

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2015

Members present

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top
Lord Balfe
Baroness Coussins
Lord Dubs
Lord Horam
Earl of Oxford and Asquith
Lord Risby
Lord Stirrup
Baroness Suttie
Lord Triesman
Lord Tugendhat (Chairman)

Examination of Witness

Mr Matthew Rojansky, Director of the Kennan Institute, Wilson Centre

Q150 The Chairman: Good morning, can you hear me?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: Good morning. Yes, I can.

The Chairman: Marvellous. First, thank you very much indeed for getting up so early in the morning and for agreeing to meet us at such an ungodly hour, from your point of view. We really are very grateful indeed.

I think you are aware of this, but for the sake of formality I make the point that we are a sub-committee of the European Union Select Committee of the House of Lords and we are conducting an inquiry into the European security strategy. This is a formal meeting and it is on the record, so what you say will be taken down, but if, on reflection at the end, there is something that you would like to excise or like to make non-attributable, do tell us. If there is anything you want to elaborate on and develop further, again, please send us further elucidation.

You have been sent a number of questions. I am sure that you will be asked those questions, but I am also sure that you will be asked other questions as well. I shall kick off with a very simple question: could you please give us a brief update of your view of the situation in eastern Ukraine, Russia actions there and what is happening to the Minsk process?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: I would be happy to. First, let me thank you, Lord Chairman, and all of you for this invitation. It is a bit early here in Washington, but a unique privilege, so I am quite grateful to you.

As far as the situation in eastern Ukraine goes, this is a rare opportunity to be able to say that we are looking at some relatively good news right now. The situation has quieted relative to what it was. What we are not seeing now that we had otherwise seen over the past year, since the intense phases of conflict last February, and previous to that over the summer of 2014, are the intermittent artillery barrages, with a handful of casualties being reported on a weekly basis. Rather, we are seeing relative quiet as the sides settle into something that looks like a sustainable line of contact or line of separation. That is more or less in compliance with the terms of Minsk II, which came out this past February.

The goal, of course, was to impose a larger political framework settlement. The situation on the ground is almost 100% dependent on the political framework. There, we have some problems. You will recall that several months ago, when the Ukrainian Parliament, the Rada, attempted to implement the elements to do with special status for Donbass, for the separatist entities, it encountered massive resistance, not only from within the Rada but public protest. There was in fact violence and someone was killed in a grenade attack.

So thus far, the political terms that would enable this period of quiet on the ground to continue have really not been implemented. However, it does appear to me, particularly from the meeting that was held last month in Paris, that the political leadership on all sides is prepared to let the nominal deadline of the end of this year slip into next year, given the relative quiet, and the fact that we now see some apparent evacuation of heavy and medium weaponry from the line of contact suggests that the combatant parties themselves are prepared to allow that deadline to slip and to continue to respect the ceasefire. All in all, I consider that to be pretty good news.

The Chairman: It is certainly better than it has been in the past, I agree.

Q151 Lord Horam: There has obviously been the migration crisis in Europe in the past few months and all the events in Syria, and so forth. That has been a huge distraction from the problems in Ukraine. Judging by what you say, in many ways that may have been a good thing, in the sense that it has allowed things to quieten down in Ukraine and get some semblance of stability.

How do you see things moving forward from here in Ukraine? Will Europe continue to be distracted, and what effect will that have on relations between the European Member States and Russia?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: That has been a very important factor. You are correct about that. The fundamental politics of Europe's position on Ukraine have not altered dramatically. It has always been with some reluctance that the European Union, Germany in particular, has recognised the reality that Russia is playing an unproductive role in Ukraine. It has responded with considerable economic pressure, political and diplomatic isolation and other steps that have been implemented via NATO, obviously, not only through EU structures. That reluctance remains. What we have not seen, however, is a return to an attitude of business as usual.

When you raise the issue of the refugee crisis, I am immediately reminded of discussions I had on a recent trip to Moscow, where, quite frankly, the view is a little more blunt. It is that Europe is now seeing the crumbling of its own social fabric and a geopolitical catastrophe brought to its shores and its doorstep, as a result of which it must now pivot and recognise the

indispensable role of its partnership with Russia in dealing with problems such as terrorism, migration and global stability, and that therefore it must reverse course on its isolation over the annexation of Crimea and Russia's intervention in Ukraine.

It will not surprise you to learn that I do not think that has happened; I hope you would agree. You could say that what has happened is at best a bit of a distraction effect. It is also perhaps one of these moments of introspection for Europe itself to ask, "What capacities do we need to deal not only with what we were expecting—relatively high-level, sophisticated political, economic and trade negotiations along the lines of the Eastern Partnership—but a real security and humanitarian crisis on our doorstep?" There I think the EU has been caught, relatively speaking, unprepared.

