



# THE NIXON SEMINAR

on Conservative Realism and National Security

## The Nixon Seminar on Conservative Realism and National Security

### The Future of NATO

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#### **PARTICIPANTS**

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#### **Mary Kissel**

That was President Nixon addressing NATO Good evening. I'm Mary Kissel with Stevens Inc. and your host tonight for the Nixon seminar on conservative realism and national security our topic tonight is NATO, its mission, its role in the world and its future as nations like Finland and Sweden. apply for membership as Putin's war in Ukraine rages on. We're honored tonight to have our co-chairs Secretary Mike Pompeo and Ambassador Robert O'Brien here for the discussion along with our very, very special guest Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison, the US ambassador to NATO, from 2017 to 2021. And before that, the senator from the great state of Texas, so, Ambassador Hutchinson, I'm gonna take the moderator privilege and ask you the first question before throwing it over to the Secretary and the ambassador. You heard a lot of common language there that we've heard through the years. When he's kicked us off tonight with those common themes. What is it about NATO that has endured these many decades? Welcome.

#### **Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison**

Well, I think Eisenhower's words, as put forward by President Nixon said it all. And I thought Nixon was very active with NATO. He was there for the 25th anniversary, and he was reinforcing the importance of America's leadership, but also doing what we all know every president since him has done and that is to say to Europe, you need to do more. And I think that today, we are now seeing a strength that Eisenhower saw, and that is that not only do we have our 30 partners pulling in the same direction, but we

have outside partners that now see the importance of protecting Western civilization, the rise of a sovereign nation to its own governing. And I think that NATO is now showing that we need to do more, more to keep us together because we're facing Russia now. But we all are looking beyond Russia to other adversaries, that we must have a united front a committed front to be able to come out on top for our way of life and our values and what we think is the way that people want to live.

### **Mary Kissel**

Secretary Pompeo Article One of NATO and NATO just for folks who are listening, founded back right after the war April 4 1949. These were many many decades go very few institutions endure for this period of time it says Article One it was formed quote to safeguard the freedom, common heritage in civilization on the people founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, react a little bit to what Ambassador Hutchison just said and about these founding principles.

### **Secretary Mike Pompeo**

Well, thanks, Mary and Ambassador Hutchison, it's great to see you tonight. You did a fantastic job as part of my team. Thank you for that, bless you. It was always a challenge Mary in the ways that you described because it is indeed an organization long in the tooth. And we were if there was one thing you could say about the Trump administration, we were determined to take every international organization and try to mold it into something that was fit for a purpose for our times. I think that's what you heard President Nixon say. He was talking about it in his time in meeting the challenges that were being confronted at that moment. And, you know, the challenges that we were confronting were that we had European countries that had completely abandoned their responsibility to do the right thing for their own people, and weren't prepared to not only we talked about in terms of money and resources being provided as part of their defense efforts to be part of NATO, but they weren't willing to tell their citizens why it was they weren't willing to make the case for their own security to their own citizens. And this is one of the things that I know Ambassador Hutchinson I worked on we we urged them to go back and defend NATO to their own citizenry, so that they could justify the resources being allocated and actually make the case for the Alliance being stronger and more capable. I still think this is a central important I think those citizens can see it more clearly now as a result of what's taking place in Ukraine, but good leaders in each of those countries, mostly parliamentary systems, but different in other places, different different cultures as well from Turkey. to Finland. It's quite a stretch. But make no mistake about each of those leaders as the responsible to make sure that they demonstrate its value to their own citizens. And if there's one thing I think we as American leaders have a responsibility to do is to continue to make that case. And you can only do that you can only do that if you are serious. If you believe in NATO's

mission and purpose and believe that is, in fact fit for our times. Last thing I'll say in this opening thought was that both Ambassador O'Brien and I, whenever we would see Secretary General Stoltenberg, and I know Ambassador Hutchinson was sincere about this as well. We would remind him of the threats from Europe, we would remind them about cybersecurity. And we will remind them that while Chinese communist party seems a long ways away, they are coming for you. And we devoted substantial American resources inside of NATO to help them understand that threat, and help prepare NATO to confront what inevitable will be an alliance that has as a central feature the Chinese Communist Party as a partner, threatening the very underpinnings of what you talked about in Article One of the NATO agreement.

### **Mary Kissel**

Ambassador O'Brien just to follow up on what Secretary Pompeo just said, urging national leaders to make their case to their citizens involves to domestic politics, and you've got a US security umbrella over the continent of Europe. So how do you incentivize leaders to do that? Does it take a threat like that, from Vladimir Putin to light a fire to get them to cough up the money and actually do what they need to do to make NATO more effective?

