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Brussels Forum

The World in 2030: Global Trends and Alternative Worlds  
Conversation

Mr. Craig Kennedy: Welcome back for the very last session. As part of the new formatting, we had both a theme, we had a graphic quiz that you had to solve. You see where they are today, David? Yeah.

Mr. David Ignatius: They made it.

Mr. Craig Kennedy: We have looked at fragility in a lot of contexts and we've come up--heard a number of very thoughtful suggestions on how to deal with it. What we wanted to do is to have one summary session to really try to pull together a lot of the ideas and thoughts over the last 48 hours. And we asked our board member, *Washington Post* columnist, David Ignatius, who is also one of our longest-standing and most experienced moderators, to lead the conversation with Chris Kojm. David?

Mr. David Ignatius: So thank you, Craig. Welcome.

Thanks to all of you who stayed to this last session. You're the bitter-enders and the people who want to know how the story turns out. If you're like me, the idea of getting to talk with America's top intelligence analyst and ask him questions for an hour about what he thinks about the developments in the world and where the world is heading is an irresistible treat. And that's the opportunity we have with Chris Kojm. Chris is the head of the National Intelligence Council, which is the group of national intelligence officers that assists all of the intelligence produced by the different parts of the U.S. intelligence community. And they produce a number of products, but today, we're going to talk about one of the most interesting and unusual. I'm going to show you a cover of this, but far from being a secret, unobtainable product, this is something you can download on the web. And I urge people who find the subjects that we talk about today to do that. It's called [Global Trends 2030, Alternative Worlds](#). It's the product of many, many months of work

by a large staff working for Chris.

In introducing this, I want to quote something that was said last fall in the initial rollout of this document by the principle author, Matt Boroughs, who works for Chris. And he quoted something John Maynard Keynes said in 1937. "The idea of the future being so different from the present is so repugnant to our conventional modes of thought and behavior, that we, most of us, offer a great resistance to acting on it in practice." And what Chris and his analysts have tried to do is take that tendency we have as human beings just to project the present into the future and challenge it systematically.

So I want to start by asking Chris if he'd just tell us about this study, what it is, how his people put it together and what he hopes to accomplish with it?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Well, thank you, David. And thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about our most important unclassified work. It is a

project that we have done five times now. We do it in each presidential election year and we plan that quite consciously to publish immediately after a presidential election so that either a new administration or, in this case, a returning administration has a chance to reflect on the challenges it faces.

In that respect, we help to inform major government planning activities, the Quadrennial Defense Review, now there is a parallel document at the State Department, the Quadrennial Diplomatic and Development Review. And each administration starts by preparing a national security strategy and the second term of this administration is in the process of doing the same.

So we help to inform policy efforts across the board for the U.S. government, and more broadly, we hope to inform a dialog in the American body politic writ large, and in the international community. This particular document, we engaged in a process of exchange in nearly 20 countries, discussing drafts, discussing future trends. And so our work was not

simply internal to the intelligence community, but a broad-based dialog with academics, think tanks and academic think tanks and governments in 20 countries.

Mr. David Ignatius: It's one of the aspects of this that I found most interesting is that Chris and his analysts took the product on the road as they were working on it. Went to China, went to Europe and shared their tentative conclusions, and then asked people, "What do you think?" I was at a session in Washington where a group of journalists and think-tank people were asked to look at a draft and then critique it, which was fascinating for us.

And I want to ask you, Chris, before we get into the substance of the report, what were the most interesting, surprising or helpful comments you got when you took this on the road and showed it to outsiders?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Thanks, David, that's a great question. And we did a process of internal review of the document, of the four previous iterations, and

asked, well, what did we do wrong or what could we do better? And comments that were reflected in our international dialog, we heard two. One is that the trends that you see coming far down the road come at you much quicker. And another comment was, you really need to talk some about the role of the United States because the decisions the United States makes will make an important difference in the world of 2030.

As all of you can appreciate, as an intelligence arm of the United States Government, we have no mission, no writ to speak about the United States. Our comments are outward-directed. But we do speak to some-  
-have to make some statements or assertions about what that U.S. role will be. In China, in particular--and, David, we had a fascinating dialog because, of course, much of what we talk about is economic trends and the role of emerging market economies, China and India, China, certainly, as a key international player in 2030.

