

- Speaker 1: At the Brussels Forum. I think the last time I was here, transatlantic relations were boring. And it's great to see all you friends.
- Speaker 1: Now, I promised Karen and the other organizers that I would end this talk on a positive, uplifting note. And I will do so. But first, when I got on a ... right before I got on a plane yesterday to come here, I had just submitted a manuscript to my publisher about the Liberal World Order. And the title of that manuscript is The Jungle Grows Back.
- Speaker 1: And what I mean by that and what I want to talk about today is that the Liberal World Order that we have been living in since 1945 and that many of the nations around this room took part in building, is not a normal situation. It's an historical aberration. If you think about the many qualities, or the key qualities of that Order and compare it to all the rest of history, certainly recorded history and I imagine going back much beyond that, each one of these elements is unique.
- Speaker 1: So for instance, what we all know, the spread of democracy, it's been a democratic era. There are, you know, 100 democracies or more today. And there have been growing numbers of democracies ever since the beginning of the Order. If you go back through history, of course, there are almost no democracies. It's almost like when democracies appear, it's an accident. So this is an entirely different period than anything we've seen before in that regard.
- Speaker 1: Also in terms of prosperity, the kind of growth that we've seen since 1945 sort of in the neighborhood of four percent annually global GDP growth. Well, I mean, you know, global GDP growth throughout history was roughly zero. Most people have lived in extreme poverty. Most people have lived under tyrannies.
- Speaker 1: And finally, most people have lived in eras when the great powers, or empires, or states were almost in constant warfare. War is the norm in human history, not peace. And in this period, we've certainly had wars, but we haven't had the kind of great power conflicts, the wars among the great powers that throughout history have caused so much destruction, especially in the first half of the 20th Century.
- Speaker 1: So all these things and others make this Liberal Order not only unique, but as I say, an aberration. It's not the norm. And yet because of the great success that we had in this period, a lot of it was masked by the Cold War, which in my view historically is a kind of side show to the development of this Liberal Order, if you think in terms of historical significance.
- Speaker 1: But the Order was so successful, and we are such children of the enlightenment that we came to believe that all these things were not an aberration, but rather a new norm. The consequence of human progress. The inevitable evolution of human kind toward better behavior. If you read people like Steven Pinker today, it's just as ... we're just better. We're just better people than in the past.

Speaker 1: And I think we lost sight of what it took to create this International Order and what an act of defiance of history and even defiance of human nature in many respects this Order has been. We like to think, and we convinced ourselves, and this was the theme of the end of history, which, you know, it wasn't just Frank Fujiyama who thought that, that human beings naturally aspire to recognition and respect for their rights and their freedoms. And that ultimately if these things continue to play out, that democracy is the end point of human history.

Speaker 1: I think today we can see what we should have known all along, which is that's an incomplete description of human existence. Human nature contains many aspirations, many fears, many dark sides. And at various times, human beings are at least as prone in times of insecurity, and not just physical insecurity, but cultural insecurity, human beings are at least as prone to want to seek strong leadership. To exclude the other, to revert to tribe, family, and nationalism.

Speaker 1: Human beings have spiritual needs, which as we all know, for all the great things that liberalism and democracy do, they don't answer a lot of the questions and needs that human beings have. And so what we really are dealing with, and have always dealt with, is an ongoing struggle within the human soul between these competing impulses. And how that's struggle turns out depends very much on the kind of global situation, the national situation, that exists in which people operate.

Speaker 1: Similarly, that we ever convinced ourselves as we did, especially here in Europe, that geopolitic ... geopolitical competition was something that was in the past, and now it was all about geo-economics, and now it was about international institutions and cooperation. I'm sorry that the nature of the international system in normal times is one of constant geopolitical competition.

Speaker 1: So we took as a new norm what was really a very strange, unusual set of circumstances that - and I want to emphasize this - we have had created, we created the circumstances in which this Order could take place. And now I apologize in advance, I'm about to say positive things about the United States. Plan A Guard as Churchill said.

Speaker 1: The United States played, after World War II, the central role in making this Order, in laying the foundations for this Order. It did so in cooperation with others. It was vitally important that other peoples participate. But it was the ability of the United States after World War II essentially to put an end to two major cycles of conflict in the two most critical parts of the world. Europe and East Asia.

Speaker 1: Ever since the late 19th Century and the unification of Germany, there had been an almost endless cycle of conflict in Europe. And similarly, ever since the Meiji Restoration and the growth of Japan to become a major power, it led to continual conflict.