### **Ambassador Robert C. O'Brien**

Well, Mary, I think as I was listening to Senator Hutchinson and to Secretary Pompeo, those those days leading up to the December 19 2019 NATO Summit, and we were pushing them very hard and the President was pushing NATO very hard and I know that that Mike had a lot of phone calls with Jens Stoltenberg and and Kay was there with him often and I was on the phone with him a lot, trying to encourage our NATO allies to engage in burden sharing, not just because it was the right thing to do and fair to the American taxpayers because it was it was good for their own defense. And, you know, we walked away from that summit after some very hard negotiating and some some unorthodox diplomacy from President Trump which which gave but was tough talk but gave Secretary Pompeo myself and Kay a lot of leverage in those negotiations. And we walked away from that NATO summit with \$400 billion in additional spending over 10 years. I'm here in Europe right now and ingredients from France, but I started out the trip in Prague and went over to the UK for a number of conferences, and I can't tell you how many of our my European colleagues and folks that both Kay and Mike now pulled me aside and said you guys were really right. Back in December of my team, we gave you a hard time. But you are right. We should have spent more money and we're glad we spent the money you convinced us to spend and and we understand that going forward. We're going to have to replenish the stocks that were given to Ukraine to help them defend their country. And we're gonna have to do the things that you asked us miss. I think there was a lot of foresight that we didn't get credit for the Trump

administration, as we urge the Europeans to do the hard thing. But as Mike alluded to, it was tough. And it is you mentioned, Mary, because you have a number of countries that benefited from US security umbrella, and why not then, you know, folks criticize us for an American first foreign policy, but Germany certainly had a German first foreign policy other European countries put their country first. And by doing so they'd allow the US defend them while they trade with the Chinese and buy cheap oil from the Russians. And I think they've realized that that's not a winning sleigh or winning formula. They've got to decouple from the Russians and and ratchet back from the Chinese and then defend themselves and, and America will be with them as a strong partner as they do so but but we have to expect more from our allies. And I think our allies understand that now having seen that Vladimir Putin invade Ukraine, I think it's not a time to say he told me so but it's a time for us to say, now let's roll up our sleeves and work even harder together.

### **Mary Kissel**

It's such an important point. That our national security shouldn't be a partisan issue. We need to defend the free world. I'm just going to ask one more question of Ambassador Basler. Hutchison, before we pull in our seminar members, many of whom have had also firsthand experience working inside NATO, Ambassador Hutchison both the Secretary and Ambassador O'Brien they've talked about this on orthodox diplomacy, trying to urge the nations of Europe to step up after so many decades of this organization being in existence. What take us behind the scenes, what was that like? When you were at NATO for many years? How does that work? Is it done at the dinner parties? Is it done in kind of the back rooms is it? How does how does it look from your point of view and you're sitting there at headquarters? Well,

### **Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison**

first of all, I want to say that I want to add on to what Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador O'Brien said about the leadership that we showed and what we did and and what they did, especially, was to say to the Europeans, that it was like a missile had been hit. When they started talking about China. And all of my colleagues were saying, what, China and this was like 2019, and no one had China on the radar. But Secretary Pompeo and O'Brien and Keith Kroc said, We've got to have communications that do not include Huawei. And if we don't do that, then we're going to have Huawei all over Europe. And we're not going to have the security that we need to communicate, when all of these things that were happening was during the Belton Road initiative that China was doing all over Europe. And so we were seeing these signals, but no one had put it together. But they did and we did and yes, it does happen. To your question, Mary. We had so many events, just with our own colleagues, was a very close knit. And all of our colleagues were were close, and never was there a personal aspect to it, it was dealing

with the issues and the Europeans want us to lead. I was told that time and again, we want you to lead yes, we need to be pushed sometimes we want you to push because they know that we will assess a risk, and we will lead the way to deter that risk. Whereas they don't have that instinct. They don't assess the risk and then say this is these are the steps we're going to take, but they will follow us and our administration did push very hard and led by the two who are leading this seminar. Secretary Pompeo, Ambassador O'Brien, Secretary, both Madison despre. We were all going in the direction of saying we've got to clear our channels. But as we look forward to other adversaries, we've got to have more input from Europe, which actually, Nixon said very strongly, when he said we're going to do more to deter Russia. We expect Europeans to do more right there with us. And when the Middle East came into play, President Nixon was the one that opened the door that we are now following right now, to NATO going outside of the geographic boundaries. And President Nixon said we've got problems in the Middle East problems in Africa, and we need to address anything that will be a security risk to any of our allies. So yes, the collegiality in our in NATO is great. Even when some are, you know, if there were several presidents that had different views we're seeing right now President Erdoğan having a different view about expansion of NATO. And I know you're gonna talk about that later. But there's a lot of diplomacy going on right now. To make sure that we do have the addition of Sweden and Finland, they will be a great value added. And so everyone is coming together now to negotiate because everything is done by consensus. Let me mention one other thing. When we had the 75th anniversary, I brought all of the ambassadors into the Senate, and I asked Jean Shaheen and Tom Tillis, the co chairs of the NATO caucus to talk to them because I wanted them to hear how bipartisan our support for NATO was, but especially that our politicians run campaigns saying that we're pro NATO, whereas Europeans tend to hide defense spending. They tend to hide money spent on security. Sometimes they spent more than was in the record, because they would hide, say, a military base under the housing programs in their countries. So I was trying to show them how just what Secretary Pompeo was saying that we should be talking to our publics and bringing them in to the risks that we're facing, so that the support for NATO will stay strong.