The Chairman: Thank you. I think "relatively" is kind.

Q152 Lord Risby: May I just build on your answer? If you look at the relationship of Russia with the former Soviet countries—Belarus to Moldova, Ukraine, which we have been talking about, Armenia, et cetera—they are all somewhat different. Nevertheless, the very clear view coming out of Moscow for some time is that Russia has a sphere of influence. That is very clear in their mind and they have made it very much part of their policy statement.

How could the EU interface with a country that believes it has a sphere of influence in that way and acts on it? How could the EU interface with Russia, if possible, considering the security and economic interests of the country, yet where some sort of *modus vivendi* is obviously desirable?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: This is an exceptionally important question and a subject that is politically uncomfortable to discuss in Washington. To have the conversation in the first instance, you have to recognise the drivers of what you rightly described as Russia's expectation that it has a sphere of influence. Those drivers stem from a different sense of reality than we tend to have either on this side of the Atlantic or in western Europe. We tend to think about sovereignty as an absolute. We often speak of our European allies, including smaller European nations that are EU and NATO members or aspire to that status, as having absolute sovereign rights to make choices. There is a very different understanding of sovereignty in Russia. I do not intend to make a moral judgment; it is based on Russia's history and the reality with which Russians have lived for a thousand years—and that is that sovereignty is always attenuated by the political, military, economic and other circumstances that reflect the power of the country in question. Therefore, there is no such thing as Georgia's, Ukraine's or, for that matter, the Baltic states' sovereign choices to do whatever they want in their neighbourhood, when that neighbourhood includes Russia, whose power is so much greater than any of them taken individually and, in some cases, even collectively, in limited instances. The message is very simple: Russians think about choices made by neighbouring countries as being not entirely their choices but choices that need to be made with Russian interests taken into account, and sometimes with Russian interests coming first, in the form of a veto.

Again, I do not mean to portray this as a kind of neo-imperium. It is a misreading of Russia to say that Russia seeks to recreate the Soviet Union. Setting aside the ideological factor, which has not been there thus far, my read of the Kremlin is that it is not looking for the level of responsibility, obligation and cost that comes with imperium. Russia is looking for that consideration; for that veto and that attenuation of sovereignty, as we would think of it, of their neighbours.

Conceptually, it is critical to internalise that they are not coming from the same place in their understanding of sovereignty to begin with. The Russians have talked for the last decade and

a half about a pluralistic or multipolar world order. What they mean by that is not a world order of some 190 sovereign nations coming together to make decisions through a rules-based framework such as the United Nations, though there is a superficial element of that. What they really mean is that there is a handful of nations—maybe two or three or five—that are the truly sovereign and independent actors on the global stage: Russia, as a right, being one of them; the United States being another; perhaps the United States and Europe in some collective form; and China. They say this very clearly. That gives you a sense of what they mean by sovereignty, which is very different from what we mean.

Q153 Lord Dubs: Can I say how much I enjoyed reading your article on the geopolitics of European security and co-operation? Thank you for that. My question follows on very closely from what you have said. You said that Russia has become more assertive and brought power politics back into play—those are my words, not yours. Would you agree that that is a good characterisation of the state of the European neighbourhood? Specifically, do you see any evidence that EU member states are responding strategically to this new situation?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: Thank you for the question. It would fly in the face of the reality that is laid bare before all of us if I said that power politics was now not the norm in Europe; it has become the norm. This is particularly troubling for me. I came of age politically after the end of the Cold War. I remember that for a decade or more there was an expectation, particularly from my European colleagues, that we had entered a new era. I will not say that we thought it was the “end of history”, but a new era in which values and a way of life in an ever-expanding sphere of stability and prosperity would simply be the rule of the day. This was not a particular policy, it was just the new reality. It was as if you walk outside and it is either raining or it is not raining. It was the weather; it was a fact of nature. What we are seeing is that human beings, particularly political leaders, have very real tools with which to utterly change that condition. That is what Vladimir Putin has reminded Europeans of, and also Americans.

Power politics comes in many forms—for instance, the Russian use of hard power and military tools, wherein Russia enjoys some considerable advantages, at least in localised contexts. Russia also has the advantage of preparedness; of being genuinely ready as a matter of doctrine, investment and infrastructure, and with the political psychology of the people, who have been prepared for conflict by the media discourse in the country. Russia enjoys many advantages in the use of hard military power, and so it has been used. It only makes sense that you would use the strongest tool in your toolkit when that can be used.

