Karel V.: Yesterday we heard a lot of things about foreign and security policy. Today, day two kicks off with a very special discussion on race, equality, and cultural identity, values that are very important to the transatlantic relationship. I'm delighted that both our panelists here are connected to GMF, very closely connected to GMF, and they're going to discuss how our liberal democracies across the Atlantic space are being challenged.

Karel V.: Right here is Mitch Landrieu. He's a newly mentored board member at GMF. He's also a book author and many of you know him as the former mayor of New Orleans. He also was lieutenant governor of the great state of Louisiana, and he's still continuing his public service. He recently established a nonprofit called E Pluribus Unum, which looks at questions of race and equity and economic growth in the American south.

Karel V.: Then we have Samira Rafaela. She was a participant in GMF's Transatlantic Inclusion Leadership Network in 2016, and we all have to offer her congratulations because she's won her election and she's an incoming EU parliamentarian. So congratulations Samira. So, enjoy the discussion and I am now going to pass over to our able moderator, Karl from [inaudible 00:01:26].

Karl: Hello. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I hope you had good night's sleep. Let's dive into the conversation. In the midst of times in which elections are won on the basis of cultural identity or rather on the basis of fear for those who seem to be threatening cultural identity, in times when all demons are coming back center stage, we have two guests here confronting the politics of identity with the politics of inclusion. They have both their stories to tell. Let's go into your story Mitch, because I was wondering while reading your book, what happened to you in these years when you became mayor. You were in the midst of a huge task of reconstructing, and suddenly your most arduous task became the confrontation of the past. What happened to you? What happened to society that the past turned up with such fierce force?

Mitch L.: Good morning everybody. Thank you for that question. You're going to find this peculiar, but when you were asking me that, I saw my mother's face god, "What happened to you son?" As you know, I served as a lieutenant governor in Louisiana after Katrina hit. All of you remember the pictures of the city of New Orleans, you gashed at the possibility of losing a great American city. The pictures, which I think shocked a lot of people in the world that there were that many poor people who had been dislocated and dispossessed by something that was a weather event, but also an infrastructure failure. The city languished for years. I then became the mayor. We had to rebuild the entire city.

Mitch L.: As we were rebuilding the city, because it was structurally gone, we had to think about how to build the city back. Naturally the inclination is to always after natural disasters, or man made disasters, or war, to put it back just like it was. That's essentially a mistake, almost all the time. We had to ask ourselves, "What will we be building back?" and we decided as members of our city, not to build

the city back the way it was, because as much as we love the city of New Orleans, as much as it's one of the world's great beautiful architectural gems, music gems, food gems, and also cultural gems that represent the diversity of the world, that we had to look at ourselves and realize that we had gotten a lot of things wrong. So we didn't want to put the city back the way it was. We wanted to put it back the way it should have been had we gotten it right the first time.

Mitch L.: So, while we were going through the exercise of reconstructing physical buildings, designing them in the right way, we also had to deal with some of our really difficult issues. One of the deep divides in America has been our nation's original sin, which is race. So the city of New Orleans, not withstanding the fact that she is a miraculously wonderful city, is also the place where we sold the most human beings into slavery in the United States of America, and standing in the middle of our most prominent circle. It'd be kind of like outside of this hotel was a statue to a confederate general whose mission it was, was to divide the United States of America and destroy it, as it was known at the time, for the cause of preserving the institution of slavery, which just seemed to be so idiosyncratic and so not in keeping with what New Orleans actually was.

Mitch L.: Because our ethos, not only in New Orleans, because we thought we were a good representation of it in modern America, that everybody comes to the table of democracy as equals, and that diversity is a strength. It occurred to us that those monuments were actually historical lies and didn't reflect who we ever had been. So we had to make a really tough decision to say, "This is who we're going to be gone forward because we do think inclusion is important," and there was no way for young African American men or women, or other folks, to look at that monument in any other way, because that monument was on public property and it was representing a view of the government, and say that that monument was representative of who we were supposed to be as Americans. So we decided to take them down.

Karl: But as a young man, you passed these monuments for thousands of times without looking at them, without thinking about them. What made you aware so much that you had to go to battle?

Mitch L.: It's a great question. A very good friend of mine smacked me on the back of the head. That's essentially what happened. Well, you all will know him, you'll think I'm name dropping, but he actually is a childhood friend. His name is Wynton Marsalis, who's one of the greatest musicians that the world has known, but essentially, he's also a great historian and music is his medium. If you ever listen to him talk, he'll give you a great exposition on how jazz music actually formed and represents democracy about as well as anything in the world. Out of many, one, different forms of music from different cultures coming together to create something new and better than was ever there before, essentially is what his theory of jazz music was.

Mitch L.: We were talking one day because I had asked him to help me curate the 300th anniversary of New Orleans, which was going to take place in 2018. So in 2014, I was having this conversation with him and he checked me, as the mayor of the city, he said, "You know," he said, "I'll help you do that, but I want you to do something for me." I said, "What do you want?" He says, "I want you to take the monument of Robert E. Lee down."

Mitch L.: Now, anybody who's a politician that's got a half a wit knows that he just said, "I want you to go to war," and I went, "Oh hell no! You know what? Why? Why do you want me to do that?" He said to me, like a good friend does, who pierced my consciousness, he said, "Well, have you ever thought about that monument from my Wynton's perspective? A young African American kid?" Then he said to me, "Louis Armstrong left this city because of that."