### **Mary Kissel**

Well, as you said, Ambassador, there is quite a lot of unity. Maybe more than was anticipated after Putin invaded Ukraine, the current administration was reluctant to get involved offered Volodymyr Zelensky a ticket out he famously said I don't need a ticket. I need ammo. I want to go to Bridge Colby, the author of *The Strategy of Denial* and maybe ask a bit of a provocative question to you, Bridge. But we don't have total unity in NATO. As the senior leaders here have pointed out, it's really hard to get the Europeans to do what needs to be done. Can NATO really afford to expand? Is that such a good idea, or should we be thinking a little differently about our common defense?

## **Elbridge Colby**

Well, thanks, Mary and it's an honor to be part of this important conversation. And I look, I think that's a very legitimate question. I think if I were advising the Senate, I would say they should look very carefully and rigorously at the potential entry of Sweden and Finland into the Alliance. I mean, I think the situation was improved, thanks to the leadership of the three three leaders here and President Trump under the last administration in terms of their defense spending, and now there are greater pledges by the Europeans, the Germans above all, in the last couple of months. I mean, it's unfortunate that it took the invasion of Ukraine for that to happen. I wish they'd listened more to you know, American leaders over the last few years. But that's where we are but the reality is, the Russians have been weakened but they still pose a significant challenge. And there are significant gaps in allied defense. And you know, I think the macro perspective here, maybe you're provoking me to mention is that we face a greater challenge. I think, Secretary Pompeo if I could put a little bit of taking take a little bit of liberty of what he said that the primary threat that we face is from China from the Chinese Communist Party. And that threat is by the administration's own admission, now acute it's no longer just the Indo PACOM commanders who are saying that it's a real hands the DNI and Bill Burns at the CIA and, you know, we don't have a military that's capable of concurrently dealing with both both theatres. And the natural solution to that is for the Europeans to step up. And they're, they're doing that but, you know, we should be sharing about that, in my view, on a kind of Nixonian way, before expanding our commitments. My view is that it's it's, it's it is there are answers there probably answers to the questions in terms of the Finland and Sweden. Finland has a very robust defense force, I think, the largest for jewelry force in Europe. But my own view is, you know, there should be a skeptical look by the Senate, you know, ask for answers in the way that the first round of NATO expansion was done. There were very detailed analyses to provide to the Senate for the admission of Poland Hungary and I think was Czech Slovak at the time. That's the level of I mean, you know, Finland has an 800 mile border with Russia. That's going to be a significant expansion. of NATO's threat surface to Russia. To me, the kinds of things that I would want to see as part of that package would be for instance, the European states agreeing to say 2.5 or even 3% as the level of defense spending, that they should not only aspire to meet, but actually meeting the near to medium term in general Cobolli basically endorsed moving above the 2% level in his hearing before the Sask the other day. And I would also, I would also say the Europeans taking a much more significant role in the conventional defense of Europe, which would allow the United States to focus more on Asia. And I know, you know, that was part of the argument that Ambassador O'Brien and others were making the latter part of the Trump administration, we need to be able to do that. So I think that's the that's the mission. I think there's actually a real opportunity here, which is the Russians

have kind of hopefully blunted their spear a little bit it's going to take them a while to get back to the high level of readiness and capability that we we feared a few years ago, I think rightly, but, but maybe they've tripped up and at the same time the Europeans are willing to do more. And I think that that's something that we should encourage and more than encouraged we should really put pressure I think there's a real concern, particularly in Germany about a backing off of what they call the Zeidan vendor, you know, the turning the sea change. And you know, more than anybody else, the Germans are gonna be the critical player here. And there has to be pressure and this is a big criticism I have with the current administration is that they have tended to sort of placate or be accommodating to the Europeans and you know, we can't push them too hard. But I think if anything over the last 4030 or 40 years, we've been too gentle and this has been the result where we've not been prepared. And so I think, continued pressure and clarity of expectation, because just to kind of maybe put a final point on it. What I say the Europeans often when I talked about this with them is look, even though the Biden administration is doubling down in a lot of ways in Europe. This is not changing the fundamental facts that China is 10 times the size of Russia, and that the US military situation in Asia is much more significant. And if we the Americans neglect the problem, we could get to a point where we are either forced to very very rapidly and kind of abruptly shift focus to Asia because the Chinese make a move or we might be defeated, in which case we will have to have a very radical shift to Asia. And if the Europeans are not prepared, they're the ones who will bear the risk. So I think we're better off looking at things clearly. And seeing them and then in my experience, you know, which is not much compared to many of the people on this call, but my experience is that actually European officials and experts actually are prepared to reckon with this reality. I mean, they're not children. They they are you know, I mean, they, obviously serious countries have long histories. The dairies themselves, for instance, had a very robust military, not just in World War Two, but until 1989 They had the largest military and NATO Europe. So this is not something that's beyond their ability. We just need to give them the right set of incentives to follow.

### **Mary Kissel**

John Noonan want to throw to you to react over to you John?