To come to your question, I would also describe as power politics some of the responses from Europe and the United States. For instance, the response of levying very significant sanctions against the Russian economy. I do not see this as dramatically different from the use of hard power. In other words, if we were to establish some kind of bright-line difference between destroying physical infrastructure through bombing versus destroying physical infrastructure through the denial of access to finance, credit, technology and any of the things that you need global markets for today, the Russians would call that an archaic and artificial distinction. Their feeling has been that we are engaged in a war. It may not be a full-blown war, or a war that creeps over the nuclear threshold—we pray that it does not—but it is a war none the less. So some of the power politics, if you want to call it that, being deployed on the western side are not kinetic military tools but they are acts of war; you can call them acts of economic war if you want. Then, of course, kinetic military actions are being taken. Some of them would be open to the criticism of being merely symbolic. But the deployment of heavy NATO equipment in countries that are close to the border of Russia, particularly in the Baltic states and Poland, and the repositioning of American units from Germany to Hungary via central

Europe, are intended as signals. This is all power projection and power politics and a response to the new reality as we have come to understand it.

The question I would ask is whether it is a comprehensive and adequate response. Is the new reality that we find ourselves in one in which we are prepared to secure and advance our own interests? My answer is unfortunately no, for a simple reason but one that I hope we can talk about a little more: we do not know what this period looks like. We knew during the Cold War what controlled escalation looked like. We had various scenarios and we were clear about those with the Soviets. Therefore, they knew that, if they did A, we would do B; if they proceeded to respond with C, we would respond with D; but that D would not automatically lead to global nuclear holocaust. It is a very unpleasant thing to talk about but there was a ladder of escalation. It was real, it was understood and it helped us to relatively keep our confrontation within bounds. I think we lack that today entirely. We are beginning to climb up that ladder without having any sense of what the next rung is. To me, that is very concerning.

Q154 Baroness Suttie: Good morning. Can I say how much I enjoyed and appreciated your explanation of the Russian view of sovereignty? It was a very accurate description of the different views of the world that we currently have. Political divisions and tensions between the EU and Russia have the potential to remain for a very long time, but do you see any evidence that Member States are perhaps softening their stance, perhaps particularly because of what is happening in Syria and maybe even because of what is happening in Egypt? We will see whether that was an ISIS-related bomb in Egypt.

Mr Matthew Rojansky: Thank you for the question. I see some very recent evidence of softening. It has come in the form of statements from several European leaders who have talked about the inevitability of a return to economic normalcy with Russia. So far, none of that has been reflected in votes in the Commission or in any actual concrete steps to change Russia's relative economic isolation from Europe. I am not sure at this moment that it serves the interests of either side to do that, if I can be a bit cynical. On the European side and the US side, since we are very much part of the sanctions regime, we are engaged in an experiment right now. It is an interesting and important experiment. This is the first time that we have collectively imposed such significant sanctions on one of the top 10 global economies—not only that, but an economy with a considerable level of integration with the global economy to begin with. If you compare this to Iran, Cuba, North Korea or Iraq, or to any number of countries that we have previously sanctioned, it is truly an entirely different ball game. It has therefore opened up a conversation, particularly here in Washington, with my friends in the White House and the Treasury Department, where many of them are enjoying a moment of triumph. They feel that they have invented a whole new weapon and toolkit; it is a sort of miraculous laser beam that we can use with relative impunity. Well, we shall see—but certainly it is an important experiment and an important question. The effects on some European economies have been very real. Finland, for example, and even Germany—as robust as its economy is—have felt some effects.

Then there is the experiment seen from the Russian side; the Russians talk about “import substitution”, and the retooling of their economy to be, if not autarky, at least less dependent on the European vector, which has been the absolutely dominant vector for trade, financing, technology and everything else in their economy for the last 25 years. They see that as advantageous. Again, if I can be cynical, I am not entirely sure that the scenario we are in now and the rhetoric matches the real incentives on either side for some time to come. The Russian economy has not collapsed; it is hurting—it is absolutely hurting—but right now this political experiment may be very much in Vladimir Putin's interest. Similarly, in the West, establishing this precedent that we have this powerful tool, with which we can have our way

and come away from it relatively unscathed, may be in our interests as well—but I personally would not recommend it, because I think that it is too high risk.

What I mean by that is in the long term I think we are hastening the atrophy or complete obsolescence of the Bretton Woods international financial system, in which we in the United States and Europe play such a dominant role and enjoy what you could call seigniorage rights. We are hastening the end of that, and I think that the Chinese will help bring that about, convinced to do so by the Russians, and others may join them. That is longer term; in the meantime, the experiment will continue.