Speaker 1: And what the United States was able to accomplish ... and really, it was able to accomplish it because it had a unique capacity to do so. Its geographical situation, its wealth, the fact that it did not have to worry about attacks from its near neighborhood allowed it to deploy large quantities of its troops overseas permanently. And thereby, put a cork in these conflicts.

Speaker 1: And that, in my view, set up the possibility for everything that we see. It's not that the United States did it. It's that the United States created the opportunity for it. The fact that Japan and Germany were taken ... basically gave up traditional geopolitical ambitions and channeled their energy into economic growth and economic success, the betterment of their own people.

Speaker 1: Because the military option that had gotten them and everybody else in so much trouble had been denied them, that created in those regions the possibility for everyone ... it liberated everyone, including the Germans and Japanese, and also their neighbors to focus on non-traditional activities like simply economic growth without having to worry about the military struggles that had constantly plagued them in the past.

Speaker 1: And this was a critical factor in making this possible, making this amazing Order possible. And unfortunately, this is, at least on the American side, what has been increasingly drifting away as the goal of American foreign policy. And I know we're obsessed with Trump. I certainly am obsessed with Trump. But this isn't just a problem of Trump.

Speaker 1: The role ... and I think this needs to be emphasized. The role that the United States took on after World War II was unlike any role that any nation in history had ever taken on. Partly out of sense of self-interest, but then I would say out of a sense of enlightened self-interest, the United States took on global responsibilities. I don't want to overstate the wonderfulness of America, the mistakes that we made everyone knows about.

Speaker 1: But the one thing we continued to do throughout that period was to take international responsibility for maintaining peace and security and this ... and underpinning this Order. It was a big and unusual load to carry. And I think, unfortunately, even though the original impetus had nothing to do with the Cold War, it was pre-Soviet Union when the United States set out on this task, because they were thinking about preventing what had happened in the past.

Speaker 1: Nevertheless, people associated it with a Cold War. And when the Cold War ended, Americans decided increasingly ... or they asked why in the world do they have to continue bearing this unusual, abnormal burden. You know, Jean Kirkpatrick, at the end of the Cold War said it was time for the United States to behave as a normal nation.

Speaker 1: Normal nations don't have global responsibilities. They have much narrower definitions of their interests. And I would say beginning with the end of the Cold

War, you can see increasing lack of enthusiasm for playing this role in every Presidency. Every Presidency had to begin by assuring the American people that they weren't going to be thinking about foreign policy. They were going to be thinking about domestic policy.

Speaker 1: And then of course, Iraq and Afghanistan were the catalysts to sort of tip the consensus over, what had been the consensus. And I think that President Obama was the first post-consensus President. He rightly believed he was elected to off-load this responsibility as much as-

Bob Kagan: ... Did to offload this responsibility as much as possible. The fact that Donald Trump could even be elected, absurd as that is, at least shows you how little the American people cared about whether the United States continued to play this role. They found his messages that we wouldn't, that the liberal order was not in America's interest, compelling. If you look at the 2016 election, only one candidate stood for the rest of continuing that old role, and she lost. If she had won, I don't know that she could've turned American public opinion around.

Bob Kagan: That is a secular problem that we're dealing with. I believe that it is at least partly responsible for much that has also gone wrong in other parts of the world. I think in so far as the United States looks like a less and less reliable maintainer of this order, it forces other nations to look more to themselves, to protect themselves. No one is capable of stepping in and taking on the American role. No one has the power, the geography, the capability to do so. What they will do and what they are doing is returning to normalcy.

Bob Kagan: I must say, when I look at Europe today, what I see is history and human nature returning. I put tremendous amount of blame on the United States for not putting a lid on the Syria crisis, which then led to this massive immigration flow, which has had such a major impact on European democratic institutions. I think it would be foolish to think that what is happening in Europe could never have happened. In a way, probably it was inevitable, just as the rise of the increasing competitiveness in Russia and China are inevitable, just as I think if you looked at the broad sweep of history, Brexit was inevitable. What could be less surprising than Britain wanting to distance itself from the continent? We are really seeing history and nature reasserting themselves.