### **John Noonan**

Yeah, I I find myself agreeing with Bridge in some critical areas that may be politely disagreeing and others I just got back from a week in Finland doing a review of their defense capabilities, and I frankly came away somewhat impressed. They have a strong army that this country of 5 million can get up to 280,000 Soldiers if necessary. They will instantly bring several fighter squadrons under the alliance and eventually six full squadrons of F 35. Under the Alliance. They have a small Navy but it's asymmetric and

designed for sea denial, which is helpful denying the Baltic Sea to the Russians. They have absolutely superb, superb cyber capabilities. Bridge brought up I think, very fairly. The point about the fact that we will immediately had an 800 mile border with Russia. Frankly, I think that's a bigger problem for the Russians and it is for NATO. The Finns are exquisitely capable at defending that terrain. It is difficult terrain, it's swampy, it's forested. And we've seen how tough of a time the Russians have had with that type of terrain just in Ukraine itself. I do purchase points I do have some concerns. The first is the Finns are still very Russia focused after 80 years of property for a Russian invasion that that frankly followed a Russian invasion with the 1939 1940 War. They're still they have they have long looked to their east and I think they will continue to do so. Even after they join NATO and we are looking to the west. Second is I'm not sure that they're fully aware of what it means to be part of a multinational Alliance like NATO. It involves overseas exercises that involves a navy that can project which they don't have. It requires strategic airlift capability and strategic sealift capability requires airborne brigades. They don't have all of those things. Now no member NATO member state is perfect. And I'd be the first to admit that this the Finns are still very capable, but they're going to have a little bit of growing to do and I think this is going to be difficult for a country that is that's famously non aligned and willing and frankly conditioned to go it alone. I will know it's a kind of counterbalance to counterbalance that having too strong capable partners in NATO will allow us to shifts to the Pacific in a way that I think is rapid and without without significant security risk to our what will be our eastern front between just feed between Finland and Sweden alone, you're talking about adding 12 fighter squadrons and almost half a million soldiers if we have to. That does not make us any weaker and that does not put us in any weaker of a position. visa vie China so I think it's ultimately in that positive. I'll finish with a very quick anecdote. My big concern going to going to Helsinki last week was that the Finnish population is obviously very strongly in support of joining NATO, but I was concerned it was something of an emotional reaction to the Ukraine invasion, which is normal for a country that's been invaded in recent memory by the Russians. I asked several of their Green Party Green Party parliamentarians what they thought about a potential being part of an alliance where the United States may be out of the START treaty when it expires in several years. That's a nuclear arms limitation treaty that doesn't have a very good prospect for being renewed or re upped with the Russian Federation. Thinking that they would be quite uncomfortable with it greens being greens, it's a party exclusively centered on on green issues and climate issues. And to my great surprise, there tact was we support a nuclear free world. But NATO can't be the the the ones to unilaterally disarm it has to become as part of a treaty or a partnership, which believe it or not, that's the Ronald Reagan traditional conservative position on nuclear weapons. So I was somewhat heartened by what I would consider one of the more left leaning parties being quite



comfortable with the idea of being part of a nuclear alliance. Whether or not this last time was

### **Mary Kissel**

Thank you so much for that, John. And it's so interesting to have these different points of view as you guys travel the world and talk to our partners. I want to get back to our special guests. Ambassador Hutchison, because we do have a problem in NATO, and it's called Turkey, although it's now spelled differently after President Erdoğan decided to call it Turkey a or the way that it's pronounced over there. And he doesn't want Finland and Sweden to join unless they take his point of view on certain factions of the curve that's that he considers terrorists and we've considered partners. Can we kick nations out of NATO? We've seen Turkey play both sides. How much of a partner are they actually what was your personal experience with the Turks?

### **Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison**

Very interesting. There is no mechanism to kick anyone out of NATO. That's why we come to consensus. Sometimes it is a labored process. And you see having different views sometimes like Hungary, like Turkey right now. But I think that Turkey also is looking at the Turkish interests and looking at a bilateral issue with which most other allies disagree, and that is on the YPG, which is their big concern. I was somewhat encouraged when I saw that Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General is getting very engaged and he has kept a good relationship with President Irwin and called Turkey. Rightly, a strong NATO ally since NATO. Brought Turkey in they have been real contributors and all of our missions, they've been good partners. But they tend to put their bilateral issues where they might differ with the other allies. Front and center when there is a need in their opinion to do so. But I was encouraged by Secretary Stoltenberg talking to Erdoğan and basically laying out what Turkey would need to let this happen and it was and I think there's a language issue here where they want some recognition of what the Kurds have done to Turkey and the Kurds. The Syrian Kurds have made trouble for Turkey. There's no doubt about that. But as all of you know, the the Kurds that are not the PKK but the YPG have been very strong allies with America and our other allies in fighting ISIS. They have taken the brunt of fighting ISIS after we left in Iraq before the deed was completely done. And ISIS rose back up and those Kurds the YPG arm of the Kurds, with America and our other allies have been very effective partners. So there's got to be a language worked out which I'm encouraged will be worked out. Assessing PKK which we all agree are terrorists. There will be language I think that will say that and then lifting sanctions on Turkey can probably be worked out. You know, we have sanctions on selling F 35 to Turkey because they put a Russian missile defense system on their soil and we couldn't allow that and still sell them the F 35. That has been a bone of contention in NATO with all the other allies for what Turkey

did. So all these things having been said Turkey has been a strong ally. I do believe things will be worked out. It will not be maybe easy. Finland and Sweden will be a value added in NATO. And I thought what John said was very good and important. I think the one other factor I would put in is that having Finland and Sweden in in the European NATO Alliance is going to be very helpful when we are confronting China because the Europeans want the trade with China China values trade with Europe and having Europe even more consolidated with Finland and Sweden, in NATO. If we have to use sanctions against China, it will be more effective having Sweden and Finland which are two large parts of EU as well as any kind of trade relationship with with China. So I think it's going to strengthen us against China, as well as being a value added for their military prowess and the fact that they had been with us in Afghanistan, both Sweden and Finland, major country years in Afghanistan. So they not only done that but they they've done exercises with us on a regular basis. They are very strong partners already and I think it will be a seamless addition and one that will be to all of our value.