On your question of causation—you asked whether this was all because of Syria and refugees—no, I do not think that it is, or only on the level of rhetoric. You hear some occasionally appreciative or positive noises from the French about Russia's role in Syria. I think that that is confined to the Syrian question. It is simply that the French are frustrated that no one else has been able to accomplish anything, and the Russians are putting at least something on the line and some real assets on the ground, which may have a chance of changing the situation. We know that the Russian intervention has been aimed primarily not at ISIS but at enemies of the Assad regime, which is not necessarily something that the French or anyone else in Europe would like to see. But the positive noises about Russia more recently are not about the geopolitical problem that we in Europe have with Russia; I think that they are limited to the situation in Syria. The Russians would be the first to tell you that everything is linked and that you cannot simply divide it up and say, "We'll co-operate on Iran nuclear issues and on Syria but then we'll go to war with each other over Ukraine". But for the moment, that seems to be the situation that we are in.

Q155 The Chairman: Before I turn to Lady Armstrong, can I ask a supplementary question? If it turns out that the plane crash in Sinai is the result of some kind of terrorist activity—a bomb or whatever—as the United Kingdom appears to believe, do you think it will have a significant impact on Russian public opinion and therefore on Putin's freedom of action in dealing with these matters?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: You are correct to say that we do not know yet what the cause was. Part of that may be some intentional obfuscation by Russian authorities—my understanding is that the Egyptians have actually been quite forthcoming but that the Russian authorities have intentionally questioned any information coming out and then introduced new information to try to cast doubt on it. You can understand why that might be the case, if they in fact do not know what the cause is—or they know exactly what it is and they fear the consequences of that, as the question suggests.

My sense right now is that, if this was a terrorist attack, it is more likely than not to redound to the reinforcement of Putin's decision to have intervened in Syria. There are people who disagree with me strenuously. The victims are not just Russian citizens but civilians of a very sympathetic, common sort: the kind of people who book a cheap charter vacation to Sharm el-Sheikh are the kind of people with whom many Russians can identify. These are not elite, super-wealthy Russians, and that is important. So the argument is credibly made that the deaths, or the tragic murders, of these people, is blood on Putin's hands and that this will lead to anger against Putin. I do not dismiss that argument—I recite it here for you—but I think a little differently. Every bit of evidence that we have had so far about Putin's activist and almost pre-emptive national security strategy for Russia has shown that the Russian people prefer that type of approach to a clear and present danger from international or domestic terrorism or what they refer to as neo-fascism in Ukraine. Shooting first and asking questions later against any such threat, even if it comes with costs, so far has only proven to be very popular in Russia. So if this turns out to have been an act of terrorism and there turns out to be

a link either to a domestic Russian group or to a central Asian or Caucasus Islamist group—or even if it is just international Islamist terrorism—the Kremlin will very easily and credibly make the argument that this threat has always existed. After all, they can say that with Beslan and the Nord-Ost theatre hostage taking and the blowing up of apartment buildings and metro cars, they have taken the fight to the terrorists. For the foreseeable future, at least for several years, that is a very plausible and popular argument. Every time a Russian aircraft does a bombing run and destroys an ammunition depot—it does not matter whether it belongs to Nusra or ISIS, or the Free Syrian Army—that will be seen as a victory for the Russian people against the terrorists who have murdered these innocents. So my argument would be that, more likely than not, the latter interpretation will prevail and that this will redound to Putin's benefit.

Q156 Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top: Good morning. We all enjoyed your article, in which you suggest that the way out of the impasse between Russia and the West may well be regional dialogue on security, based on the principles of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Could you develop and explain the parameters of that and say how that might bring about a new state of relations with Russia? What do you think the role for European Union countries would be within that?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: Thank you for the question. I hope that in the last 20 minutes I have sufficiently impressed you with my realism and hard-nosedness about Russia, so that when I proceed to become idealistic and optimistic I am still taken at least a little bit seriously. I have encountered plenty of scepticism about this argument. Maybe the problem is that it is premature; at this point, the motives politically and even in a security sense are just not there yet. Maybe that is the problem—and I talk about that in the article. The key thing to understand about the Helsinki process is that it did not come from nowhere; it did not simply come from the good will of all sides thinking, “Gosh, wouldn't it be nice if we had a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security architecture, so shouldn't we just get together and talk about that?”. No, it came from the fact that we saw repeated and extremely dangerous crises centred in Europe for a period of a quarter of a century from the end of World War II until the beginning of what we now call the détente era. It was precisely because of the seriousness of those crises, from the Berlin crisis all the way on, including the Cuban missile crisis, which we now know was one telegram or letter away from possibly bringing nuclear war, that both sides—the Soviet bloc and the western bloc—recognised the inevitability of finding ways to change and constrain the path of escalation. That is what détente was about, and it was in that context that the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which we now call the Helsinki conference, took place over a period of three or four years, which gave rise to the Helsinki Final Act.

