is that in the area where the United States is overturning multilateral agreements and going for unilateral America First, America on its own arrangements. For example in trying to deal with the problems around Iran, we are going to see real crises over extraterritoriality and the attempts of the United States government, ratcheting up sanctions against Iran, for example, totally out of line with the internationally agreed nuclear deal. And in a way which is going to penalize through secondary effect any European banks, companies, aircraft manufacturers, and motor car manufacturers who want to do business in Iran because they will be threatened with being put out of business if they want to do business in America, as well.

And this is quite a big deal in terms of how you reconcile America First international relations with the legitimate sovereign rights of countries in other parts of the world, not least the European Union, who have already negotiated in good faith with America. Agreements like the Iran one, and now find that Trump has the means to tear all that up and chuck everything up in the air and you start again. This is going to create ruddled attentions. It's going to create a certain amount of reduced prosperity because with the Trump trade policies, we fear the people are going to be worse off.

And as one prominent British politician put to me the other day that, "It's very interesting working with Donald Trump. The good thing about him is that he thinks outside the box. The bad thing is he doesn't know what the box is."

Thank you.

William Kristol:

That's a ... I don't feel worried enough about this. So like let me have one word, just something that I've been very struck by watching the debate and being in the debate I suppose over the last 18 months. About President Trump and, more broadly, about the sort of liberal world order and how it fares. I think people, it's just a natural human tendency, you take a photo and then you sort of assume that the next photo will be like the previous one plus or minus one, two, three percent. And that's usually true. I came to Washington in '85 figuring I would work for the Reagan administration. I figured the Cold War would be the

defining thing. I thought Reagan was on the right path. Maybe in 20 years we'd have some erosion of the Soviet control over east Europe. And then, 10 years and 20 years after that, you might even have some freedom in Russia itself.

And everything collapsed in '89. And the world ... What do they say about bankruptcy? You go bankrupt very slowly stage by stage, and then suddenly all at once. That's how politics and history sometimes are. Not usually, obviously. Otherwise-

Jane Harman: Right.

William Kristol: Most things are continuous, but things, occasionally, are discontinuous. It does seem to me we're in a moment, because of the technological changes, globalization, automation, because of political changes, because of all kinds of things ... Maybe just because the current world order has been going kind of a long time. These things last historically, seventy, seventy-five years. Where we may be hitting a few discontinuous changes and unlike the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, these could be ... If you think the last seventy years, which I think is empirically proven pretty good by compared to the preceding seventy in terms of war and in terms of getting people out of poverty, and in terms of all kinds of reasonable metrics of human happiness and success.

I think unfortunately the Berlin wall analogy cuts the other way and you really get really bad things pretty quickly. I think people kind of underestimate that the contingency of history ... This is the World War I story, they're sitting around in 1913 and it's kind of a mess in the Balkans. And Kaiser Wilhelm isn't up to Bismark standard. And you have some problems domestically in Britain and France. Basically my impression is, everyone thought, you know, we'll kind of muddle through this like we muddled through the crisis of 1911 and the crisis of ... And I don't even know the history, but of 1905. Like, there a whole bunch of crises and Russia seems to be kind of liberalizing, you know, gradually. And then stuff happens somewhat fecishly, in a very contingent and unpredictable way and suddenly you're in World War I. Suddenly you have the Russian Revolution and suddenly the next 50 ... Well, the next lots of years get shaped in a pretty disastrous way. I don't think we're quite there.

But I worry about the contingency, when you look at Europe in particular, you look at what's happening politically there. In a place like Germany, which is you know, the stability and peacefulness and reasonable and democracy of Germany, has been a very important thing for the last X number of years. How solid is that? And our leadership has been so important I think, even when its faltered at times. Not fundamentally been challenged in the way it is now, I think, by our own president. One wonders how much things could you know, suddenly sort of unravel. For me, that's sort of the big question of the moment. It's a question of Trump, it's also a question [inaudible 00:28:37] water forces that almost everyone heres spoken about ... Nationalism, populism, wage

stagnation, cultural changes, social media. You add it all up, it's an awful lot of stuff happening at once.