Bob Kagan: Let me just end with this note. We can do something about this. We effectively pushed back against history and human nature for seven decades after World War II, and despite what everyone thinks, we still have the capacity to do so. The institutions that we set up after World War II are very potent and durable. It's very hard for China, no matter how rich it is, or Russia, which is not so rich, to undo this system unless we basically allow them to do it. We have the capacity to push back. We just need to understand that the pushing back has to start occurring. We have two modes, it seems to me. We're either absurdly deterministically optimistic that things are just heading in the right direction, all we have to do is sit back and watch. That was essentially the message of the end of history. Or we decide that we're in decline and there's nothing to do but

enjoy the ride down. The truth is, and it's proven by what happened after World War II where the world was in an infinitely more dire situation than it is now, that people can fight back.

Bob Kagan: We all have our jobs to do. We in the United States have to go back to trying to convince the American people and make them understand what the cost of all this is, and Trump may be helping in that regard. He may be in his own way making Americans see that again. In Europe, please be as upset with the Trump administration as you possibly can be and all the stupid things that he's doing which undermine the liberal order's compact, especially on trade, but Europe also must tend to itself, and not just in terms of increasing its strength, but going back and pushing for democratic values here on the continent of Europe. I think we've been far too permissive to countries that have slipped away from democracy, countries that are in NATO, countries that are in the EU. They're allowed to stand up and declare their illiberalism. I think Europe needs to start taking those issues more seriously, as well as dealing with the rest of the panoply. That's my up message. That's the up part of my message. Thank you very much.

Speaker 2: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the president of the German Marshall Fund, Dr. Karen Donfried.

Karen Donfried: Good afternoon, and welcome to everyone to GMF's Brussels Forum. I am so grateful to Bob Kagan for kicking off the 13th edition of GMF's Brussels Forum. Bob, as always, you were incredibly thoughtful and thought provoking. I think this message to all of us, pushing us to push back on things that we don't think are right and things that we think fly in the face of the international order that everybody in this room has contributed to building over the past 70 years is in many ways the theme of this Brussels Forum. I think the responsibility of pushing back does fall to everybody in this room.

Karen Donfried: As you know, you're an amazing group of people. We have folks from the US government, from European governments, we have media representatives, folks from the private sector, folks from think tanks. I was told that all together, we represent 53 countries in this room, which is pretty powerful. We also have a fantastic bipartisan mix of congressional staff and congressional members who are part of this conversation as well. The power in the room is strengthened by participants from our Young Professionals Summit. They are going to help us make sure this debate isn't just among folks in my generation but those of you who are going to be carrying this order forward.

Karen Donfried: I also am really delighted because Richard Lui yesterday said, "Who knows what tomorrow is?" I said, "It's International Women's Day." I am delighted that we are welcoming a record number of women to Brussels Forum this year. You can look and notice that around the room. The fact of the matter is, GMF has always been committed to issues of diversity and gender balance. Women have been making big impact on policy for a long time. If you look at just our agenda today, we have Federica Mogherini, Rose Gottemoeller, Manisha Singh, Ana Gomes,

Susan Ness, Michèle Flournoy, just to name some of those headliners. Women are leading today. I don't know if she's in the room now, but a trailblazer has been Madeleine Albright, and she will be with us over these next couple of days. I just want to make us all aware that today's a special day for a lot of reasons.

Karen Donfried: There are many of you who are here for the first time, some people I don't know, which is great, and there are lots of you who have come to many Brussels Forum. It's wonderful to welcome those of you back. I see Bob Zoellick, who's one of those people. We're glad you're back. I now want to give a special word of thanks to our partners. We couldn't do this without the amazing group of partners that we have. We have our founding partners, Daimler and the Federal Authorities of Belgium, our strategic partner, Deloitte, our foreign partners, Boeing, BP, the Brussels Capital Region, Centrica, Microsoft, and the OCP Policy Center, as well as our associate and dinner partners. Really, without any of these folks, Brussels Forum wouldn't be the success that it is.

Karen Donfried: We also this year, as you're going to see, have an Oxford-style debate on the main stage. Intelligence Squared US is going that with us. We also have Politico as the official digital partner of Brussels Forum. That is the team that makes this all possible. We also this year have a great showing from our GMF trustees. Those trustees are led by the co-chair of our Board of Trustees, Marc Leland. We are all in inspired by his remarkable commitment to GMF. Beyond the board, the people who make the magic happen are my amazing colleagues who are scattered throughout the room. They're really the folks who at the end of the day deserve the credit for Brussels Forum.