Now, the Helsinki Final Act is not black magic; there is no special button that it creates that allows us to plug up the muzzles of Russian tanks or defuel ICBMs in their silos. But it introduces a comprehensive conception of European security, which is absolutely critical. The Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE principles that we recognise today come in three baskets. Political and military security for the Soviets at the time was about what one of you rightly called their sphere of influence in the region. It was about recognising and enshrining the borders that the Soviet Union created by force after World War II. That was part of the bargain. We have to be very honest about that, because we are going to have to be honest about it today. It looks different—the borders are smaller, they are pushed back, but they are still there. Recognition of the political and military aspect of security has to be part of the deal.

The second piece of it was economic and environmental. It was very forward-looking of them to think in those terms then. That is much more important today, obviously; I talked earlier about economic tools as economic warfare. We are going to have to have an integrated concept of economic security in Europe, which would probably include labour migration, which many fear in western Europe and which the Russians have great concerns about as well. By the way, few people recognise that Russia is the second destination in the world for migrants after the United States—it is simply that those migrants come from places such as central Asia and the Caucasus, which we do not pay much attention to. But they number in the millions.

The third element or so-called basket from Helsinki is human security, which is the human rights equation. The basic message there—and if you want to call it a *quid pro quo*, it was—was that we in the West recognised the Soviet Union's predominance in its sphere of influence in the political-military dimension, in exchange for which they formally recognised that the human rights of their citizens in the Soviet Union and in all the other signatory states to the Helsinki Final Act was a concern of the European community as a whole—it was not merely a “domestic” or “sovereign” question, and you have to leave us alone. That was a critical evolution in thinking about European security.

So I offer this as a comprehensive understanding of European security; if we tried to reinvent it today, there is no chance that we would do any better, so let us use what we have. The real question that matters is how we get back to a dialogue in which the goal is to constrain escalation and achieve perhaps a new *détente*—I am not super-comfortable with that term, but I use it for lack of a better one. The question there is not about what it looks like; we know what it looks like because we have it. The question is really about motivation. My concern is that we have had just enough time to forget the important lessons of the Cold War, such as fear, and just how bad things can get. I talked earlier about forgetting the lesson of what controlled escalation looks like, so that each step does not have the risk of leading to infinite conflict. Yet we have not come up with anything new. What we have is the same old dangerous ways of waging war, but no new tools and none of the old tools for constraining them. So I think that it is mostly about politics and motivation.

The role of Europe, which you asked about, would have to be to supply that motivation. I do not think that the United States will do it from the western side; I certainly do not think that the Russians will do it from their side. What they expect is a kind of genuflection or apology and a recognition that they were right all along and that we were the ones who upset the applecart by expanding NATO, and so forth. So Europe is properly positioned in the middle to supply the existential rationale and say, “Look, guys, this is a mess, and if we keep getting it wrong in this way, Europe is going to pay the costs, first and foremost”. So the political will and political capital will have to be mostly supplied by Europe. I tell my fellow Americans—and I think that I included this in the article—that we are going to have to be prepared to swallow that. We are very bad at doing that in the United States; we are very bad at letting Europeans lead. We always talk about how much we want Europe to lead; mostly we want them to pay for things and not do anything different from the way we would do it. Well, we are going to have to accept that if we want real European leadership.

Q157 Lord Triesman: Good morning. Like everybody else, I am going to return to your excellent article, in which you argue that Germany remains committed to multilateral structures despite the talk that there is growing German hegemony. Can you give us an assessment of how you think the German leadership has performed during the crisis over Ukraine compared to the way it is playing its role in the refugee and migration crisis? Is that

evidence that Germany will take on an enlarged foreign and security policy role outside Europe and the EU framework?

Let me add a small addendum. I remember that during the discussions before the United Nations millennium conference, when we talked about whether there could be enlargement of the Security Council and changes to the permanent membership of it, the most senior German political leaders and diplomats said that they thought that it would be seen as hubris if they tried to claim any of those international roles. Now we see the argument for them taking a greater international role and stepping up on these kinds of issues. I make that comment because that is a very significant change over a period of just 10 years.