One final point on Trump and then we'll have some exchange. I do think Trump is a symptom, clearly, of other things. But symptoms can also become causes. I think people sometimes reassure themselves a little bit, historians I know, sociologists, big thinkers who wanna ... Well, he's a symptom. Let's talk really about the bigger picture here and then we get into an interesting discussion at thirty thousand feet of the bigger picture. But you know, you can have all kinds of problems. If one of them gets worse, you know, they're not even caused by an underlying [inaudible 00:29:17] diseases or problems, perpetencies, but if one of them is mistreated, if there's a disastrous operation, you know, it could be terribly bad for you. Even if the underlying things are sort of chugging along, it might ultimately be manageable. For me, that's sort of the question of ... He is president of the United States. We've just never had the experiment.

I guess I'll just put it this way, finally. We've never had the experiment in the modern era of a President of the United States who is as uncommitted to us as unknowledgeable about I would say, the maintenance and preservation of the liberal world order as Trump. And it might turn out that guess what? America, we're a very big country with a huge infrastructure, government and private sector in civil society and we can sustain this for four years. Maybe for eight, maybe not for eight. Or maybe it turns out that we can sustain it for one year, or two years, or two and half years and suddenly something happens and look up and you realize, gee, it was kind of important to have a president who believed in and understood some of the basic characteristics of this world.

Or maybe he's thinking outside the box and we sort of go to a different and slightly and manageable world order of it's own shape. But the kind of contingency, the fluidity, the unpredictability of things I think, is very hard to internalize in terms of ones thinking forward.

Tom, you had a formulation of this last night that I thought was helpful.

Tom Friedman: Yeah. I sort of look at this and responding to your point Bill, in two ways. One is, I think you're one of the Trump administration I would call unhinged but bound. Bound by people like Tillerson, McMaster, Gary Cohn. I think you're two of Trump is unhinged and unbound. And I think your three is going to be unintended. The unintended consequences of a president ... You simply cannot unravel this many traditional alliances. You cannot undermine this many presidential norms. You cannot tell this many lies without their being unintended consequences.

Some may turn out to be positive. I go back to what I said earlier, which is that there's no question. There is a method to his madness. Let's take China. I happen to have supported the president on this. I happen to think that China grew rich over the last thirty years with hard work, investing in education,

investing in infrastructure, delayed gratification, cheating, stealing intellectual property, non reciprocal trade rules, and violating the WTO. That's how they got rich. And they got rich that way around ... Metaphorically speaking, tennis shoes, t-shirts and solar panels. If we allowed China to use the same model on artificial intelligence, bio materials, computing aerospace and all of the twenty, twenty-five issues they aspired to, we're going to have a real problem.

So we needed to take China on. That's the method to his madness. But look at the madness to his method. How would you take China on in a rational way? Well first of all, what I'd do is, I think I'd sign an agreement with the twelve largest pacific economies. I might even call it TPP. That would control forty percent of global GDP-

William Kristol: That's a good idea, yeah.

Tom Friedman: Based on our interest, our values, removing eighteen thousand tariffs on our exports. That's where I'd start.

Then I'd go to Peter and I would say, on the European Union, "Okay. We need you as our allies. You have the same problem China has that we have." I'm not going to slap aluminum and steel tariffs on you. That is chicken feed. We both have a bigger issue. Then I'd call the Chinese and I'd say, "We're going to meet, in secret in Hainan island. I'm going to send my trade negotiators, you send yours." All of this will be done in secret. Nobody's going to lose face but I'm going to show up with eighty percent of global GDP with a Euro-Pacific alliance. And we're going to end these trade practices of yours once and for all.

Instead, what'd he do? He blew up TPP. He blew up the European relationship and he said, "Let's do it all in public, in your face. So either you're going to fold, or I'm going to fold." And so, that's just stupid. You take a method to a madness and you turn it into a mad method. And then you eluded to this bill and this is really important. It's what this man does not understand, which is that the idea that it is America's interest to break up the European Union is absolute madness. He seems to have forgot why it was formed in two world wars that we were drawn into, and to control the power of Germany, number one. And number two, the European Union is the other United States of the world. Its the other great center of free markets, free ideas, and free people. It's our wing man in the world.

Why in the world would we want to fracture it over some incredibly stupid [inaudible 00:33:58] Steve Bannon ideas, you know, from his misreading of history. It's just madness.