In our dialog in China, much of the commentary we

received went as follows, that there's no eagerness to replace or to take on a global leadership role by China, that the role of the United States will be less prominent, but still that the United States will be the single most important player in the international landscape in the world of 2030, in the view of our Chinese interlocutors.

Mr. David Ignatius: I can imagine, if you're a Chinese intelligence officer confronted with this traveling visitation from the National Intelligence Council asking you what you think you Chinese analysts of a world in which American power relative to that of China is going to be inevitably decreasing, that would be probably a terrifying moment. And it's interesting and not surprising, really, that the Chinese express some reluctance or concern about the process of change.

Just to give you a sense of this report, it's organized around, first, what Chris and his analysts describe as four mega trends, four great, big things that are going to happen pretty much no matter what.

They're going to be shaping the world through 2030, and I just want to briefly mention those and ask Chris if he'd comment on particular aspects of them. And then I'll note some of the other aspects of the report. But these four big, over-arching themes are, first, individual empowerment. In other words, we're heading toward a middle-class world. There's some marvelous statistics. One that caught my eye re-reading this over the weekend, it took Britain 155 years to double GDP per capita with 9 million people. India and China are doing the same thing, 100 times the number of people in one-tenth the time. So it gives you a sense of the speed of this middle-class process.

Let me just stop there for a minute, Chris, and ask you. It's wonderful to think about a middle-class world, and yet, as I look at the way the world is changing, the accumulation of wealth--and in China, for example, I see the rise of criminality, organized and disorganized, as people try to skim some of this fantastic new creation of wealth. Is that something



that you looked at and what would you tell us about criminality as the world grows richer?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Yes. It is certainly something we looked at. I want to stay on the positive before we get to one of these clear downsides of individual empowerment. On the positive side, we're really looking at a world in 2030 where, for the first time in human history, the majority of humanity will not be living in absolute poverty. That's just a remarkable moment for us all. And the global middle class of one billion today, by pessimistic projections, would go to two billion, and if positive trends continue, it could be as large as a middle class of nearly three billion. It's just a mind-boggling assertion. But, yes, David, there are downsides and we worry about them.

Individual empowerment means the democratizing of every aspect of life and that means weaponry, that means the ability to fabricate lots of nasty items. Individual empowerment can feed terrorism. It certainly

feeds international criminality. With all the IT possibilities that we've talked about for the last two days, it's quite easy for criminal groups with minimal organization to do a vast amount of damage very quickly.

Mr. David Ignatius: A second of these over-arching trends is what the report calls the diffusion of power and we see that in every day's newspaper. But their forthright conclusion is that we're heading into a world in which there will be no hegemonic power, like what we've been used to seeing from the United States, that the rise of China and other facts mean that this will not be the hegemonic world, but will be a world of networks and coalitions that are formed to deal with problems. And, Chris, like most of the things in this report, I can give that a very positive gloss or I can get very nervous about it and I'd be curious on your take about what life is like after this hegemony that we've lived through.

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Well, this diffusion of power is, on many levels, not simply the ordering of powers in the international order, but it's the diffusion of power within countries, within societies. And so in some ways, what's most concerning is that this global middle class will present assertions and desires for participation, desires for services on governments, that governments have a very difficult time meeting. So the pressure on all forms of government, particularly authoritarian ones, but democratic ones as well, will only grow going forward and I think that's what concerns me the most.

On the positive side, from the U.S. point of view, yes, the U.S. relatively less important a player in the international community, but as this very gathering shows, that the transatlantic relationships, the transatlantic partnerships, America's many allies and partners across East Asia as well, that in a world where networks and contacts and your ability to marshal governments and NGOs and private businesses on a whole

host of questions, the United States is still, relatively speaking, very placed in this world of diffused power.

Mr. David Ignatius: A third element framing the World of 2030, you can sum up as demographics. And we've talked through these three days about different demographic issues. This report is particularly interesting in its focus on them. I want to talk about the aging of populations phenomenon, which is highlighted strikingly in one set of numbers I want to share with you. One headline for this group is that on a map of an aging world, Europe is aging most dramatically. Europe is post-mature in the language of this report, with median population age of over 45. But listen to these numbers to show you how countries will age in terms of their median population age from 2010 to 2030. Brazil, a young country, will go from 29 median age to 35. India will go from 26 to 32. China, this is fascinating, will go from a median age in 2010 of 35, already an aging country, to a median age of 43,

almost at this European post-mature level. Russia will go from 39 to 44. Iran will go from 26 to 37. Iran has had a very serious effort to restrain its population growth. Japan will go from a current median age of 45 to a median of 52.