Mitch L.: Now when he told me that, what also happened was that my consciousness, which was aware of something, really kind of came flushing forward, which is I was fully aware of the great diaspora that occurred in the south after slavery ended, when African Americans in the south, and other people of good conscience, fled because it was inhospitable to people of different races, creeds, colors, national origin, sexual orientation. So the talent, raw material, raw talent, intellectual capital, fled to south, and we have suffered for it tremendously ever since because the notion back then was not that diversity was a strength. That it was a weakness and that only certain people could do certain things and other people were superior to others. That notion throughout our life, throughout history, wherever it occurs on our earth, is a bad notion that needs to get put down. The reason it's so compelling today is because that notion is beginning to resurrect itself again and cannot be resurrected anywhere in the world without challenge.

Mitch L.: So you heard General Allen talk about this yesterday in the context of white nationalism, white supremacy, and climate change. When climate change is going to force 100 million on the high side and 50 million on the low side to start moving from where they are to other places, our immigration is threatening, and all the things, and then people are afraid of each other because of how they look, what their politics is, who they love. You're going to have an intense social deterioration that is anathema to us being a peaceful society.

Mitch L.: So I crunched a lot into that, but make a long story short, it became apparent to me really early that this was one of the steps that the country had to take in the south, in the United States, to do our part to make sure that we lived up to what America's ideals were. Because we talk a good game, we don't always walk the walk, but we always hold ourselves accountable, and this was a step towards doing that.

Karl: Now looking at the statistics of New Orleans, a mayor has quite a task there. Half of the black men is unemployed. One in two black children lives in poverty. You would think attacking a symbol is one of the lesser worries.

Mitch L.: Yeah, didn't you? You're right. Yeah. It was really interesting because essentially it's just a piece of stone and metal, and you would think that taking one down would be easy, but it wasn't. We scratched really, really deeply and people were very threatened by this notion that somehow we were taking something away that was so incredibly important. The message that I gave to the people is we're not taking anything away. We're actually opening up, adding value, and giving people a great opportunity to have a better history going forward.

Mitch L.: So, when you asked me, "How did you walk by that monument every day and not understand it?" We actually do this every day in our lives, because we're so worried about feeding our kids, going to work. We walked by symbols of institutional racism and actual institutions of racism throughout our entire life and we don't change them, and even people of goodwill who were not necessarily aggressive overt racists, are not really tuned into the kinds of things in United States African Americans are burdened with it that other individuals are not. I think our country has to think about those and we have to redesign them because they were designed this way, and it's a mission, I'll just speak for my country, that we in America have to work through.

Mitch L.: I think it is clearly true in other countries as well because hatred, or the seed of hatred, is nurtured everywhere, and those are the things that lead to war. Those are the things that lead to famine. Those are the things that lead to some people having and other peoples not having. In liberal democracies, the essential element is that we all come to the table as equals, and every human being has great dignity and great worth and great value and should add to rather than take away from. That's essentially why I think many people responded to it because it was a universal conflict that has not yet been resolved.

Karl: Were you shocked by the kind of emotions that erupted once you started taking this monument down?

Mitch L.: No. I wasn't shocked by it because I basically lived it my entire life.

Karl: So you were aware of how culturally embedded racism is?

Mitch L.: Yeah. No, I wasn't shocked by it. I was a little surprised by how hard it was because I thought we were more ready, but I wasn't surprised by it. I expected fully for people to be very angry and very frustrated because our nation hasn't yet ... the United States of America has not gone through race the way, for example, Germany has tried to repair the damage that it did as a result of The Holocaust, that South Africa has functionally walked through it. We in the United States kind of just go around it and go over it, go under it. We talk about it from time to time, but we never really in a disciplined way say, "We're going to get to the other side."

Mitch L.: My strong feeling and recommendation from our fellow countrymen is to let's have that talk now because it's better on the other side actually. It's not good in the space that we're in, and it certainly was terrible in the space that came before. So I think it's part of us growing up. We're still a very young country, historically speaking. Please.

Samira R.: It goes, of course, really deep, because this is also about really strong emotions. It's about recognition. People wanted to be recognized for their history and also for their pain and for their struggles. So it goes really deep.

Karl: It's interesting that you mentioned Germany, because we can cross to Europe. In Europe we tend to think that we've got racism more or less behind us and only slightly last decade we start to realize that we have to confront it yet. One of the interesting things is that just the other day this week on the front pages of the newspapers in the Netherlands, there was this Dutch study on the economics of slavery. It used to be thought that slavery hardly contributed to the Dutch economy. Now there was a rework and rethink of the economy. In 1770, in the high days of slavery, 5% of the GDP of the Dutch republic was based on slavery and even 10% of the GDP of the province of Holland, the richest province. This was staggering figures. How come that we have to wait till 2019 to make this economic analysis?

Samira R.: That's what I also meant with it's about really strong emotions and it's really, really time that people are being recognized for, again, for their history, for their personal history, for the impact of that history, for the impact of ... it's also for what happened and the effect of that. It's 2019 and to be honest, I think that's really late. It only makes it more difficult to discuss these emotions, to discuss these pains. I'm glad that we started to talk about it because it's really necessary because we see the negative effects of that. We see that it also leads to polarization. We see that it leads to people not understanding each other. We see that it leads to segregation. We see that it leads to conflict and people not talking to each other anymore.