### **Mary Kissel**

I was gonna bring in Matt Pottinger here if he's still with us. Yeah, there he is. Great. Hi, Matt. Matt, you know your your life experience touches on a lot of these areas. You You know you serve the United States in Afghanistan. You lived in China for many years. Can you expand on this point? That Ambassador Hutchison was making, about how strengthening the alliances in Europe may actually help us strengthen our defense against Communist China?

### **Matt Pottinger**

Yeah, it's a great ambassador. Kay Bailey Hutchinson, it's great to see you. Thanks for for making time tonight and for all of the great work that you did, supporting us and in our strategy. It's great to see you again. You know, one of the things that that I think we've learned from the war in Ukraine, first of all, is that arguments that we'd heard for many, many years that NATO expansion was inherently provocative. I think that we've been the opposite has been proven right now as a result of this war. Even the Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Schultz, I remember just a couple of days after Russian tanks for a rolling meeting to Ukraine had towards the capital give. He said that to his own parliament, quote, anyone who reads Vladimir Putin historicizing essays, who has watched his televised declaration of war in Ukraine, or who has recently as I have done, held hours of direct talks with Vladimir Putin could no longer have a doubt that Putin wants to build a Russian Empire. So in fact, I mean, if we think of what might have happened, had Poland, for example, not been in NATO, would we would Poland now be at war? I think that it shows, in fact, the extent that we've had any effective deterrence, it's been NATO countries that have so far been able to deter invasion that I believe would have come for those other countries. Have you not been part of NATO? Merely to

your point? You know, the only time that the article five of NATO, which is the collective defense, you know, an attack on one NATO ally is an attack on all NATO allies, the only time that that's been invoked was in a very different theater. It was it was after planes crashed into American cities into our buildings in New York City, in the Pentagon, in Washington and and also in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, when terrorists attacked us at home the United States we ended up going to war as an alliance in a very unexpected corner of the world in Afghanistan for you know, almost two decades. How prepared Ambassador Do you think the NATO allies are for both psychologically, spiritually, if you like, and certainly materially for the possibility that the United States will be attacked in the western Pacific as part of a you know, ill fated invasion? If si Jinping decides that he wants to invade Taiwan, that if he decides that attacking us warships and planes is is part of his plan to ensure the success of inundation of Taiwan? What does that what does it look like? In in the Alliance if that if that terrible day comes to pass, given that it was sort of a shock, as you mentioned back in 2019, when when, when needed, Stoltenberg really started to talk openly about that possibility.

#### **Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison**

Well, I think we did start the conversation went after the Defense Review. The strategic review came out and said our strategic threats for the next 10 years are Russia and China, China first and then Russia, as well as Iran. As it will in North Korea as secondary but focused on China and it was a shockwave in NATO. But I think because of the Belt and Road Initiative because they have expanded the Belt and Road Arctic initiative, which has is another reason that Finland and Sweden are going to be very important partners. We need more activity in the high north. And I think that we will have to push the Europeans that's for sure to use the economic sanctions against China because I think in a way that's even a more productive way to address China than Russia because China needs the economic trade that they get from Europe and the United States and Canada, etc. And I think that they will factor that in if they decide to make designs on Taiwan. And that's why I think the Europeans should continue to have in the forefront and I think they will there will be a strategic review. Reset at the June summit that is going to happen. And I think there will be an addition of China into the NATO concept and I think we are just gonna move looking at what China does, looking at what they do with regard to Russia and the Ukraine. Certainly I think we should be working more on India as an asset and they're going to be more interested in what we do against China because they have seen now China for what it is after that altercation up in the their northern border. Australia will be very strong with us as well. Japan is thinking of going to the summit. They have said that their president is thinking of going because they're concerned. So I think we're going to have a strong front not that it's going to be I think it's going to be a slow movement depending on the things that she does, but I think what we're doing is is strategically important that we set the stage on

Peyo you do Matt Pottinger, as well as Ambassador O'Brien set the stage for us, addressing China as a potential adversary. And now that is building momentum, and building strength and building commitment among our allies. And the partners that I've talked about in Asia that also are more concerned about China. So I think we're and we're Stoltenberg leadership, I can't say enough about the importance of his leadership to America. He's so pro American and pro NATO. And he's very strong. He's disarming and I always say, disarmingly smart, because he's, he's just kind of like you O'Brien, you know, just this jolly fellow. It's always got a happy face, but he is tough and strong and he is clarified just like you are, and I think that having him there and extending his term was very important and bringing in Finland and Sweden will add a strength and I think we're moving in the right direction for NATO

### **Mary Kissel**

itself. I want to bring in Alex Gray, Alex, we're so used to talking about these nations as individual threats. We've got a Russia problem, we have a China problem, we have an Iran problem. Bad guys all talk to each other. Is it really the right way to think about it to say, well, we need to focus on one or the other. Aren't they all part of a larger problem that we're confronting.