If you want to think about the challenge for Japanese economic policy, policy generally, there it is. Germany will go from 44 to 49. The U.K. will go from 40 to 42. The UK is going to stay young, relatively speaking, relative to Europe, and the U.S. is going to go--I'm tempted to take bets, but I'll just tell you, we'll go from 37 to 39. So thanks in part to our ability to absorb new immigrants and their fertility rates, the U.S. is going to stay pretty young.

Chris, those are fascination numbers. What should we make of them? When intelligence analysts look at that and think about what that's going to mean for global trends and security, what conclusions would they draw?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Well, there are several. The first one I'd like to draw for you is that today the United States has an older population than China and by 2030, we will be four years younger than China. What this means is that China, its young people entering the labor force reach a peak about the middle of this decade and then new entries into the labor force will decline. The implications are quite clear, rising labor costs. And at a time when China, by national policy design, seeks to move up the value chain, this poses considerable challenges.

For the United States, the benefits are clear that a younger labor force, where the labor force actually continues to grow between now and 2030, is a significant demographic advantage. For Europe, this places challenges on productivity in the first instance and that you really will need to focus on productivity growth to continue economic growth given the demographic trends going forward. Also, it places a key

demand on labor and that challenge can be met several ways.

One that I point out is that Muslim populations in Europe will grow from about 4 percent to about 8 percent in 2030, and so indigenous growth of the labor population will be very important for a future European prosperity.

Mr. David Ignatius: The last of these megatrends is a set of issues that we often refer to as the sustainability issues, but they're issues of food, of water, of energy, and these are such technically complex issues. Chris, if there is a particular point that you'd want to highlight for this audience that emerged from the research that your analyst did, please share it.

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Well, I think the key point here is we see global population rising from about 7.1 billion today to 8.3 billion so that's 15 percent plus growth rate. But resources, it's dramatically different. Food, 35 percent. Water, 40

percent. Energy, perhaps as high as 50 percent. Of all the trends I've outlined here, David, this is the one that, scare in not too big of a word to use, that would scare me the most. So there really will be a race to produce the food and the resources to really enable these significantly larger middle classes to live the way that their incomes--that they desire with that level of income. They will have the income and they will have the ability purchase those foods, goods, and services, but for those at the bottom of the pile, it's a great big question mark.

Mr. David Ignatius: I should just note when I was asked months ago to comment on this report, the only thing that concerned me was the question of adaptation to the changes underway. These are dynamic processes. I'm always worried about following into the Malthusian trap of hypothesizing a resource base and a population growth dynamic and forgetting about the ways in which price signals, other signals, lead to changes in the resource base.



One interesting thing about this report is that rather than pause at a signal outcome, Chris and his analysts offer four different scenarios for the way things might turn out. Their stalled engines is the scariest in which everything just kind of fails to meet the challenges. Fusion is the best-case outcome. Suddenly everything comes together and is networked and harmonized. There's one that's very interesting that's called genie-out-of-the-bottle and in this case, the Genie is a referent to the genie coefficient of population inequality, if you remember you economics tables, in which we have a world of growth, but greatly unequal distribution with all the challenges that poses, and then a non-state world in which non-state actors so obviously a problem in the last decade become even more so.

Chris, these different scenarios for the future are cleverly written, often in the form of memos to people who would be reading them in 2030 and pondering what the various worlds imagined looked like. As you go

through this, obviously, I'm curious what you, as the supervisor of this process, think among your four scenarios, which, if you had to lean in any one direction, this is an unfair question, but which one would you lean in?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: I'll answer that question, David, but I think I have to say a few other things first. And that is, well, why do we do scenarios? And there's no value in a prediction because predictions are always wrong and predications aren't helpful to policymakers. As policymakers have clearly expressed to us, what helps them is looking at a range of possibilities and be able to set the marks to the left and right about what the world may look like as policymakers deal in a world of vast uncertainty. And our role, frankly, is to help bound that uncertainty and risk going forward.

Now, turning to the four scenarios, I want to talk about one that isn't here and it was a scenario that, as we took around for discussion, we got the comment

it's too much of a straight line of trends, that it did not account enough for the likelihood of discontinuity. We can't say what those discontinuities or black swans will be, but we know that we need to take them into account and so that's why we try to address more starkly the nature of the scenarios before us.