Samira R.: So it is really, really the time now to speak about it openly, that we give recognition to that and that we understand why this part of history was so hurtful, because we see generations now growing up in our society that got that part of history also in the way they grew up. They heard the stories, they still see the pain. They still feel the pain even though they are that part of the younger generation like I am. It's really time to start talking about it, and the impact of that.

Karl: The debate in Europe seems to be heating up on the statues of colonialism and slavery that are related to the statues of Leopold here in Belgium. Why is it that each debate in each of these cases in different countries is so heated and creates such a division of not understanding, "Don't touch history. Don't rewrite history," people say that?

Samira R.: Well, again, because we started very late with the debate, with the dialogues about this. But there's also something really ... I noticed something really uncomfortable with the confrontation itself. So I noticed that when we want to start discuss the position of others in terms of respect, in terms of security, or in terms of also social security, then there is something really uncomfortable the moment we do that because instead of trying to understand and trying to listen to that, most of the time people respond really defensive. That is exactly the kind of behavior that will not work out in a positive way.

Samira R.: So it's really time that also, like for example in education, in schools, but also in the workplace, we start to work on methods that can make these kind of conversations more easily. But the confrontation is really needed and there's something uncomfortable with the confrontation now. Again, that leads to polarization, that leads to conflict. So, we need to put pressure on that, but there's also responsibility for politicians, for example, to facilitate that dialog, to not back down or to not move away from that conversation.

Karl: Should you go into confrontation each time that you see this racism popping up?

Samira R.: Yes.

Karl: [inaudible 00:17:29] you will turn to it in a minute, but ...

Samira R.: Of course we need to confront that. Again, there's a role for politicians, for example. There's a role for people working in government but also in civil society to facilitate these discussions and these dialogues.

Karl: Can I turn to your personal experience? What creates more strain in Dutch society: the fact that you're a woman of color or that you're a Muslim? What is most makes people create this unease that clearly is in society if you look at the election results?

Samira R.: Well, I mean, again, because some topics are painful to discuss, but I believe that we really need to discuss them. We need to do the confrontation in a really ... it can be in an effective way, it can be in a respectful way, but you need people who are either setting it on their agenda, or who dare to discuss this. In my personal opinion, the reason that I wanted to enter politics, I already said from a really young age, "I want to enter politics." I grew up with a father who is from Ghanaian and Nigerian roots, a Muslim man, and a mother who is Jewish, Dutch, and Caribbean. So I grew up with a lot of cultures and religions. But it also showed me, I mean, I have a personal history, the Jewish side, but also the personal history of my African and Caribbean grandparents and great grandparents.

Samira R.: So, I have a personal history that is about recognition, that is about justice, that is about asking for justice and recognition. On a really young age, it made me

aware that equal opportunities are not there for everyone. So that was for me the most important reason to enter politics, and I also saw that there's a lack of representation, good representation, that there's a lack of diversity, for example, in politics. That is exactly needed to, for example, discuss these kind of subjects to make sure that we have many people with many backgrounds bringing in different perspectives or that can explain why some things are hurtful are really needed to discuss. So, again, for me that's one of the most important reasons to enter politics, to also facilitate these kind of dialogues.

Karl: How do you do that in concrete terms because you say, "It's my reason to go into politics just to confront radical extremism."? How do you do that?

Samira R.: Well, first of all, entering politics, stepping forward, that's really important, and especially I experienced myself that being young, a woman of color, that it's really needed that you also need an environment that supports you in that. The necessity of role models is really, really necessary, and people who believe in you. So that's the first step. Then entering politics, it's really important that you know what your ambition is. So I know that I want to enter politics to fight extremism indeed, to confront people with that. To make sure that also subjects are being put on the agenda that are also really important for the communities I come from for example, because I can understand that, because I grew up with it. I grew up with the knowledge and I believe that the future of politics is really grassroots.

Samira R.: We need to be involved with communities. We need to be involved with people. We need to have the dialogue, we need to listen more, because politicians, we are really good in talking as you can notice, but it's also really important that we learn how to listen, and that we also make sure that we bring that back to the table where, for example, legislation is being made, where for example policies being made. Therefore, you need diversity. You need different people with different backgrounds coming from the communities, bringing that back to the table, and do something with that.

Karl: Crucial issue for the [inaudible 00:21:54] is of course, how to win elections with that. Let's turn to a chapter on politics. May I turn to what you say on Trump and Trump in politics?

Mitch L.: May I make a comment about what she just said?

Karl: Of course.

Mitch L.: She just crystallized for you the reason why this is important. You are Muslim, you have Jewish heritage. Years ago, she, if she was in the United States, would have been sold into slavery. Today, Donald Trump wouldn't let her in the country. Many, many years ago, if your heritage as being Jewish was real, you may have been executed, and she would have never been or disappeared. So when you say, "Well, why did you take the monuments down?" Well, if my job

as the leader of a city is to have a city and to care for everybody, ought to raise up the future, ought to do justice, well, I mean, here it is. She would have never ever been elected to anything, and not only would that have been unjust and unfair for her, we would have lost her spectacular intellect and talent. My question to the world is, how many people have we lost? How many wars have we fought because we have thought that some of us were better than others? That's just that simple.

Mitch L.: So as we're sitting in this event, I know we're talking about justice and we're talking about people having the right to be seen because it's fair for them to do so, but think about it from a national security perspective. Ask yourself whether or not these are the reasons why we have the kinds of conflicts that actually resolved in many, many, many human beings being killed over time. What's happening today, which is so dangerous, which in my mind is a national security threat, both at home and abroad, let me start at home.