### **Alex Gray**

And I think you know, there's there's certainly some macro trends that we've got to think about. The one thing I would say, and I think bridge has made this point. Well now in the past is that you look at what is the US interest in Europe right now and the US interest in my estimation is to get out of Europe to manage the security environment in such a way that we can turn our attention to the Indo Pacific and NATO is the tool that will allow us to do that, in my view. And I've Ambassador O'Brien and I called in the Wall Street Journal not long ago, before the Ukraine invasion. For Finland and Sweden to join NATO precisely because it would be a bulwark against Russian imperialism, it would be a burden sharing mechanism that would let us pivot to the Indo Pacific but the more that NATO is burden sharing, the better it is for our number one geostrategic priority, which is Asia, in my estimation, so my real question, I'd love to hear what the group has to say about this, especially those who have really studied Alliance architecture is what are the lessons of how NATO works and how NATO has operated over its history for what we're trying to do in the Indo Pacific? You know, right now, we don't have a formal alliance structure. We have the quad we have individual security alliances, bilateral security alliances, mutual security treaties, but what have we learned that is you know, that can be taken from from the NATO example and transferred to the Indo Pacific. What have we learned that we don't want to replicate? And how how is how are the lessons of that 75 plus year history applicable to the the conflict the confrontation with China?

## **Mary Kissel**

That's a great set of questions. I'm gonna bring in Secretary Pompeo just because I know that he dealt with those formal structures like NATO, but also those informal structures like the quad and also Mr. Secretary, correct me if I'm wrong, but you also had a different flexible group that included the likes of Brazil talking to India, and some nations in Asia. You could address Alex's question there, sir. We'd love to have your thoughts.

## **Secretary Mike Pompeo**

Two things one, you know, we've talked about NATO as a historic matter. We've talked about Southern flanks and northern flanks. I think the world's just changed I get it, I can still read a map. But as as you listen to as the conversation that you can see that it is more complicated than that today. Second, you know, one of the things that that frustrated me and you know, cated and talk about me being jolly all the time, I thought that was fascinating. But one of the things that was frustrating so you had this consensus organization, right, we need everybody and it turns out that over 70 years, that's probably the right solution. For organizations that are security related predominantly, so think DOD, and state even to a second secondary degree. You need everybody to have had the chance to say their piece before they are committed because they will be asked to do things that no one contemplates when they joined during the program. Just just as Matt was talking about Afghanistan being the first use of Article Five, I promise you when this was all brought together at the end of the 1940s, no one was thinking about counterterrorism and Tora Bora just right. This is not some but every member was in every member had signed off on it. And so no one could say, well, that's not my deal. I was remember me I was against that. So as you think about these other organizations, you have to tolerate the diversity. Second thing is a lesson that flows from that is one of the benefits that NATO has had is there was a pretty homogenous set of values when it arose in these places. And as you move away from that, as you move away from governmental structures that are different from the ones that are currently in that particular group, whichever one you sign up for, you will find that that will be even more cumbersome and you're more likely to face risk of defections that actually prevent you from achieving the organization's and the last one is the one that Mary was referring to. Under the auspices of COVID. I brought together a group Mary remind me maybe 10 countries, they were it was a unique collection, and it wasn't all of the European countries. But we used something that everybody had a shared set of understandings around and frankly needed the United States support on we used COVID as a chance to bring them together that provided air cover for their diplomats. They could say Oh, I'm getting on this call with the Israelis. I'm getting on this phone call with the Brazilians. We provide a cover for action, something I learned as a CIA director. And we could over time and we did over time, well, the last 1415 months. We did

overtime, expand the conversation, to the things that I was really trying to drive that group. I think we in the end, we had 35 or 40% of the world's GDP as part of the group. And we began to talk about things that were broader and we they were these were foreign ministers that were on the phone or on the conference call. who weren't, didn't speak to each other regularly had never met each other outside of passing in the hallway at the UN General Assembly in the fall of each year. And we began to get a cohesion and a normative set of understandings about how that group would respond to things in a way that laid the foundation for something that had we had to grab them to do something really important and really difficult. We wouldn't have had Article Five to fall back on we wouldn't have had a collective agreement that we could point to, but I think we increase the likelihood that the group of nations would more readily come together around an important matter. And so, to your point, Alex, I think those are all important components of how you think about putting together groups of nations around a CRS set of interests, even when you had folks on the you had foreign ministers on the phone that couldn't even travel to each other's countries. And and so I think that was useful as a construct to begin to think about how we are going to confront the Chinese Communist Party as we all move forward together, and NATO will be a bulwark, and given the capacity for the United States to turn its attention and focus to that all important matter.

### **Mary Kissel**

We've got about 10 minutes left in the seminar and I want to make sure that we get all of the members in Oregon Ortagas. You're very deeply involved in US politics, you have a great sense of what's going on on the ground. We've got a it seems like a pretty broad consensus here that we like NATO. We want it to continue something we should expand quickly. Some don't. Do you sense that same commitment among the US public that support for NATO and endeavors like this?