I think stipulating as you do, David, that it's an unfair question, I think the one that's least likely, as we sit here today, is stalled engines. That really is posited on reversal of globalization and an inward turning by the worlds' leading economies and countries. Certainly, it posits an isolationism in its modern form, if you will, in the United States. Fusion of the four outcomes, clearly, is the most posited, but it, too, is posited on a crisis where the United States and China come together to avert war and catastrophe. It's posited in this case in South Asia, but it could be elsewhere. But it becomes a driver for a much more intense level of international collaboration and the

recognition of the mutuality of interests and in averting conflict.

To truly answer your question, David, I think what's going to happen here is there will be elements of these scenarios. It won't be any single scenario playing out. Surely, there will be aspects of genie-out-of-the-bottle. Even as we have tendencies toward democratization, with respect to individual empowerment, if you look at incomes, the trends across much of the world, with the exception of Latin America, but certainly in the United States and China, is towards a much greater inequality and growing difference with wealth within societies.

And also, David, we surely will see aspects of the non-state worlds. Sovereign states matter and they will surely in the world of 2030, but the ability of international corporations, NGOs, cities, state and local governments, the growth of decentralized power on a federal basis within states, we see that in many countries. We're going to see lots of networks and ad

hoc partners addressing a whole range of international questions. So I surely see worlds three and four coming about. I think stalled engines, for the moment, is one we can avert and, of course, our hopes, surely more than complete confidence in our analysis, would be in the direction of the fusion world.

Mr. David Ignatius: In noting the pace of growth, one statistic that struck me was the statement that, in terms of urbanization, the world will add the equivalent of five cities the size of London every year from now until 2030, which, if you think about it, is daunting. Also, a strength of this report is that, as Chris said, it tries to take note of events outside the normal distribution, if you will, to avoid these straight line projection dangers. The report calls them black swans, after Nicholas Taleb's well known comment. I'll just list a few of the black swans, but if you want to read detailed discussion, again, download the report. One is severe pandemics. We've had hints of that, but this posits a really--the thing that we're

really frightened of that the movie "Contagion" is about. Much more rampant climate change, even than some of the more pessimistic models predict. Another one that fascinated me, and I'll just refer you to the report because I can't even explain it adequately, is solar geomagnetic storms that have the effect of radically disrupting all of our electromagnetic systems. And then finally, and this is the one I want to actually ask you about, Chris, one of the black swan events that might happen, although it would be a surprise, would be U.S. disengagement from the world. And I want to ask you to speak about that, but also ask about the interesting dilemma that you had in preparing this of having U.S. intelligence analysts analyze the United States.

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Well, you ask how we do that and I would have to say, very carefully. We've had an ongoing process of dialogue with our policy counterparts, so above all that our thoughts are ones that they're engaged in, are well aware of and at least

with respect to the United States, surely have some role in shaping. And it goes beyond the bounds of my role at the National Intelligence Council to so state, but I will state that as I look across our senior levels of government, there is intense international engagement and, you know, a very strong consciousness of the role that the United States can and does, and in the view of our policy counterparts, should play on the international stage. The role of engagement is vital for peace and prosperity full stop.

Mr. David Ignatius: So I want to turn to the audience for your questions. I'm going to ask one more question of my own from Chris because I think we owe it to this audience in the Brussels Forum to offer some exposure of these ideas.

One of the interesting discussions in the report is about the likely future of Europe in 2030 and there are three scenarios for Europe. One is collapse of the euro and all of the attendant social and political economic dislocation. I'm assuming, and I want to ask Chris in a

minute, that should say that would be somewhat less likely as of today, March 17, than you would've when this report was published because of developments that have happened. But I want to ask you to focus on that.

A second scenario for Europe is slow decline and the third is Renaissance. And that's a scenario that imagines a real federalist breakthrough in Europe and a different kind of governance and activity.

And so, Chris, let me ask you to address for this audience the question of Europe and maybe you could share with us, since you are responsible for the National Intelligence officers as they look at Europe every day and every week, just to give us some flavor of what their thinking is now as they look at Europe and its problems.

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Well, thanks, David. I think the most important thing to say is a judgment that we're quite confident about, and that is by almost any measure, Europe will remain a great power in 2030. Its contribution to the international economy, trade,



its role in international institutions, across every measure of power Europe remains a very significant player.