And to your last point, when the world is fast, small errors in navigation have huge consequences. When the world was slower, we had a bad president, we had to go fifty miles at five miles an hour, we got off track. The [inaudible 00:34:16] of getting back on track was very manageable. When we need to go

fifty thousand miles at five thousand miles an hour, you have a bad president, it's like having a 747 pilot who just transposes two numbers as he enters the navigation data, you can be five thousand miles off course and the pain of getting back on course, of trying to rebuild, alliances, relationships and norms that were built over seventy years, that is not going to be a small [inaudible 00:34:43].

Hugh Hewitt: I'm going to have to descent.

William Kristol: Good. You Que and then I'll come back to Peter again.

Hugh Hewitt: I was the only person in thirty rock on election night that voted for Trump. I'm still happy with vote and I wanted to note that the dog that didn't bark in the Putin, Trump press conference. Vlad the Impaler, who's now 3-0 against American presidents is very upset that we withdrew from the JCPOA. I am very glad that we withdrew from the JCPOA and the president did not give that back. I also note that Vlad the Impaler was upset that the president was critical of Nord Stream 2. It is a disaster for Nord Stream 2 to go through and to make Ukraine and Eastern Europe hostage to Russian gas. For the very reason that all of us are agreeing that Putin is a malevolent actor on the world stage, we ought not let him control the energy supply of Europe.

And so, with a seven hundred and sixteen billion dollar defense budget and a new NBAA that's going to come out tomorrow, hopefully building two air craft carriers at the same time with the moving of the capital to Jerusalem with the emergence of the new entente of Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, and United Arab Emirates and Egypt, and Israel, quietly and the United States. I think we finally have the opportunity to contain the most serial exporter of state sponsored terrorism and violence. Iran finally, after eight years of fantasy league foreign policy, we have realists, and I think the best National Security team that we've had since George Schultz was Secretary of State with Pompeo, Mattis, Boltin and Director Coates.

So I just have to reject the whole para dime that we're worse off than we were three years ago and I think while it's rocky and it's rough, it's a necessary course correction because we had gotten so far off course, these are the Iran and other actors.

William Kristol: Well said and fair ... It's a very common view you just articulated here. No, it was very good that you did because it's important that people here it. Jane and then Peter.

Jane Harman: I actually like what you were saying Bill. And I would add a few things. I think that Ronald Reagan, rather you supported him or you didn't, had a positive vision and a sunny personality. And I think both of those things matter. I think Trump does not have a positive vision. It's much more tribal and it's this group pitted against that. He didn't start that, I agree with that. Some of the Obama

approach was like that too. Certainly the election approach was like that and I think that's the wrong approach. I think leadership requires a positive vision and we're lacking that. I also think the fact that he basically has an aversion to regional alliance is a problem. I don't think anyone before him has had that aversion.

He sees everything in binary terms and I think looking at the world in binary terms makes it a more dangerous world. And I think that his aversion to the Iran deal will prove to be very dangerous. Remember, it was a deal. It wasn't a perfect deal but at least on some level, and I would argue on a major level, it was stopping Iran's nuclear program for a period of years or possibly forever. And by blowing it up and forcing secondary sanctions on Europe, it permits Iran, if Iran chooses to do this, to start

PART 2 OF 3 ENDS [00:38:04]

Jane Harman: ... Iran, if Iran chooses to do this. To restart centrifuges and uranium enrichment, and then this alliance of Suni states that you're talking about, Hugh, will, I would predict, want to get their own bombs, and there'll be an arms race in the Middle East, and oh by the way, this North Korea deal that's supposed to be better than the "bad Obama deal" is years off, according to Pompeo, who I agree, is a very good Secretary of State, so. And I also am on Mattis' defense of policy board. I'm very high on him. So I'm not dumping on the Trump team. I just think some of the policies are wrong.

But on North Korea, getting to a better deal than we had in Iran, I think will prove impossible, and that could, if the U-S starts unraveling the nuclear umbrella that we've had in Asia, and has backed out of T-P-P, lead to an arms race in Asia. And that's why I'm saying nuclear arms race, that on Trump's watch, given his aversion to regional deals, we may be building a much more dangerous world.

William Kristol: I'm not sure if this disagreement makes the Harmon-Hewitt ticket impossible or just ...

Jane Harman: No.

William Kristol: ... or just, you know, it's not Reagan-Bush. We've had times before where they've had, you know, 18-64.