Mitch L.: For some reason, President Trump never tweets out much when a white guy picks up a gun and kills a whole bunch of people. Doesn't say much about it. But if it is a person of color, or if they have Muslim heritage, they are tagged with being a terrorist, and we don't call it domestic terrorism. If you're the mayor of a major American city, and you get called and said, "24 people just got shot in a playground," or in a theater or et cetera, for some reason, people go to sleep on that as though that's not something that threatens domestic tranquility. It does, and when the impetus is raised, like it was in Charlottesville, when there was terrorism and somebody ran over somebody else because they didn't like the way they looked or because they didn't like their political philosophy, that's a huge challenge.

Mitch L.: Then what then tends to happen, and you said this a minute ago, you said, "Well, in Europe we thought we were past race." In the United States we did as well. We thought we were past populism and nationalism that gave rise to autocratic rulers, but I know that you all feel across the world. That's fermenting itself in nations all over the place, so this just isn't an American problem, because hatred and the seed of hatred has been with us forever, and when it begins to raise its head, yes, you must confront and say, "That seed is going to produce bad fruit." If we continue to let it go on abated and we don't challenge it: we don't challenge it rhetorically, we don't challenge it from a policy perspective, we don't call it off for what it is, it's not just a matter of justice, although that's a critically important part. It's not just a matter of liberty. It's about social cohesion and it's about our personal security.

Mitch L.: When in history we have allowed it to flourish and we have not checked it, then we find ourselves in some major, major, major security conflicts that result in death, and that is not good. So not only is it as a matter of justice necessary, as a matter of security, it is as well. We ignore it to our peril. There are lots of signs that not only is it not abating, that actually it's getting a little bit worse at the moment.

Samira R.: Yeah. I totally agree. I can tell from my own experience, I've worked at the Netherlands police in a commissioner staff on inclusion. I can tell that when you don't ... that's why I find it very important that we work on social equality. Also in Europe, also within the European Parliament, we really need to work a strong social Europe, because that's what I and my colleagues will do. We need to do that. That's really because we see that if you don't work on social equality in your society, but I've seen it also from a security perspective at the Netherlands police, that if you don't work at social equality, you will face security issues. I mean, that was also the reason why I did study on radicalization and terrorism and I was really interested in what the causes were of radicalization.

Karl: What did you see there?

Samira R.: What you see is that-

Karl: Were you studying Muslim radicalization or any kind of political radicalization?

Samira R.: No. I studied radicalization and I studied, well, two examples of groups in Europe but also one in Africa where you could really see a strong process of radicalization. There were different causes. Especially social and economic causes. So, the moment that you have social and economic inequality, that hurts the society in a way that people don't think they are being hurt by politics, that people don't feel part of society, that people will find other ways to participate or add negative ways that is not really positive for the development of the society or for security in society. So, it is really important that we work on the fundament, and that is social equality, so that we see that we need to do less with security issues like for example, radicalization. That's why it is again, so important to make sure that our institutions, that politics, but also police forces are diverse so that they can represent the society.

Karl: How did you find the Dutch police? In what state did you find because you're a counsel for national level?

Samira R.: Well, I'm really glad with what the Dutch police is doing right now. They are investing a lot right now in trainings about inclusion. They are looking into specific tools and methods to make sure that, for example, more diverse people are being part of the commissions that select and recruit people. So they're doing a lot about it, but still there needs to be more awareness, but that's not only for the Dutch police forces. So it's also really important that in Europe, police forces will work together and exchange knowledge and ideas about this. So I'm really glad with that, but still there needs to be, of course, more awareness. there needs to be more diversity within the police force, but they're working on that. That's really good because it starts with awareness. That's really good and it will take time, but they're on it. That's the most important thing, to be aware of that.

Mitch L.: The diversity is not just about race, it's about gender as well.

Samira R.: No. It's really broad, yeah.

Mitch L.: So for example, the police departments. A long time ago, police departments were mostly white men in the United States of America. As a consequence of not having a diverse police department, if there was domestic abuse, sexual abuse, sex crimes, the police officers were never properly trained to investigate any of that. Now that the police departments have become more diverse, more women have become police officers. One of the best police chiefs in America was the police chief in Washington DC for many, many, many years. You're beginning to make sure that citizens can be taken care of when the police show up. This is not a novel idea, but it would be great that when ... and by the way, most police officers are spectacular. They risk their lives, they do a good job. If they're trained properly, supervised properly, if there's transparency and accountability, when a police officer shows up, you feel comfortable and they're there to protect you.

Mitch L.: But what if you were in a position when when they showed up, your history taught you that they were there to hurt you. That's not a great recipe for peace and success, and police departments all over the world, but I'll speak to America, have in the last couple of years really started to get a lot better. In the city of New Orleans, when I became mayor, our police department was a mess. I invited the United States Department of Justice to come in so that we can actually retrain every police officer, put a body camera on every one of them, have open transparency and accountability when there was a police involved shooting, really diversified the police force, men and women racially, so that when the police police, they're doing it in a way to, this just sounds so sophomore, but to protect and to serve, not to oppress and to hurt.