### **Morgan Ortagus**

You know, I think it's interesting. That's a great question, Mary. It's interesting because one of the things that surprised me about some recent polling is that for me, Afghanistan and our terrible withdrawal last August, where we saw 13 of our best that perished, you know, and just in a manner that Minette Shouldn't they should not have that really resonated with me and, and and stuck with me and the American people and I think that was a turning point in the Biden presidency. Fast forward to Russia invading Ukraine, all the polling that I'm looking at. I'm actually seeing that it is permeating the American psyche, even more than Afghanistan did. It's making a you know, a bigger difference on Biden and his team. So I say that to say that often we think that the American people aren't necessarily, you know, paying attention to things like NATO and foreign policy and the things that we all care about, but I think if we can make the case

and we can show people, you know, for example, I was just in Ukraine a couple of weeks ago, I was in Lviv working with a group that rescues or friends from the east and the south and the contested areas and get them to the Vive. I did a lot of TV from there, Mary, a lot of different conservative outlets outlets to make the case to the American people that this is why we need to care about this war. Now Secretary Pompeo has said it best on on his interviews when he said this has to be Europe led and I think that's where bridge and I and others have been wildly supportive of NATO critical of where we have been thus far in the Russia Ukraine war because we continue for like every 40 billion we said it's about 2 billion from the Europeans and the Europeans are sending every five weeks they're sending the equivalent of \$40 billion of payments to Russia for their energy. So I love a kumbaya moment. I love all of his talking about how great NATO is and the relationship is and our European partners. But I think that it is not as rosy on the ground. If you're in Ukraine. It's not as rosy on the ground in Europe, I still think that the Europeans have a long way to go and we have to hold them accountable because if they are unwilling to stop Russia in their own backyard, they're not going to be with us on Taiwan and China. There's there's two meetings, a lot of meetings with Secretary Pompeo in 2019 and 2020 stuck out with me but two that I remember very strongly once we were in London, and then once we were in I believe it was Switzerland, when when the leaders that we were speaking with in both countries looked at Secretary Pompeo as we were talking about the threat of the Chinese Communist Party, and basically they both said at very different points in those two years. No one can do this but America, no one can leave but America referring to you know the fight that would be needed. I used the word fight literally well or figuratively and literally I guess that would be needed to be undertaken against the Chinese Communist Party. So I do think that the American people are paying attention to this. I think they are concerned when they start to see the images that we've all seen a world war two movies come to life, right in Europe. I mean, it's it's pretty surreal to see these images that you know, our world war two generation that we see in movies now on the streets of Europe. So I think we need to continue to make the case to the American people why it matters. I think they're with us. But I think simultaneously we have to keep pressure on the Europeans both public and both private and I think the best case is that you have someone like Mike Pompeo and Robert O'Brien combined with Ambassador Hutchinson, you have good cop and bad cop and that seemed to be a pretty winning combo in the Trump administration.

### **Mary Kissel**

Bridge Colby. You had one last follow up and then we're going to bring it back to our special guests in our co chairs bridge.

### **Elbridge Colby**

Thanks, Mary. And I wanted to build on on Morgan's really excellent point and just sort of the realism of it because I do think that's where we need to, to be thinking in our heads and the strategic reality and also what Alex said about the severity of the problem and the need to to shift focus. But I think there's sort of two things that come to mind for me, and I think that if we tap into that kind of Nixon legacy, I mean, one is what Secretary Pompeo I think was suggesting is focus NATO on its core mission, right. I mean, an alliance that that I mean, the downside is it's unwieldy, but the thing that binds it together is ultimately a security and defense alliances for the North Atlantic area and European area at this point. And that, you know, if there are countries with different political systems and legacies and so forth, you know, there was Greece and Portugal and so forth within the Alliance during the Cold War. That's part and parcel a deal. It's a military lines, so make sure it does its part and if a country says, Well, I give a lots of development, that ain't the same thing. Countries need to step up. And that's both strategically necessary. I think the Morgans point. It's also politically necessary for the sustainability of these organizations, that the Europeans and particularly the Germans and others really do step up. And then I would say again, picking a page from the Nixon legacy is sort of make the alliances and coalition's fit for purpose. D is the term that was being used. I mean, the downside of over NATO wising, everything is you know, we forget about the other eight toes that were created, Seto and cento and stuff that fell apart. And I think in the context of Asia, trying to create a NATO like structure, there would probably be a bad idea. We'd be better off focusing on the bilateral and kind of multilateral organizations, but instead really focusing on getting countries to pull their way particularly Taiwan and Japan. Maybe the Australians netting together the South Koreans taking the China threat more seriously, but I think again, it's about helping them be fit for purpose and sort of focused on what they're supposed to do, and not getting kind of lost in some of the extraneous things. And then similarly, in the Middle East, you know, you've got the Abraham accords that somebody to work with, it's focused on a counter Iranian edge, you know, anti hegemonic revolution. Work with that. That's what's available. So I mean, I think that's the kind of model to answer Alex's question and building on some of the earlier comments that I would I would suggest as the way to go.