Mr Matthew Rojansky: I agree with the framing of the question. The best antidote to fear of hubris is to act by acclamation of the public at large. In other words, if all of Europe or the whole of the world—even Washington—looks to Germany for leadership and action, well, there are no worries about hubris there. We have seen that over the past year or year and a half. There is even talk about the Chancellor herself, as though hers is at long last the phone number for Europe that Henry Kissinger sought many decades ago. You know, whom do you call when you want to call Europe? Well, now you call “Mutti.” It goes without saying that Germany has capacities that no other individual European country has.

The question of how Germany has handled Ukraine versus the refugees is a really interesting one. I see a distinction from my vantage point, but I am not inside the German decision-making apparatus, so it may be entirely artificial. I see that on Ukraine, the Germans were extremely reluctant, and in almost all respects are still reluctant, to respond in a decisive fashion. I think that that is for two reasons. One is mostly calculated and the other is mostly moral. The calculated reason is that Ukraine is a mess. I know Ukraine very well and it is an absolute mess. Picking the “Ukrainian side” in what is emerging as a war between Russia and Ukraine—the Ukrainians certainly call it that—is not a no-brainer. It is not an easy choice because then you end up owning what you broke and being responsible for Ukraine’s future after the conflict. That is not going to be an easy task and I do not think that the Germans are to be blamed for not particularly wanting that responsibility. The moral calculus will be familiar to all of us: how can Germany, politically, morally and in every other way, choose to fight against Russia given its history? That was the underlying dynamic that drove Russian-German rapprochement and the Neue Ostpolitik, going back many decades. That is still very present in German politics and morality. So it is a reluctant leadership role on Ukraine.

You raised very importantly the issue of the common foreign and security policy and the implications of the situation in Ukraine and the refugee situation on the existence of such. Although it may sound counterintuitive, Ukraine has in a way undermined the notion of a common foreign and security policy, not because Europe has been so divided but because institutional Europe—the EU—has punted to NATO the security response of Europe to the notion of possible Russian challenges to sovereignty and territorial integrity in the post-Soviet space. We see that now with the development of some attempts at NATO-led deterrence. But there is no EU deterrent strategy. There is nothing resembling an EU security strategy in response to the threat. That is because the threat, as it has been understood, is of a magnitude beyond the EU; maybe in 20 or 30 years it might have those capacities, but it is not even close. The EU Member States that are also NATO Member States and take that threat seriously—the Baltics, the Poles, the Romanians and others—are not particularly interested in addressing this threat through the EU.

On the refugee side, Germany’s response has been very different. It has been led by a moral impulse. I am not blessing or concurring with this impulse but it is a largely moral impulse that says, “We are a nation that has treated stateless people and refugees horribly in our past;

we have an obligation to do better as we face this humanitarian crisis". Obviously the consequences for the rest of Europe are clear. Most of Europe seems to resent Germany's decision. The implication for Europe's common foreign and security policy on refugees to me seems to point in the opposite direction of Ukraine. Perhaps being forced to address and assimilate this new reality in Europe comes closer to an area where Europe has decent capacity and capability and might be brought round.

The thing about integrating refugees is that, at the end of the day, this is a basic human question; these are people and families. Not only that, this is to the benefit of every country that ultimately does it and does it well. We are a nation of immigrants. The United Kingdom is increasingly a nation of immigrants. You all know this as well as I do. These people are going to work and they are going to work hard for their country. Most of the politics around it is just fantasy and political rhetoric. These are just my personal views, but that is different from the Ukraine crisis, for which there are really not a lot of good short and middle-term futures, whereas on refugees there are a lot of good short and middle-term outcomes and that could be good for a common foreign and security policy. Europe enjoys good tools for integrating and settling people and providing them with social welfare. That is what Europe does well.

Q158 Lord Stirrup: Thank you. Listening to your characterisation of Russia's approach to sovereignty and some of your subsequent answers makes me feel that this is, in some ways, a recasting of the Athenians saying to the Melians that the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must. The European Union has a number of strengths but it has also been described as an herbivorous power, one that lacks its own military capabilities. We have heard in evidence that the Berlin Plus arrangements are dead in the water, effectively leaving the EU without access to any hard military capacity. In your answer to the previous question, you said that the EU essentially does not have the tools or power to address seriously the security issues coming out of Russia and Ukraine but that it might in the future. Do you see any practical steps that the security review can take, or anything that it could put in place, that might contribute to improving the EU hard power capabilities in the medium and longer term?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: That is the most important question, not just for the EU but for NATO. It is also the important question for the United States when we look at our future commitments in Europe in an environment where our new Speaker of the House is a fiscal hawk who previously chaired the Committee on Ways and Means. Very obviously Europe will have to up its financial investment in security. What matters when you talk about spending on defence and security is not just how much you spend. This 2% thing is something of a chimera; I do not quite get it. I know that we have to pick a number, so we picked a number. But what matters is the capabilities that each of the European states is bringing to the table. It seems as though the main capability that, for example, the Baltic states bring to the table, in addition to some definite value on cyber-warfare and technology, is their alarm-sounding. They are the canary in the coalmine. They let us know when we all have to rush in. That is a fine political strategy, but people in the Baltic states working with their European colleagues might ask, "What are the actual conflict scenarios that we are likely to face and what are the capabilities that we need to respond to those scenarios?" I would suggest that, for the Nordic countries or northern European countries in general, they might want to help them to do that and they might want to have NATO's blessing in so doing.