I want to ask Peter, Peter Westmacott one thing. And he'll say whatever and he wants, as they all do, whenever I ask something. But you're Europe, in particular, I mean honestly, just analytically, whatever we decide what we would like or what we condemn or praise. Do you think if we meet here in three years, 20-21 let's just say, will Europe look pretty much the way it does now? Or Britain will have had some slop ... messy ... presumably Brexit, but basically it remains an ally, the E-U remains sort of, so to speak, functional, Hungary

remains fringy, in terms of its politics, the A-F-D is not, like in the German government, or how worried are you that we're really entering something we haven't seen in decades in Europe?

Peter W.:

I'll try that. Really tough question though. Can I just say briefly, oh the disrupter in chief or whatever we want to say, I agree with you. I think that on a number of things, and we haven't even talked about the poor European performance in paying for NATO defense where it is completely unreasonable, as I think people all agreed that The United States should pay 75% of the bill for a defense organization which protects 28 different countries. And I think on elements of bad behavior by Iran, Trump was right to call them out.

And I think that on dealing with China, Tom's very eloquently put point, he was absolutely touching on something which matters to all of us. I think the problems that we have had is the how he goes about addressing these issues which are in importance to us all. And I think the rejection of the multi-lateral approach, though I understand why, does not make things very much easier.

And tied with that, is this kind of view that he seems to have as soon as he's seeing anybody from any other country, or indeed organization, what's the trade balance? And he obsesses about that. Sometimes the numbers are right, sometimes the numbers are wrong, in the case of Canada and the case of the European Union. And suddenly the European Union becomes a foe, whereas Vladimir Putin's a friend. And I think, all that distorts the chances of us coming together on some of these very, very important global issues where we do need to stand up for our own values against people like China and the way that they have behaved and organized their own economic growth.

Added to which, I'm afraid I do have to say that I think the creation of alternative realities, and playing fast and loose with facts, and certain values does make it very difficult for us to either look to America for the moral leadership that the world needs, or indeed to call out other bad guys when they lie through their teeth or cheat or lie or kill their friends or throw journalists in jail. Or indeed, undermine their own national institutions which are doing a decent, honest job on the basis of objective facts and intelligence, weakening those institutions, which I hope will not continue, is something that the rest of us are worried about.

Your question, but where is Europe going to go? I cannot tell you what's going to happen with The United Kingdom or European Union, there's about five different options at the moment of the way in which all this will end, which range from a hard brutal cliff edge with no deal at all, and the chances of that happening are rising to the possibility that there is a second referendum and the British decide, you know what, it's simply not worth it, let's not bother and we'll stay in the European Union. That's complicated for a whole lot of other reasons. And in between that, there's a raft of other ones.

I think if I had to put money on this, I would say that there will be a kind of Brexit that happens before the 29th of March, which is when the two year cycle of Article 50 expires, but it could well be very little, an agreement to go, and an agreement to have a long transition period during which the details are sorted out. Lot of people won't like that for a number of reasons, but it might be the least painful and the most achievable given the political difficulties which are going on at the moment.

Looking further ahead, a problem is that Germany continues to have something of a free ride in terms of its extraordinarily competitive exports because there's a single currency, which undervalues what was the Deutschmark and overvalues the currencies of the weaker countries in the European Union. And Germany does not accept that given that it's so much stronger and so much wealthier than it would be otherwise, that it kind of needs to help out with the Club Med countries, which are not doing so well.

And until that currency unit is somehow matched with a degree of fiscal and political union, which is not going to happen any time soon, Europe is going to remain, it's not at all on life support, but problematic and difficult. And in the meantime, many of the issues which led to the election of Donald Trump, many of the issues which led to the vote on Brexit are causing people to vote for hard line guys who don't play by the rules in Hungary, in Poland, through democratic processes, and indeed not very far away in places like Turkey in a way which I think means that much of what Europe was created to stand for and to defend, especially in terms of those values, is looking a little bit rocky.

So in three years time, if we come back together, I think Europe will still be probably wrestling with many of those issues, but I think, rising tide, bringing up a lot of votes. Just like The United States economy is doing well, the global economy will be doing better. And some of those really difficult issues, including immigration and free movement of labor, but also the weaker economies around the Mediterranean may be doing a little bit better.

Will The United Kingdom still be a part of that, or will we be out there trying to organize a new role under the slightly bizarre, if not mediocre, slogan of Global Britain, I cannot yet tell you.