### **Mary Kissel**

Okay, we're gonna turn it back over to the co chairs for some final thoughts and then we'll have Ambassador Hutchison. Wrap it up for us. Let's go first. To Ambassador O'Brien.

### **Ambassador Robert C. O'Brien**

Thank you, Mary. And let's I want to focus on this Finland and Sweden issue for just a moment. I think that Senator Hutchinson and and John didn't get it absolutely right.



We've got an incredibly capable set of countries there. And what we tried to do in the Trump administration was move some of our troops from Germany to Asia Pacific and also move some of those troops out of Germany into Poland. I think both of those were pressure moves, and I think Finland allows us to do that. But I think and Sweden joining NATO allows us to move some of those troops immediately to places like Guam, the Aleutian Islands, Hawaii even if we want to keep buying US territory. Number two, look, Gigi ping is using pay is watching what is going on right now. And he saw Putin invade Ukraine, hoping that he'd drive a wedge into NATO. Instead, he got a more unified data and now he's gonna get an expanded data with Sweden, Finland, obviously detrimental highly detrimental to the Russians. And he's got to be thinking about that if I invade Taiwan. What happens with a quad the quad become a mini NATO or an official alliance that has military capability, but South Korea which started making noises about joining the quad joint I'm here in France, the French officials are talking about trying to get involved in the quality of the problem. Obviously axis would be problematic for him. So she's in pain is watching NATO become stronger as a result in the invasion. The last thing he wants to do is see a stronger alliance system in the Indo Pacific as a result of an invasion of Taiwan. So I think the the outcome of the NATO enlargement is gonna be important in deterring him. The final point I'll make that Kay talked about and Mike talked about, paid always being jolly. But Mike, you'll remember we had a I think it was almost an all night negotiating session with President Erdogan and his team. And I think September of 2019. It was tough sledding, we saved I think in that night about 8000 of our Kurdish allies, literally, you know, on satphones with with the Secretary's team, welcome pastor Jeffries and Satterfield mothers, calling gentle Muslim and getting those those troops extricated and, and evacuated. I think we saved a lot of Turkish lives as well because we we stopped they would have a pretty terrible battle in in northern Turkey. And the Secretary played a key role in making that happen. And so I think at the end of the day, even in the most difficult circumstances, the Turks can be negotiated with they are part of NATO. And I think, you know, with some some tough diplomacy, I think we can get over their objections that Kay laid out with the YPG and PKK. And, and the other groups that they that we would hear about quite regularly, and I think we can't get the Turks over their objections and encourages enlargement. And, again, I think it sends a real terrific message to Beijing where they're choosing pain as the biggest audience for what's happening in Britain right now. Thank you.

**Mary Kissel**

Thank you, Miss. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Secretary Pompeo, final thoughts.

**Secretary Mike Pompeo**

I don't have much to add other than NATO needs to focus on its core mission needs to be ready for these times. And the United States is going to depend on the European

countries, largely the big economies inside of Europe to drive that process. And when they do when they get that done well, we will be able to focus on these, these other priorities that the American people are going to ultimately demand that we prioritize. We need NATO to actually deliver against its promise set in 2022 and 2025, such that America continue to focus on the things that we are certain to confront as the years proceed.

### **Mary Kissel**

Thank you, sir. Ambassador Hutchinson, we need NATO to deliver will it deliver in your experience? Final thoughts?

### **Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison**

No, I think that NATO is going to be the convener of the Western Allies and partners. I think that is going to be their next step. I think that's something that Jens Stoltenberg would like to begin to, so that the Asian leaders are democracies and the NATO leaders that we have, start getting to know each other working together, coordinating and communicating better. And I think that that's going to be important going forward as we confront bigger adversaries. There are a lot of bad guys out there. The other thing I would say is that I think she President Xi of China is going to be watching what our alliances and especially the us really do. Do we lose? Do we say you never mind, as we all did, to be honest about Georgia and Crimea? And I think it is so important that we do has been suggested push our allies to continue not in their interest not to have one partners going out and saying, Well, let's don't humiliate Putin. Are you kidding me? We should be going all out to the Ukraine repel is vicious attack, and she will get that message and she will see lose interest or if we stay strong. So I just appreciate so much, Mary, you. You did with Secretary Pompeo I know you do smile and great personality to I wasn't trying to be mean but I think that the strength that that you show and the strength that we showed is what we need to continue to push for the strength of our alliances and our partners. We have 70 partners when we're all together, we had 70 partners in Afghanistan, our 30 allies and then our partners, that can be a formidable force but America must lead and we must not lose interest. We must stay on course.

### **Mary Kissel**

America must lead. We want to extend our greatest thanks to non Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison, for joining us tonight, as well as our co chair Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador Robert O'Brien in our fantastic seminar members. Many of whom have served in government, the military and you can see them on your television screens. You can hear him on the radio, you can follow him on social media. We encourage you to do all of that. We're going to take a little break this summer before coming back in person at the Nixon library later this year. So check the website for that. We're very

excited that it will be very happy to meet you in person. Then I'm very kissel with the Nixon seminar on conservative realism and national security. Thanks so much for watching. Good night.