There may be other elements to that, but I am the first to admit that I do not know. In three days' time, I am headed to the NATO Defense College to do a fellowship, where I will probably learn that everything I have just said is completely wrong. But my sense so far is that if you think of a national security and defence strategy as a five or six-step plan, step two

in the plan right now is “call Washington”. Of course the United States is there; we are there because of our presence of troops and materiel in Europe already. However, there are some steps that should come before that. That entails the comparative advantages of individual European countries.

Think, for example, about the Black Sea theatre. Russia was in Sevastopol all along, but thanks to its complete occupation of Crimea, Russia now has the enhanced capability of making the Black Sea into what we call an area denial zone. That is similar to what the Chinese have done to notionally keep the United States out of the South China Sea and the East China Sea. The Russians can do the same in the Black Sea. Whose concern is that, first and foremost? I would think that it is Turkey’s concern; it is Bulgaria’s concern; it is Romania’s concern. We need to work on a strategy with NATO, with the United States, because of our naval assets, and with the United Kingdom, because of your naval assets. We need to think about a strategy that, on an immediate and ongoing basis, challenges that and demonstrates to the Russians that they will not be able to deny free navigation of the Black Sea and will not be able to shut down the Black Sea in case of a conflict somewhere in the post-Soviet periphery.

It is always going to be about specifics: what are the specific capabilities that we need to respond on a precise, measured and controlled level to the kinds of provocations that we are likely to see? It has to be about that rather than overarching rhetoric, such as, “Gee, we wish Europe would spend more”. You can spend 2% of your GDP on defence and have absolutely no defensive capability. When I go to NATO Defense College in the next week or so, the thing that I would like to work on is defining what those steps of controlled escalation, of action and reaction, might look like in different theatres and how to do that in ways that do not open up this slippery slope toward general nuclear exchange, which obviously we do not want to see.

Q159 Lord Balfre: In recent years, we have seen a shift in European public opinion, which is much less willing to get engaged in military action. Perhaps this question should be asked to you after you come back from NATO rather than before you go. Do you see this as posture-shifting or do you think that there is any hope of a more engaged role being taken by European Member States in defence? You mentioned the Baltics. I have had conversations recently with people in Sweden and Finland. It is ludicrous that we talk about defending the Baltics, yet two of the major powers in the region will not contemplate joining NATO to help defend the other three, which are in NATO, and Norway, which is the furthest away but also one of the powers. Would you like to speculate as to how the role of Europe in international affairs in its own neighbourhood could be strengthened?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: That is a fair question and I hope that my insight into this will increase after next month. First, I would observe that this is not unique to Europe. We in the United States are experiencing the same phenomenon. I read an editorial piece in *Time* magazine this morning making the case that the reason why Putin has had such a relative public relations success in the Middle East in his interventions is because Americans are simply exhausted from our interventions; Americans are unwilling to mobilise to engage in conflicts anywhere in the world because we are exhausted. After all, President Obama, although he has become somewhat more activist than we thought he would be originally, ran on a platform of getting us out of our entanglements.

Here is the thing about those kind of political moods: they are pretty fickle. Usually, not only do they change and evolve in cycles over time, they come in response to world events. We are still dealing with a kind of hangover from the past 25 years, when most of the perception in Europe and the United States has been that we prevailed in the big conflict that mattered—the

conflict with the Soviet Union—and that there is not a direct threat to our territorial sovereignty and security. The kinds of threats that we deal with are gooey, amorphous, international and transnational in character, and those sorts of things can be dealt with, if not by international organisations, at least by capabilities that do not look like old-fashioned hard power, going to war or sending the boys overseas. That hangover still exists in the United States and Europe.

You asked what can be done to change the mood. Unfortunately, the only realistic answer is that the mood will trail the real world events—the threat—probably by several months or several years. When there is a really clear and present danger of a Russian or other invasion of Baltic countries—I mean by that more than just the Estonians telling us that they are nervous about Narva; I mean the Finns really feeling that a replay of the Winter War might happen—and when that feeling is real, I think you are going to see the Finns clamouring to get into NATO.