Karen Donfried: What are we trying to do at Brussels Forum this year? For those of you who've been here before, the forum, as you know, tries to be a place where diverse voices can be heard, and we can generate some out of the box ideas. The idea behind that is to have transatlantic cooperation flourish. As Bob made clear, flourish is probably not the verb that would leap to mind today when we reflect on transatlantic cooperation. We've tried to mirror some of what's going on in the relationship by reorganizing this room and creating a more intimate setting where we really hope there's a greater sense of conversation.

Karen Donfried: We also think that it's a moment where action is necessary. Of course, action is always necessary, but our sense is that in a time of uncertainty, in a time of growing divisiveness, in a time of distrust, complacency can be fatal. What we'd like to do is play a small part in catalyzing new approaches to the challenges of our time. The feeling is that we cannot afford just to talk, we can't just admire the problems, but that we need to come up with a plan of action. That's the thinking behind this theme of Revise, Reboot, Rebuild: Strategies for a Time of Distrust. Trust is vital to meet any of these challenges. When we think about alliances, of course alliances are based on interests and alliances are based on values, but they're also very importantly based on trust.

Karen Donfried: As we all know from our personal relationships, it's hard to build trust, it takes time to build trust, but it's not very hard to destroy trust. It can just take a series

of ill-considered actions to destroy trust. That was the thinking behind that focus. If we think about trust and where we are today on that score, there's so many challenges. There's a loss of trust in our institutions, loss of trust in our politics, in our leaders ...

Speaker 1: ... For institutions. Loss of trust in our politics, in our leaders, in our democracy. And that's shaking the core of that liberal order that Bob spoke so eloquently about, and the U.S. role in that order.

Speaker 1: And so how do you build trust? You build trust through understanding, through cultural exchange, through art, through food, through shared experience. And so one of the other things you'll see this year, is that we want to try to give some of that experience to you. So we're incorporating more experiential dinners, greater problem-solving, deeper dives into the challenges to try to create that here.

Speaker 1: And so my challenge to all of you, is that you use this opportunity, so that when you walk out of the Steigenberger on Saturday afternoon, you're more focused, and have some ideas for concrete action that you can take in your part of this world. To try to rebuild trust and come up with action plans to address these challenges. So that is my message for all of you. That's what we're trying to do here at Brussels Forum this year.

Speaker 1: And with that, I am going to turn the baton over to Richard Lui, who some of you will know. We're lucky at GMF to have Richard as a fellow, he also, of course, is an anchor for MSNBC. And you'll be seeing Richard, not only for the next conversation but throughout Brussels Forum. Because Richard is the one tasked with holding all of us accountable for actively engaging with the challenges we face today, and also for providing concrete strategies for this time of distrust.

Speaker 1: So with that, Richard, please come up.

Richard: Well, we all made it. We're here in Brussels, Belgium, and it's good to be with all of you. I cannot thank you. Bob, great to hear from you, and Karen, thanks again for having me back. And it's always great to be around so many big brains, 'cause I think just by osmosis, I'll get a little smarter, and might be a better journalist along the way. Maybe. Works for some, doesn't work for others.

Richard: So all of you understand what our format is. And that is really to engage, to come up with some action items. Some fix-its. Some solutions to take the theory to the action. That's what makes it so exciting in a place like this. And you understand what the theme is this year, which is Revise, Reboot, Rebuild: Strategies for a Time of Distrust.

Richard: And what we're gonna do, as your facilitator, in between I'll pop-in, and I'll just ask ya, "What'd you come up with so far? What do we got?" And then we'll put it up on the screen and do something exciting with it.

Richard: Who's wearing red in the room? Any reason? IWD. International Women's Day. I went and bought this tie today, I had forgot to get my red. And I knew there was a reason why. And we're talking about very prominent and strong voices on this day, and I could not, of course, be part of the opening without mentioning Karen. Who has been one of those strong voices. So, Karen, big round of applause for Karen.

Richard: We've also got very uniquely this year, we've got four "femals". Anybody know what that is? Have you heard of "manels"? Panels with all men? Well, this year we have four "femals", which means four panels with all women. And look out for them, they're gonna be fantastic.

Richard: So these are sort of my guiding ideas behind what the theme is, right? Which is the R-R-R Strategies. The triple "Rs". First off, anybody seen that new series called, "Ugly Delicious"? All right. "Ugly Delicious" is a Michelin star chef that's decided, "You know what? I'm just gonna make food that may look ugly, but it tastes dog-gone good." So I want us to think about solutions that are ugly food. Solutions that tear down what the constructs might be. The culture that might surround it.