William Kristol: A few minutes, questions. Sir ... Quick questions, we'll give quick answers.

Stewart B.: Stewart Bernstein, former ambassador to The United States ... to Denmark, great panel. Love the balance. How do you think this Trump phenomena or whatever you call it is going to impact the elections that are coming up?

William Kristol: You mean, domestically or abroad?

Stewart B.: Domestically. Yes, here in America.

Peter W.: Not one for me.

William Kristol: I mean, I'll say a word if you want, yeah. I guess I have a connection with you, which is ... off-year elections are almost always bad for the party that wins The White House and controls congress. Obviously 19-94, 20-10 both examples of that. So you'd have to bet just on the normal break of things that Republicans lose a bunch of house seats. The senate map is extremely good for them. If you look at the numbers right now, in terms of the economy, presidential approval, some of the better predictors in the past. If we assume we're living in a sort of normal and traditional political world, which may be a mistake obviously, and a lot can happen in the next few months, you'd have to think maybe Democrats win The House pretty narrowly, Republicans could pick up one or two senate seats. I think the supreme court nomination helps Republican candidates in red states, and you could have a short ... it could be less disastrous for Trump, I would say, than conventional wisdom has it.

Which does not mean that medium term or long term, I would argue, Trump isn't pretty disastrous for the Republican party for conservatives. You just have such a widely skewed senate map this year, and you have house races, which some number of them are just hard to move over the line. You could have a much bigger swing though. Very hard to say. And very hard to know what the effects are.

I do think people are underestimating again, this is the point about contingency and believing snapshot, we could very narrowly have a divided house in which some numbers ... members of both parties say, "We're not voting for the speaker from our party until we get certain concessions on how The House works."

Jane Harman: Yup.

William Kristol: We could easily see that in the senate, which could be 51-49, 50-50, and Collins, Rekowski, Jones and Manchin get together and say we want the whole place to run differently. Nancy Pelosi, if the Democrats win The House, I don't think will be Speaker of The House because enough Democrats, people again are assuming, I have too myself until recently I was in a conversation with a senior Democratic strategist, and I said, "Well it's going to be crazy in 20-19, you'll have Pelosi running The House, Trump president, she'll be trying to impeach him, it's going to make today's politics look mild."

And he said, "I agree with that partly, but why do you assume Pelosi is Speaker of The House?" And I kind of misunderstood him, and I thought ... I said, "Well, I guess I assume Democrats probably win The House." And he said, "Oh, I think they will, but I don't think she can be speaker."

Jane Harman: No.

William Kristol: "Because 20-30 candidates have pledged not to vote for her for speaker. Some of them incumbent, some of them likely to win challengers or open seat candidates." So people have sort of not factored that in, you know. They've discounted the degree to which we'll have a Democratic leadership fight, a Republican leadership fight in The House, possible chaos in The Senate, Trump feeling either emboldened or threatened, and whatever that does in terms of his own behavior, firing people at The Justice Department, Mueller. We'll have a Mueller report maybe in the next three-four months, maybe after the election, maybe some of each, you know?

I mean, the level of contingency, fluidity, and unpredictability is very high, I think.

Jane Harman: Yeah.

Tom Friedman: Because of ... all those parties are blowing up, I think the 20-20 presidential election will be unlike any election we have ever had in our history.

Jane Harman: Back it up, the 20-18, in political time, there's a hundred years between now and November. And if Mueller comes out with a report by Labor Day, which some are predicting, that could play a big role, but the other big role is the number of young, women candidates running in both parties. Some have already been knocked off, but one just knocked off a very senior Democrat named Joe Crowley. And if those people get elected in both parties, certainly in the Democratic party, that will change the Democratic party in The House considerably.

William Kristol: But one other thing I would add, Ron Brownstein makes this point of conversation I did with him that he's made it many, many times, he's a very good analyst of these things ... If you just look analytically though at who's likely to win, the Democrats are going to be more democratic, more coastal, more metro, more upper-middle class, well educated, more ... many, many more women members, many more women voting for them, especially college educated. Republicans are going to be more working class, rural, white districts. Then the people who are going to lose in these swing districts are like maybe Barbara Comstock, where I live in an upper-middle class, suburban area.

So the parties get more like themselves, which would suggest, though not inevitably, but you never know, they're cross-cutting pre cleavages, more proliferation. The way he puts it is, the trench between the parties will get wider and deeper, more likely than not, after 20-18.