I am not saying that I wish for that to happen, I am simply saying that we cannot artificially conjure up political will for defence spending and military interventions or deployments without there being a real, clear and present danger. As the Hollywood movies have taught us, you can manufacture it to some extent—the tail can wag the dog—but only to a limited degree, and you always pay the costs for that later, as we did, frankly, in the United States over the Iraq war. I think that the Baltic states are moving in that direction right now, but the Russian threat is still relatively limited, amorphous and ambiguous. The Kremlin may be sincere when it says, “You would have to be insane to contemplate attacking a NATO country”. As long as your biggest potential adversary says that it would be insanity to challenge you, you have pretty good reason to feel secure, so the motives are not quite there yet politically.

Q160 The Chairman: Mr Rojansky, you have been wonderfully incisive, penetrating and frank. Perhaps I could impose on your good will with one last question. We began by talking about Germany, and I should like to end by talking about the United Kingdom, or asking you to talk about it. How do you see the British role as it has been over Ukraine and the other issues which Europe is facing and what the British role might and should be? Perhaps you could say just a few words about how you look at us from across the Atlantic.

Mr Matthew Rojansky: You invite me to spoil any good will that I may have created with my previous remarks. No, I will not do that. This may be typical American exceptionalism, but I view the UK as quite different from much of Europe. That is not because of any great profound mission or some kind of Anglo cultural hubris; it is because of the UK’s capabilities. You are talking about a nuclear-armed power, a considerable conventional power, including naval and air power, and a Security Council permanent member with a veto. As a consequence of all of those things, the UK plays an outsized role in the geopolitical component of dealing with the Russians, the Iran nuclear question or any other question. Has the UK lived up to that or taken advantage of that special role and those unique capabilities in response to the Ukraine crisis? The answer is no, I do not think it has. I think that the UK has largely muddled around as part of a European consensus, occasionally as a critical voice in it, but mostly sowing confusion rather than increasing clarity.

My personal view is that, in Washington, we feel a tug from our British and Canadian allies to be tougher on Russia without very much in the way of improved tools or capabilities for responding to Russia coming from them. As an American who tries to advise our Government about how to deal with Russia, I find that very frustrating. If we want a special relationship UK-US dialogue on Russia, let us have it. If we want a three-way dialogue with Canada, let us have that, and if we want a transatlantic dialogue with all of Europe, let us have that. Let us

not have what I feel we have had too much of in the last decade or so, which is NATO allies or important European trading partners of ours attempting to wag the dog of American policy towards the region by raising the temperature and volume of your statements without following them with any action or introducing capabilities that can be helpful to us, simply in hopes that you will sway American actions or the American view. It is unlikely to happen, because the main driver for US policy will be our domestic politics, which are going to be very vividly on display for the next year and a half, unfortunately.

That means that anyone who wants any hope of influencing the US approach to Russia, Ukraine and the region will have to be prepared to have a serious conversation with the next Administration starting some time around mid-2017, which actually gives us a nice runway. It gives us about 18 months to develop some strong European capabilities and something resembling a European strategy for the long haul with Russia which, I hope, will get beyond economic sanctions and isolation and wishful thinking that the Putin regime will simply disappear or transform within its own petri dish of economic isolation, which is not going to happen. Then you will have a fantastic opportunity to engage with a new American President to say, “Will you join us in this strategy? Oh, by the way, we are prepared to take the lead on this”. Whether that leads to something like a new Helsinki order or is more confrontational—confrontation may be justified; that is fine—the leadership would then come from the European side with the capabilities and investments to match it. That would be very compelling to a new American Administration, but wading into American politics, alarmist statements and moral guilt-tripping? That is not going to play well, not going to work and not going to get any results that you want, in my view. I hope that that is not too frank or insulting.

The Chairman: Not to put words in your mouth, but when Douglas Hurd was Foreign Secretary, he used to talk about Britain punching above its weight. There are people in this country who feel that over Ukraine and some of the other issues facing Europe, we have been punching somewhat below our weight. Do you think that that is a fair assessment?

Mr Matthew Rojansky: Yes, I would agree with that.

The Chairman: Mr Rojansky, you have been very kind. You talked about idealism and realism. I am reading Niall Ferguson’s biography of Henry Kissinger at the moment, and he makes a very good case that Kissinger was the ultimate idealist, which is not the way we had previously thought of him, but is very germane to this debate. Thank you very much indeed.

Mr Matthew Rojansky: Thank you so much.