David outlined the three scenarios we posited and I underscore they are scenarios outlined for reflective purposes of policymakers, not predictions of reality. And it is correct, we did outline a scenario of collapse of the Eurozone. My colleague, Karen Donfried, the national intelligence officer for Europe, is present here today and she's welcome to comment as well. But my impression from her and the analytic community is the collapse scenarios are receding. Their likelihood is significantly diminished.

A slow decline perhaps is your middle-of-the-road scenario, but I want to focus my comments here on renaissance. And what has changed since we were first drafting this report is very clear, decisive leadership, internal to the European Union about its future. Now, the timeline can be open to some question as to whether it's fast enough and there will certainly

be questions about domestic political support for implementation of further integration, but I think we've been impressed at the commitment to further integration within the European Union.

In addition, of course, one of the topics discussed earlier in this forum revolved around transatlantic trade and investment partnership, the TTIP. And it's certainly a point of great interest to the analytic community that you have a leadership making political commitments to a very significant expansion of free trade. And if this is realized, economic analysis alone indicates to us that this will have a significant benefit in the direction of the renaissance scenario.

I do need to say a word about the role of the United States here and in the world of 2030, of course, the relative economic importance of the United States and Europe and Japan are relatively diminished and this simply underscores for our policymakers the importance of the engagement theme, you know, working much closer with allies and partners across the board, that as the

world becomes more multi-polar and it's in the danger of becoming less multilateral, there's a greater need for cooperation networks and commonality of purpose, certainly across the Atlantic.

Mr. David Ignatius: So let me turn to the other side. I want to just share one last little nugget of fact because it was so striking. The report does not talk a lot about Russia's role in power sharing. Russia is pretty much a flat line in the graphs that are shown expressing power distribution. And here's this striking projection, that Russian population will decline to 130 million in 2030, from 140 million in 2010, that Russia will actually experience population decline. But Russia's Muslim population will increase fairly significantly, by five percentage points to 19 percent from 14 percent and that life expectancy in Russia will be 15 years lower than that in Europe. Pretty striking figures.

I'm curious. Did you take this, Chris, on the road to Moscow?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: We did.

Mr. David Ignatius: And what did you get from the Russians?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Well, they disputed some of our analysis. But I think the word I would say about demography is we're pretty certain about demography. Every 18-year-old in 2030 is already born. So we've got that one nailed. And much of the dialogue we had in Russia really revolved around primary resource extraction. And if you see your role in the international economy is based on oil and gas and mineral exports, you're not really looking to be a leader in the international economy.

And this speaks to some of the debate in Russia that has gone on under the name of Putin and under the name of Medvedev, irrespective of what their individual views are as to what course Russia will take. Will it seek to modernize and develop a modern industrial economy? And that would require many, many steps that,

at the moment, it's not clear or doubtful that Russia is taking.

Mr. David Ignatius: So it's your turn to quiz the intelligence officer. I want to start with the woman in the front row who had her hand up. Yes, ma'am, if you're interested. And then the gentleman from Iran and then Mr. Papantoniou from Greece. And yes. So let's-- yes, please.

Ms. Erika Mann: Thank you so much. Erika Mann, Facebook. I read your 2025 report and you talked about the demographics about aging societies and then about very young societies. Now, I want to concentrate on the very young societies and not just in Asia and Latin America, if I remember right, what you had in mind and what you talked about. But I want to understand if you don't have to change our education policies and the way we integrate very young people into our societies, because we tend to have a very quite old establishment, either in companies or in politics and we allow young people to move into this establishment quite late now.

The same is true in Europe. In Europe, when you look into some of our countries where we--I can't say we exclude. I mean, that's not fair. But young people have a very tough chance, actually, to become part of the society in a complete sense. Is there anything you would, from the scenarios you have done, is there any kind of recommendation you can make, what one can do actually to help a more healthy development and to integrate young people much quicker than we do right now?

Mr. David Ignatius: Let's collect three questions. This gentleman and then Mr. Papantoniou. Chris, if that's okay.

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Yes.

Mr. Mizel Bahadna: Yes. Mizel Bahadna (ph) of Georgetown University. Will there be more clashes in the cultures and civilizations or more integration? And second, with the water shortage, will there be more innovation in water or will be more wars on water,

especially in areas where several countries share one source of water? Thank you.