Again, things can go in contrary ways sometimes. But just to analytically if you look at who is likely to be ... who are likely to be the members of each party in congress, and what lessons they're going to learn from 20-18, which is probably a doubling down lesson, unfortunately from my point of view, not a reach across the aisle lesson ...

Jane Harman: Right.

William Kristol: ... that I think, is the most ... So I don't think things get better or easier or friendlier after 20-18, which really sets up a pretty wild situation going into 20-10

Jane Harman: I agree.

William Kristol: Over there, young lady ...

Esther B.: Hi, Esther Babson, I run the Climate Security Program at The American Security Project. I'm here as a scholar with the rest of the folks over here. So my question is likely for Mr. Friedman, but for whoever else wants to comment, around the three climate changes you mentioned. So we're seeing this global trend of nationalism and authoritarianism, in some ways, do you see one of those changes as being more important than the others or just impacting these global trends in a larger manner?

Tom Friedman: It's a very good question, and I ... To keep with the climate change metaphor ... Well what do you want when the climate changes? You want adaptation. It's the most adaptive that survive. Who's actually adapting today if you look at America? Well, we ... from all the reasons that Bill just laid out, our national government, and the national governments of all these countries are basically being completely paralyzed by tribalism, so they can't keep up with the pace of change. That's at one end of the spectrum.

The single family is way too weak to manage all this adaptation. So, actually, the political unit that is working in America ... If you want to be an optimist about America today, stand in your head. 'Cause the country does look a lot better from the bottom up ...

Jane Harman: That's true.

Tom Friedman: ... than the top down. It's at the local community level. And by local, I don't mean little towns just. I mean ... I'm talking about Minneapolis, I'm talking about Memphis, I'm talking about Birmingham, I'm talking about big cities. And what's actually going on there ... So the cliché about America is that we're a country divided between two coasts, two coasts that are liberalizing, pluralizing, diversifying, modernizing, and in the middle is fly-over America where everyone's high on opioids, voted for Trump, and waiting for 19-50. That's the cliché.

Actually, America's a checkerboard of communities that are building what I call, "Complex Adaptive Coalitions," that are rising from the bottom up. I profiled one, and thank you for being late, the one in Minneapolis, where business is getting intimately involved in the public school system, joining with philanthropists, joining with social entrepreneurs, joining with local

government. You check your politics at the door, and it's all being led by what my friend, Giddy Greenstein calls leaders without authority.

People from the community stepping up, 'cause they operate in civic time, which is that this project takes 10 years, not in political time, which is I have to show a success in two years. I can show you communities all over the country where this is happening. I just profiled one, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 19-90 falling off the map, today one of the 10 coolest cities in America, by the way, surrounded by Redding, York and Harrisburg falling off the map.

So these are very ... It's very hard to get these 'cause they're built on this unique thing called leadership. But the key element is that you check your politics at the door. And that is the optimistic trend. And I'll point out one thing, I just read this study that University College London produced about Brexit, 'cause, again the cliché about Brexit was the cities all voted to remain and the countryside all voted to leave, this study, and I can give it to you afterwards if you want, showed that people who lived in communities where they had strong relationships with neighbors and felt connected voted to remain.

And I think that's what it's all about, and you know, I've said this before, my book ends with a theme song, which I think is the theme song of our time, it's by Brandi Carlile, it's called "The Eye;" the main refrain is, "I wrapped your arms around me ... your love around me like a chain, but I never was afraid that it would die. You can dance in a hurricane, but only if you're standing in the eye."

I think my climate changes are a hurricane. I think there are leaders around the world who think the right answer is to build a wall against the hurricane. I think the right answer is the healthy community, the Complex Adaptive Coalition that moves with the storm, draws energy from it, but creates a platform of dynamic stability where people can feel connected, protected and respected. And I think the great struggle in global politics, coming forward, is going to be between the wall people and the eye people.

William Kristol: I think that was ... I'm being signaled our time is virtually up and that was such an optimistic answer, I feel like we should ... end on that and we should be grateful that Tom Friedman ... grateful that Tom recited that rather than singing it, so that was ...

Tom Friedman: Yeah.

William Kristol: Thank you all panelists, and thank you, all did well.

PART 3 OF 3 ENDS [00:54:15]