Mitch L.: It sounds so simple, but if you're not trained appropriately, and you're trained to shoot first, not last, and you're trained to look a skew at the citizens that you're there to protect as opposed to someone you're there to protect, then it produces bad results. When that happens, and it happens a lot in the community, the community retrenches. They then begin to radicalize in domestic ways, and then it produces lack of social cohesion, which essentially if you have no social cohesion when a bad thing happens, a climate event or some kind of violent event, that's when number one, you're not capable of being able to receive the bad thing. Secondly, you can't respond to it.

Mitch L.: So a lot of what was talked about yesterday on the national security front really came home to me as a domestic politician about being prepared for what is coming our way, from adapting to getting better at it, to being more resilient, to being able to respond. We don't really prepare as well as we should, and our tendency is to wait, to deny, to put off for another day what we want to know today, to understand that we have major threats coming our way, but really not making the sacrifices necessary to be ready for when those bad things happen. That's not good for us.

Samira R.: Also the lack of legitimacy and the lack of trust within these communities towards, for example, police forces is really dangerous. It's really a risk, and that's also for example, a reason why, for example, the Dutch police force is now facing the challenge to engage people from that communities within the police forces. So it's more difficult to recruit or to select people from the communities because there's a lack of trust and legitimacy, and that's a circle that you need to break through because it's also very dangerous and it's also very important that people have the feeling that, "Okay. When the police comes, the police is also there for me." That feeling, but also the use of language also coming from the police force saying that, "Hey, we want to be a police for everyone," is extremely important.

Karl: Now, in order to put these policies in place, in order to raise the awareness, to start the inclusion, you have to grab power, you have to win elections. The confrontation is that many voters do not share these views. Now, the burning issue on the left is how to address these voters. If you talk about Trump, about the make America great again, the again being dog whistle. Now, would you say then that-

Mitch L.: You know what a dog whistle is? That's good. I thought that was just us in the south. Never mind. So you want to know how to do it?

Karl: No. I would ask then you would say that these voters are responding to his racial tendencies, his racial remarks. You have to listen to voters. In what way do you have to address these voters on their racism or on their exclusion? How do you address these issues? What is your moral point of view?

Mitch L.: Would you like me to? Well, first of all, not everybody that voted for Donald Trump was a racist. There're many, many people that voted for Donald Trump that voted for him, but they voted for President Obama, and then they voted for President Trump. The reasons they voted for him were legitimate reasons about why voters choose who they want to lead them in democracies. They felt left out. They felt not seen. The same conversation we're having right now about African Americans, coal miners in West Virginia could have, where they said, "Well, nobody saw us. Nobody addressed us. Nobody talked to us. Nobody really thought about who we were." Same issue. So I don't want to even make the suggestion that everybody that supported Donald Trump was racist.

Mitch L.: However, it would be wrong of me not to confront the president on the language that he uses to talk about behavior. We should judge people based on that behavior, singularly. Not their race, not their creed, not their color. So when he comes down the steps and then escalated and says, "Mexicans are rapists," all of a sudden he just did what you should never do, which is to say if there's some people who may or may not have been from Mexico that were criminals, that may be true, but it doesn't mean that Mexicans are criminals. When he says that Muslims are terrorists and there're one billion Muslims in the world, you sent the communication to people that if you see anybody like her,

that you should be afraid of her because of her faith. Well, that's just wrong. That's inhuman, and that's not something that we should countenance. That is different.

Karl: Does that make him popular?

Mitch L.: Well, with some people it makes him popular.

Karl: How do you address these people?

Mitch L.: What you need to do is to have conversations like this and to clearly say that this statement is wrong and this is why this statement is right, and rather than following that pathway, follow this one. It requires leadership, and at the end of the day, if, again, to the conversation of General Allen yesterday, if people are tired, if they are hungry, if they're afraid, if they're wet, if they're cold, they are going to be susceptible if they feel like somebody is taking something away from them to be moved into a nativist mindset. So our challenge is to not have the world in that condition. That's the most important thing to think about, and that's not something that takes a little bit of time. It takes a lot of time. So we shouldn't be surprised because you've seen this over and over again.

Mitch L.: When people are fighting over a little bit of meat on an otherwise empty bone, our tendency is to turn against each other. So what's the answer? Just to say, don't turn against each other? No. Make sure that everybody has opportunity. Make sure that there's peace. Make sure that there's social cohesion. Talk about liberal democratic values of equality and liberty, and then win the day. What you cannot do is retreat. You cannot do that. That is not a winning formula for fighting this battle. You have to call it out. You don't have to do it in a hateful way, but you have to do it in a clear and a forceful way and then create a pathway forward. Then you have to win the day because in a democracy, if you believe the majority rules, you got to get most of the people to vote for you. That doesn't mean acquiescing. It doesn't mean saying something that's wrong is right. It's calling it out and changing hearts, changing minds, changing institutions, changing laws that produce a better result. That's what leadership is essentially about.

Samira R.: It's really dangerous also from a security perspective, by the way, to deny these voices. I mean, you need to listen to that, and again, you need to confront, but first of all, listen. Listen to what keeps people busy. What are they worrying about? Because also, you're a politician, in my position, it's my job to listen to people to understand why they are not satisfied with policies or with laws. So it's also really dangerous again to deny that and indeed have the good conversations and show them what is right, what is wrong, or what can be right, or what can be wrong. Then again, bringing that back to the table and make sure that you and others are making the good policies, the policies that work, because people also want to have good solutions to their problems. It's also because they want to see that we are being effective.