Richard: And so that'll be one way to think about the action steps that we're thinking of today. Also, as a journalist, and there is many esteemed journalists in here, more esteemed than myself. David Ignatius, for instance. Mr. Clemons here as well. And many, many others. Jonathan Capehart. I could go on, and on, and on. We don't like to ask the question, "So what?" So as you're thinking of these solutions, think about. "So what?" How does that make sense? As opposed to it being a nice idea, and very well thought out. "So what?" What does that mean to that person? That everyday person when we ask that, "So what?" And then think of exact action steps. That's what we're gonna do.

Richard: So, with that. I did the very same thing, earlier Tuesday. I'm gonna pull out these little Post-its in here. I got all this stuff in my pockets. The Young Professional Summit, which just finished hours ago, came up with some ideas. Action plans that they would undertake starting Monday. This is the first one. "Bringing sexy TTIP back. Write a blog about promoting free trade between U.S. and Europe." By the way, is that YPSer here? That wrote that. There you go. Thank you.

Richard: And these are some of the pledges they made to undertake starting on Monday. Let me give you another one. Let's go to the next, "What I'm gonna do on Monday tip." You can move the slide forward. There, let's go to this one over here. "I'm going to work with the TILN Alumni Network to organize a transatlantic convening for black women in politics." Rebecca, are you here? Right over there. By the way, TILN stands for "The Transatlantic Inclusion Leadership Network." So that's what Rebecca's gonna do on Monday.



- Richard: I've got another one over here. "Invite all YPS to join the youth Atlantic Treaty Association. John." John, are you here? Great, thank you, John. Don't take that sitting down, right? Those are some of the commitments that they wrote on these Post-its just this morning. And so that's what a practical example of hopefully what we'll all come up together with, are some of these practical examples of what we will do moving forward.
- Richard: Spot me. Danielle went through that very quickly. I've got a question to kick us off. So if you pull out your phones right now, just go with me real fast, that'd be great. This is a word cloud. So Revise, Reboot, Rebuild: Strategies for a Time of Distrust. So what I'd like you to do, this is very 2018, is write a hashtag slogan of the practical action step that is needed to achieve what this year's GMF Brussels Forum theme articulates. So you can make it as long as you like, 'cause it's a hashtag. Just go for it, put it in there. Let's see what you get. You've got 50 seconds to do that.
- Richard: Is that music? Bane, this is new. This is great, we've got thinking music now. You wanna get on up here and do a little jig, you can do that too. We've got some space. All right, so we've got some. Personal. Responsibility. IBCFH. Keep it coming. Hashtag dialogue. Real. Partnership. Action.
- Richard: So as we move forward, verbs, great. Subject verbs and then objects, or adverbs after, great too. But since we're talking about action, let's think that if possible, moving forward. 'Cause we would really like to go through these over the next three days and give them their proper attention.
- Richard: Well, that's great. This is the way we're gonna start. I will ask this very same question as we move forward today, tomorrow, and then on Saturday. So we'll be able to see how our thinking evolves, hopefully.
- Richard: All right, great. Now I would like to introduce you to a video. If you could please give your attention to the screens. This is an introduction to the theme of this year's Brussels Forum.
- Speaker 3: [inaudible 00:33:23]
- Speaker 4: Old challenges remain. Fresh ones have emerged. Newly elected leaders on both sides of the Atlantic have been vocal about shaking up the establishment. Change creates opportunity. It can equally beget uncertainty. Uncertainty has deepened into distrust. Distrust within, and between nations. Distrust with all too real consequences. Government, business, the media, our fellow citizens. People no longer know where to look for truth and leadership. What seemed solid is now crumbling.
- Speaker 4: We must work together to directly confront the challenging world we find ourselves in today. We need to seek solutions, rather than aggravate volatile situations. We need to analyze the breakdown of trust within and between

societies. And find new ways to build strong partnerships and networks that support democratic ideals.

Speaker 4: Do we need to examine our thinking? What is our strategy to revise, reboot, and rebuild for a time of distrust?

Richard: And to kick off our conversations at this Brussels Forum with that very theme, I'd like us all to please give a warm, warm welcome to Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Richard: Madam High Representative, exciting times, is it not?

Speaker 5: Sure. It is.

Richard: Yes, absolutely, okay.

Speaker 5: They're not getting boring.

Richard: Not at all. And-