Mr. Yannis Papantoniou: Thank you. Yannis Papantoniou, Economic Minister of Greece. As you move up the scale of the various scenarios from the least desirable one, (inaudible) to the most desirable one, I'm sure you'll agree that a basic factor, a critical factor, is the amount of cooperation that will exist between the alternative or the various powers of the centers of power. Now, when you have a hegemon like the States last century or Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then somebody imposes this cooperation.

Now, in this century, there is no hegemon, as you have suggested. The alternative is to reinforce global institutions, institutions of global economic and political governance very substantially, the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, the United Nations. Do you see that coming and is your report covering the question of global governance, which I believe is critical for determining the outcome of your scenarios? Thank you.

Mr. David Ignatius: Good. So, Chris, mechanisms to draw young people in, clash of civilizations and water wars or water innovation and will we have global governance to deal with the lack of a hegemony?

Mr. Christopher A. Kojm: Okay, if I could take them in reverse order and start with global governance. We do speak pretty forthrightly on that question going out to 2030 and, frankly, we see growing difficulties in the area of global governance, the reform of international institutions, intergovernmental cooperation we see as more difficult. And this relates directly to the diffusion of power in the international order and, as I said, within society. So even where government leaderships are more willing, the domestic politics, irrespective of whether you're a democracy or not, get very hard.

That said, I think the point I would make about international cooperation is that leaderships in every country are staring at the same problems. What became clear as we took this document around is that elites in



China, India, Russia, Africa, Europe, we don't really differ greatly on what the possibilities and dangers are for the future of the planet going forward. And so there are powerful incentives for leaders to address these questions, above all, in the first instance, avoidance of a conflict among the great powers.

And that gets to the first question about integrating young people into aging societies. I don't really have much advice on that score, but I do know what we say in this report, that 80 countries today have populations with median ages 25 and above. That goes down to about half that number come 2030. And this is, in some ways, very useful for the international economy because most conflicts take place in countries and within countries that have high median ages.

To illustrate my point, come 2030, there will still be a median age below 25 in places such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, the Horn of Africa, and not within Russia as a whole, of course, but in Chechnya. So when you have young populations, it's simply an added

complicating factor, particularly in places where you have significant underdevelopment of the economy or political institutions and in some cases, looming state failure.

So the challenges of aging societies and very young societies are quite different, but one benefit of the changing demographics of the planet that we've seen over the past 20 years is a diminution in conflict and demographics has a role to play there.

Turning to the water question, will there be water innovation, will there be conflict over water? I think the answer is yes, that we will see significant innovation in the efficiency of use of water. That hinges, above all, on pricing. Technology plays its role, but if water is for free, it won't be used very efficiently and I think governments are starting to understand that.

Half the world will be under water stress come 2030. There are 200 major river basins which cross international borders. Forty percent of the world's

fresh water crosses international borders. The record over time to the present has been one mostly of cooperation. There are very few instances where you can point to water as leading, in a direct way, to conflict. So we can take some heart from the historical record here that governments have found ways, at least until now, to work out these problems.

Mr. David Ignatius: So I see many hands raised, but I see one hand raised which is a commanding one and that's from my boss, Mr. Craig Kennedy, who, as we all know, is a tough cop. So, with apologies, I'm going to suggest two things. First, do [download this report](#). I mean, as interesting as Chris' comments have been, they're just really the beginning of what you'll find in the report. And then, perhaps when we're finished, people could, if Chris has a moment, come and chat with him and raise any other questions. And I apologize to people that I wasn't able to call on you.

I have been asked by Craig Kennedy to say just a few words in closing our session. I can't possibly hope

to be as eloquent as Timothy Garton Ash was in opening, in his comments, but I want to close this theme that we've been trying to explore of fragility and how we cope with it. And I'm sure you've noticed, as I have, on this wall behind, every day we see people on a tight rope. The first day, there were just a few fragile feet and then they were further along and today, I said earlier, they've made it. I think some have actually gotten to the other side. Each day as I've looked at this, I've wondered what's below the tightrope? Do you have people cheering them on and saying "go, go, you can make it? Don't slip?" Or are they firing slingshots, trying to knock them off? And it's probably a little of both.