Karl: Radical voters and certainly radical politicians like [inaudible 00:39:11], or Marine Le Pen, they would say that you position yourself on the right side of history and you are on the right side of the pointing finger, and that from your moral high ground, you are dictating what people should say, and they get, well, they do get a grasp in ... so just follow them, and say, "Yes," it fuels their anger.

Mitch L.: Well, I'll take ... I don't know those gentlemen or people that you just talked about, but I know who David Duke is, in the United States who was an equivalent, who was the grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. He ran for office in Louisiana and he became a state level representative, and then he ran for governor, ran for the United States Senate. For a minute, a lot of people showed up. After confrontation, after explanation, after taking people through, "Well, you know, maybe he's right about the consequence of a certain policy, but he's wrong about how to fix it. This is why that's not a good pathway to resolution, but this way is." You talk to people you have to trust that the citizens that you represent will eventually get it, but the battle is on the ground where ideas matter, and you have to have the conversation. At the end of the day, elections really make a difference.

Mitch L.: I think what people are beginning to see, so this was manifest yesterday, this is too polite an organization to have had the conversation yesterday, when you all were talking about national security, but what's the consequence of the president's tweets that are diametrically opposed to what the policy of the United States of America is relating to Article Five? Is America going to show up or is it not going to show up? Well, you heard from everybody yesterday that of course America's going to show up, but that's not what the president said.

Mitch L.: So, he confuses the hell out of people and he scares our allies. We spend enough time beating up Germany, beating up Canada, beating up Mexico, who are all of our friends, and spending a whole lot of time saddling up to Putin and to Bin Salman. Last night the president stood in between both of them at the summit that they were at while the Democrats are talking about how we're going to save America. So it's no surprise that the world is confused about whether America really means what it says. You can kind of take comfort in the fact that, well, maybe we don't listen to the president, but a lot of people do, because the presidency matters. He is the president of the United States of America, and whether you disagree with him or not, when he speaks, he is speaking for the country and it's not honest to say that the tweet doesn't matter because they are his words.

Mitch L.: Now, one could argue, and I think argue strenuously, it's not a good idea for a commander in chief to be in opposition to the people that are working for him and that there ought to be cohesion and command and control in policy. That's a legitimate argument. But it's not fair to say that the tweets don't matter because they are utterances from him, and right now he is the President of the United States, so he speaks for the country. So as a result, people shouldn't be confused that the world is confused about America's position and what we're

going to do should something bad happen. I think that that's something that is worth thinking about. So it matters when he says things like Muslims are terrorists.

Mitch L.: That really matters because the people who are Muslim, and I don't mean to speak for those who are, but if they said all Christians are terrorists, and I'm a Christian, I would go, "That didn't feel good. That was just kind of weird. Am I welcomed there? Does that guy like me? Am I going to get a fair shot? Is he going to discriminate against me because of my religion?" If I was from Mexico, I was an immigrant, and I showed up anywhere around the United States, I would go into the shadows because I would think that ICE agents are coming to get me tomorrow and are going to separate me. So do you think they're going to come out of the shadows or are they going to stay in the shadows?

Mitch L.: If there's a rape or a sexual abuse in an immigrant neighborhood, do you think they're going to come forward and talk to the police, or are they not? If you don't have everybody partnering to actually reduce violence and to protect us, then it's going to get worse, not better.

Samira R.: Rhetoric and language and tone is extremely important. We often I think underestimate that, but I think the future of politics also lies in a change of narrative, a change of tone, a change of language, because it's really needed that if we want to address also these issues and if we want to recognize people when they-

Karl: Yeah, how do you do that? Address this radical language? In evidence you have plenty of examples of politicians riding the waves with radical ...

Samira R.: Exactly. Well, at least don't do the same, but we also need to think of a different narrative. We need to think about a message that is inclusive in itself.

Karl: What is the inclusive message that can also get the white middle aged men in unemployment?

Samira R.: Well, it starts I think also really simple. It starts with saying, "Well, I'm here for everyone and I'm here to do politics for everyone who needs it, for the whole society who needs it, for the whole world who needs it." But it's really important to start with the message, "I'm here for everyone," and then start a conversation with everyone you meet.

Karl: So you're not the confrontational type of politician? You would not tell an audience to stop racism, you would not go into confrontation?

Samira R.: Of course you will go into confrontation and you need address that, but it doesn't mean that you can start with spreading message that, "Hey, we are here for the whole society. We want to listen, but this is wrong and this needs to be more right, and this needs to be better." I do want to have that conversation

with you, but I will tell you when you're doing wrong. I will tell you that this is not right. We need to be open to the conversations with people because again, if we're going to deny their worries, if we're going to deny their needs, it can be also really visible and dangerous. But of course, when it's about racism, of course when it's about injustice, of course you need to confront that and you cannot leave that, of course not. That's for me, again, a very important reason to be in politics because I want to confront people with that. I want to confront politicians with that.

Samira R.: When I'm speaking about language and tone, it's really also about the politicians that use a kind of rhetoric that is really dangerous for society, and I want them to change that tone and I want them to change that narrative.

Karl: Before we take a few questions, just one from the room, just one last question on Democratic Party. Really, do you think it will be dividing issue of how to address the white voter in America, and who will address it?

Mitch L.: Well, first of all, the white community is not monolithic in the United States of America. All white people don't think alike, just like all African American people or all Muslims or all Christians. I think the country has proven itself to be open, but sometimes you have to prick the country's consciousness and say, "This pathway is wrong. You might be in pain and you might have been overlooked, but now we see you, but your response to what just happened is not correct. This is the better response for all of us. By the way, we're all better together."

Mitch L.: I think that the community is open to that. You saw during the civil rights era, whites and African Americans came together to pass great legislation, but things ebb and flow. It gets okay, we go to sleep, but you have to be eternally vigilant. This notion, yesterday I heard this said as though someone was surprised, that we thought that liberal democracies were going to be stable, that everything was going to be fine. If you go to sleep on it, if you don't nurture democracy every day, it's going to retreat. It's just something that we have to do and that obligation and that responsibility is never going to end. It's just never going to end. So I think that you just ...

Mitch L.: The word confrontation doesn't translate in our political correctly. I understand what you're trying to say, but to be clear, confront and confrontation are not the same thing. Address issues forthrightly so that people can't look away from them and demand that we work through them to get to a constructive end is the kind of conversation. Yelling at each other doesn't work, but I have seen many, and Jane, you know this, I know you're going to ask a question in a minute. Our job as politicians is to address the issues and to try to change people's minds from where they are to where we need to be. I guess that's what elections are about, and if we can't find a way, then we have to make one, but you can't do it by not recognizing that as an issue and turning away from it and acting like it doesn't exist. That kind of appeasement is not good. Engagement, constructive engagement is better.

Karl: Do some in the party think it would be good to look away?

Mitch L.: Yeah. Most people do. Nobody wants to talk about it.

Samira R.: But I do think-

Mitch L.: Not nobody, but it's easy to kind of just put aside.

Samira R.: I do think that confrontation can be effective. You can make sure that it's being done in effective way and also respectfully.

Mitch L.: Yeah, I agree.

Samira R.: But I think that given the challenges we face also in terms of racism and populism, it's really important that we do.

Mitch L.: Sometimes you have to fight, I agree with you. I agree. I don't disagree with you.

Karl: Five minutes of questions from the room. Please.

Jane Harman: Thank you. Is this on? Can every ... Yes, you can hear me. I'm Jane Harman. I served in the US Congress for nine terms and fled the toxic partisanship to head the Wilson Center where 40 languages are spoken and we have a majority female workforce. I'm a charter member of the Mitch Landrieu Fan Club and think it's great to have idealistic young women in politics in Europe. My question is this, is there a danger that we overcorrect for our history? By taking down all the statutes, I'm not commending any of the statues, do we erase a memory of the bad parts of our history? Specifically, I read recently that the Chinese, on the 30th anniversary of Tiananmen Square, have basically erased that from Chinese history. They've rewritten all the textbooks and a majority of their population is under 30, it's 30 years old, and don't even know that that happened. Don't we also learn from history, even if it's bad history?

Mitch L.: Would you like me to?

Karl: Yeah.

Samira R.: Yeah, of course.

Mitch L.: Well, you conflated two things that are opposite. It would be terrible for the world to forget what happened in Tiananmen Square, because that was about democracy and telling the true story and the total story of what actually happened. Taking down the monuments is the exact opposite of that, because the monuments, these are ... I'm talking about the confederate monuments now, were put up in places of reverence, not remembrance, on public spaces to only talk about four years of history and ignore the rest of it. Those things in fact

are the suppression of the total story of history. Of course you can overcorrect. We do this all the time. In every problem that we try to solve, we tend to go too far and then we come back in balance. But that is not to say that our public spaces, spaces of reverence, should be reserved for those things that are integral to the stories that we want to tell.

Mitch L.: By the way, to address the issue directly, maybe one of the harshest things that I said in the book that I wrote was that if all of the historical society's mission was to protect our history, and they did it just by putting up confederate monuments, then they are guilty of historic malfeasance because they forgot the other 296 years of our history. By the way, ladies, there're not that many statues of women anywhere in the world. So I would think that putting the issue of race aside for a second and on the issue of gender, the women of the world might have a problem with only remembering the guys that kind of showed up and didn't do as much as they said, right?

Mitch L.: Now think about, just think about it from a gender perspective and take it out of race, and then all of a sudden it becomes a little bit more immediate as it relates to gender. So when you think about it, ask yourself, just in terms of monuments, have we adequately and historically commemorated the contributions that women have made to the world if the way we have chosen to do it is to put up a monument to reflect a person who did a good thing? The obvious answer would be no, we didn't even get it close to being right. The bigger issue about these monuments, I don't want to get lost on the stone and the metal, it's not the physical things themselves, it's the ideas and the people who put them up. If those ideas still permeate our policies and still generate the kind of consequences that we have, then we have not moved as forward together. So not only is it not history, it's not even passed.

Mitch L.: I would ask us to, challenge us to just really think about that, and when you take a minute to think about it, like Wynton asked me to think about it, and you're honest and you're open, you would say, "We've fallen short and we can do better. Yes, we need balance, but we're out of balance at the moment."

Samira R.: I agree.

Karl: We have two more questions. Two of you.

Speaker 6: Hello. Hello. Good morning. Thank you so much for your amazing comments. My name is [inaudible 00:52:37] and I run a national nonprofit in the US that trains young leaders to lead in all industries but rooted in social justice values and solutions. We've been around for 15 years. We have 2000 young and youngish people in all 50 states and territories, and one of the conflicts or things that they grapple with, all of us, is race to be the big boogeyman. I'm really glad that this conversation centered raced. But my question to you is what is the path for it since you all talked about healthy confrontation, and specifically in your experience that someone checked you and helped you see the mission?