But that graphic that we've had is a visual reminder that this is a period of rebalancing. I often like to remember a comment by Herman Cain, who is a famous nuclear strategist, who was one of the people who were described as wizards of Armageddon because he thought about the nuclear balance. And Herman Cain

observed in the 60s, I think, that a bipolar world, such as we'd seen with the U.S. and the Soviet Union, had a kind of stability. He couldn't have imagined that brief unipolar world where we had one superpower, but that had a kind of stability. But he said a bipolar world is stable. A genuinely multi-polar world is stable, where you have different strong groups that each have the solidity to act and bargain and balance. But what was dangerous was the transition, the movement from the one to the other. And that's what we're in the middle of. And I think that we all--the sense of fragility is, in part, that, moving from a world in which the rules, the ordering principles were understood, people were kept in line into this much more chaotic and fragmented world.

I'm struck in each of our discussions through these three days that it's not a post-American world yet. I keep coming back in different discussions, whether it's talk about energy, new forms of energy, surprising American energy production and maybe even dominance or

the, to me, absolutely fascinating discussion with the Mike Froman and the rest of the panelists yesterday about the transatlantic trade and investment partnership that, in an interesting way, there's a sort of re-upping, a recommitment by the United States after this extremely difficult decade in which Europeans felt often alienated from America, the European anxiety about the phrase pivot to Asia, which I think we can all agree was overdrawn, that America's still committed in Europe, to Europe and is part of the answer.

When I think about globalization, another feature of many of our conversations, I'm struck by the way in which the process of globalization plugs local elites into this global grid in a way that helps generate wealth, shared knowledge. This process of diffusion, becoming a middle-class world, is part of, I think, the way in which globalization shares information, economic expertise and wealth. But something we don't often think about is that as elites plug into this global grid, they unplug from their local grid. And as a

consequence, I think a lot of the disorder that we see is the traditional, historic leadership in different parts of the world becomes more oriented toward Davos or New York or London or Brussels and less oriented toward the problems that it's experiencing at home. And that worries me.

I like to think that there's a way in which social media, which is actually pretty local--you know, if you walk into Cairo and ask people what they're looking at on Facebook, who they're connected with, yeah, it's people all over the Arab world, but it's very often a very powerful, local connection.

Finally, I'm struck by the disconnect between the ability of this globalized economy to generate wealth and to recover from a terrible, you know, you want to say near-death experience, to come back, begin to come back here in Europe and the continuing political difficulty verging on dysfunction. So I would say on this tightrope that we're walking, the thing that I

find most frightening is the fragility of the political part of that tightrope that we walk along.

In the United States, our Congress isn't able to pass basic budget legislation. It goes from cliff to cliff, you could argue. In Europe, the difficulty of political institutions in addressing the problems, in forming the kind of Europe-wide institutions that are part of Chris Kojm's renaissance scenario, the difficulty of getting there. I look at the experiment in democracy in the Muslim world that's taking place in Egypt and I have to tell you that I find the returns two years on, as Egypt lurches toward an economic crisis and the democratically-elected government, so far it fails to solve the problems that the new Egypt that we hope will be prosperous, those difficulties worry me.

So I want to close, again, with this image of our movement along the tightrope. I hope we'll be, you know, rooting for the folks to get to the other side, and that processes like this will contribute to that.



It's fascinating that, as this conference shows, we can describe our problems with precision, but solving them seems as difficult as I can remember in my time as a journalist. So I want to close on that somewhat hopeful, somewhat pessimistic note and invite everybody to come back to, what I hope Craig will promise us, will be the Brussels Forum Number 9. And thank you all for being here through these three days.

Mr. Craig Kennedy: David and Chris, thank you for ending the Brussels Forum on this high and intellectual note as we started. That was really a tour de force by both of you and we're very appreciative.

We are greatly appreciative of all the people here in the audience. We're going to go down to a reception in just a second. Let me just do one last set of thank-yous. I want to thank our longtime partners, the government of Belgium and Daimler. I want to thank BP, the OCP Foundation, Ministry of Defense of the Republic Latvia, Bank of America, and the government of Montenegro. They really helped us a lot this year and

it's been just terrific. And then there's a very long list of other partners that have helped us in various ways. We are very, very appreciative.

The last thing you can do today when you leave is if you have compliments, you can talk to Nicola Lightner who's over there, who really runs the show. She's truly the big boss. If you have criticisms, you should talk to me. And I hope you feel that the comments and suggestions we got last year, we tried to integrate a lot of them into the changes this year. If you don't like something, let me know. If you've got a great idea on something we can do that would make a difference, we would appreciate it. Many, many thanks to all of you. Please join us downstairs for the reception and we'll see you next year.