One of the earlier sessions that we had, because I'm a TILN fellow, was that when you talk about racism and white supremacy, you scare white people.

Speaker 6: In our experience, some of the conflicts that we've had is that it seems that people are more ... they want to hold on to their comfort rather than progress. So I'm curious to know how, what is the path forward? How do we have healthy confrontation in a way that actually leads to success? Would really love to know your answer. Thank you.

Karl: Please, Samira.

Samira R.: Yeah, it's a really good question. Thank you. Well, I can speak from my own experience. What I've done myself, and what I will keep doing, is to bring in that experience, is to bring in that understanding, is to indeed discuss this and name it like it is. But bringing in my own, again, knowledge and use that to explain to people why it is so important that we talk about it, why it is so important that we talk about it in this way. Why it is so important for young people of color, for example, or women of color, because these are the associations that I have myself and I will not deny my own experiences. I will not do that. I think it only makes you a credible voice. Yes, people can even attack you for that or target you for that, but it's really needed that politicians there to bring in their identity.

Samira R.: So I can only speak from my own experience that this is my way to put that on the agenda and to name it as it is and not scare away. But to have that healthy confrontation, you can use your own experience to make people also more maybe comfortable by explaining it and taking that time. But it needs to be said how it is. Again, I'm doing that by bringing in my own identity and experiences.

Karl: Mitch, a quick word. How [inaudible 00:55:22]?

Mitch L.: Yeah, a couple of things, from the macro to the micro. First of all, people who feel this way should run for office, because who's in office matters because they help dictate suggestions about what laws to change. When Jane was a congress person in California, she would basically say, "Next week I want to introduce a bill to accomplish a certain thing," and that would create a national conversation that in many instances would lead to changing the laws. So, that's really important, A. Secondly, it's not a surprise, and now that the elected politicians who were elected are diverse, we're actually discussing different kinds of issues, because when different kind of people get elected, they bring their life experiences like you have alluded to.

Mitch L.: On specific issues that currently exist, for people that don't think this is real, Gerrymandering of congressional districts has a massive racial component. Voter suppression has a lot to do with whether Stacey Abrams, who's a person of color, should be the governor of Georgia today. She clearly should be, but she's not, because ... So when people say these things don't currently exist, looking at all of the wonderful people, we had a talk about national security,

after the war ended, the Korean War and the GI Bill was passed, our folks came back from the African Americans who fought and died, or who fought and were harmed, came back and had to go live in neighborhoods and were discriminated against because they couldn't get loans to actually buy the houses and build generational wealth. So those are specific things you have to do.

Mitch L.: All the while, and I think you hit this well, you do have to send the message that when we mean everybody, we mean everybody, not just people of color, but white people too. Everybody is invited to this table. So it's not about taking something away. I asked my dad, who was, when he was 29 years old, was one of two white guys in the legislature to vote against segregation packages. In other words, he took the modern view that history has said was the right one, and his life was threatened that day in 1960 when my mother was carrying me. I said, "How did you get where you are?" He said, "My best friend," first African American to graduate from Law School, Norman Francis, who went on to become the President of Xavier University, the longest serving president of a university in America and a Presidential Medal of Freedom honor, was my father's best friend whilst he was in law school.

Mitch L.: I said, "Dad, how did you find the courage to protect Norman?" That was his name. He said, "Mitch, I didn't do it for Norman." He said, "I did it for myself." He said, "Because Norman made me better. Norman's presence in my life, his intellect, his talent made me better. So it wasn't just about him." This is what I'll say to all the white people who seem to be so overly concerned about all this. You don't need to be worried about it. African Americans have treated us a whole lot better than we treated them. That's first. The second thing is, you are better when you meet people who were different than you. The diversity and the gifts that each of us has, that is unique and special, that makes us who we are, whether you're Christian, Muslim, Jew, you're black, you're white, you're American, you're from the Netherlands. You bring a different experience that only you can bring, and when you're open to each other and you learn from each other, our collection is better than our individual parts. That's just a truth.

Mitch L.: Now, if you don't believe in that truth, if you somehow believe that because you were born white and blonde haired and blue eyed, that you're smarter, faster and better, not only are you wrong, you could be right individually, but it's not because of the way you look. It could be just because of your talent, but if you believe that, then you can only believe that separating everybody and lording over everybody is the right way to go. I just don't happen to believe that truth. So I'm like you, I have to live in my truth. I have to live in my experience. I have to tell people who I saw and what I did and how I felt, and how I'm better when I build relationships with people that I've never met before, and that's my truth.

Mitch L.: So, in order to change it, you have to live it, you have to testify to it, and you have to be really, I believe, unfortunately, more forceful about it than we should have to be in this moment in time. I'll just go back to this, and I just have seen this in my very short life, you got to fight for it every day. If you don't nurture it,

if you don't water it, if you don't tell it, it's going to die, and that's kind of what freedom is about, isn't it? Essentially, that's what we're talking about when you get back to it, and that's why it's so compelling and so important for us to confront or to deal with in a constructive and thoughtful way. If we have to fight for it, you know what? So be it.

Karl: I'm afraid we have to conclude here. Many questions in the room, but these energizing ideas for the day. Thank you. Thank you also for the audience. Thank you so much.