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Intelligence Squared U.S.

Give Trump A Chance

For the Motion: Clive Crook, Gayle Trotter

Against the Motion: David Frum, Michael Waldman

Moderator: John Donovan

AUDIENCE RESULTS

Before the debate:

28% FOR

43% AGAINST

28% UNDECIDED

After the debate:

21% FOR

72% AGAINST

07% UNDECIDED

Start Time: (00:00:00)

John Donovan:

The gentleman who is responsible for the existence of Intelligence Squared U.S. We always start each debate by chatting a little bit about why the topic and why now and what might we expect to hear? So, please welcome to the stage Bob Rosenkranz.

[applause]

Hi, Bob.

Robert Rosenkranz:

Hi, John.

John Donovan:

Bob, let's talk a little bit about this motion. When we -- when we say, "Give Trump a Chance," what do we mean by, "Give a chance"?

Robert Rosenkranz:

Well, I think it means we should reserve judgment. We should be open-minded. We should not be reflexively oppositional to everything he proposes or every nominee that he puts forward.

John Donovan:

Meaning let him govern?

Robert Rosenkranz:

Well, let him -- I mean, govern means part of the system that includes Congress, that includes the executive agencies, and it's a very broad question. But it means, I think, in this case, to keep an open mind about his administration.

00:01:01

John Donovan:

And as you listen to this debate tonight, what are you going to be listening for to help you decide how to vote?

Robert Rosenkranz:

Well, I'm going to be listening I'd say -- I try to make a distinction between what I call what's going on, on the screen, and what's going on, on the soundtrack. And I try to pay more attention to the screen than the soundtrack.

John Donovan:

You mean the soundtrack as the music and the atmospherics?

Robert Rosenkranz:

The soundtrack meaning the atmospherics, things that are symbolic, things that are theatrical, things that might have an impact on perception, but don't really represent substance versus what's going on, on the screen, is the substance of what a government is doing, the appointments that they make, the actual decisions that go into effect, actual pieces of legislation that get passed. I'm trying to look for a distinction between, as I say, the soundtrack and the screen.

00:02:02

And I personally give more weight to the actions than I do to the atmospherics.

John Donovan:

And I just want to point out an interesting thing. We're not quite into the third week of this administration. We started this program back in 2006. President Obama was elected in 2008. And we did a count. We did 10 debates over the period of the Obama Administration that had the name, "Obama," in the motion. We tested him all sorts of ways.

Robert Rosenkranz:

My guess is that this will not be the last debate that has Trump in the name.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

All right, well we'll be back in Washington for some of those. I am expecting -- I hope everybody will be here for those.

Robert Rosenkranz:

Good.

John Donovan:

Thank you. And thank you, Bob Rosenkranz.

Robert Rosenkranz:

Good.

John Donovan:

Let's welcome our debaters to the stage.

[applause]

And to add to the atmosphere and to the power of your voice, let's give these debaters a round of applause.

[applause]

00:03:00

And so, that's one more thing I want to explain. Again, because we actually edit this program into a -- starting with a radio broadcast, we make certain edits and we take -- the listeners of this will hear us taking breaks. And so, you're going to see me do things like say, "I'm John Donovan and I'll be right back," and you will notice that I have not gone anywhere. So, you're watching the sausage being made. Please be patient with that. But also, for that reason, a couple of times throughout the evening, again, to make your presence felt, I would love it if I could request your spontaneous applause. And this would be one of those times to really launch the broadcast. So, if we could go ahead.

[applause]

Well, hello to the future from the stage of an Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate held in Washington, D.C. in the earliest days of the administration of Donald J. Trump.

00:04:01

I'm John Donovan, and in this debate, our proposition is, "Give Trump a Chance." And to those of you who are watching or listening to this debate after the fact, whether by days or by weeks or by months, know that this debate took place exactly 13 days into the Trump Administration. 13 days that have seemed pretty wild to those of us who are here tonight where a swearing in was followed by massive protests, followed by a temporary ban on travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries, followed by demonstrations at airports, followed by an attorney general being fired after defying an executive order, followed by Democratic senators boycotting part of the process for confirming Trump's Cabinet nominees. And whether things started to calm down immediately after day 13 or got wilder still, well, you in the future know a lot better -- you in the future know a lot more about -- well, you in the future -- see the good thing about editing is that none of those things happened.

00:05:05

But I'm going to start it again. And whether things calm down from day 13 or got wilder still, only you in the future know. You know better than us. So, let's just say right here on day 13, "We can only imagine." "Give Trump a Chance," we will debate yes and no and what that means according to values we aim to adhere to at Intelligence Squared. Civility, logic and, yes, facts, the old-fashioned kind. And then, as always, our live audience votes to choose a winner and only one side wins. The first thing we'd like to have you do is vote to tell us where you stand on this motion as you come in off the street. There's a keypad at your seat. And as you go to it and take a look again at the simple motion we have tonight, "Give Trump a Chance," if you agree with this motion, push number one. And, if you disagree, push number two. And, if you are undecided, push number three.

00:06:00

And we'll give that a little bit of time. And I'll just -- I'll wait to get full eye contact from all of you. By the way, the other keys are not operative, and if you press the wrong key, just correct your vote. Just push the button once, hold it down for a second, and let go just one time and that will work. Okay, I have full eye contact. I just want to check with our producer that everything was registered. That vote is in. Okay, what I want to explain is that what we do is -- after you've heard the arguments, we ask you to vote a second time to consider the motion, having heard the arguments. And we give victory to the team whose numbers have moved up the most in percentage points, who have persuaded more people to come to their side from the starting position. That may mean a result where there's an absolute winner who's not actually the winner because the other team has moved more people to their side, so I want to explain that so that it's clear. Our motion is this, "Give Trump a Chance." We have four debaters, two against two, arguing for and against the motion.

00:07:00

Let's meet them first, starting with Clive Crook. Clive, welcome to Intelligence Squared.

Clive Crook:
Hi.

John Donovan:
Hi. And spontaneous applause.

[applause]

Hi, Clive, so you are a Bloomberg View columnist. You write about economics and finance and politics. Not a Trump supporter. You were not a Trump a supporter, though you're arguing that side, you wrote that you could never vote for him, but that you want to give him a chance.

Clive Crook:
Exactly.

John Donovan:
What do you mean by that?

Clive Crook:
Well, I think he's owed a chance. That's what I'm going to be arguing. I'm not enthusiastic. Far from enthusiastic -- I'm a pessimist about Trump, but he's owed a chance. That's the system.

John Donovan:
Okay.

Clive Crook:
That's what democracy means.

John Donovan:
We'll be looking forward to how you make that argument. And tell us, please, who your partner is.

Clive Crook:
Gayle Trotter.

John Donovan:
Ladies and gentlemen, Gayle Trotter. Hi, Gayle.

[applause]

Gayle Trotter:
Hi, John.

John Donovan:

Welcome to Intelligence Squared. Gayle, you are a columnist, a political analyst, an attorney, a full-throated Donald Trump supporter.

00:08:00

You are -- you live in Washington, D.C. Let's point out that, in Washington, D.C., 91 percent of the votes went to Hillary Clinton. So, that -- does that mean with your friends and neighbors, politics is off the table?

Gayle Trotter:

Well, no, because I took note that Hillary Clinton won fewer votes in 2016 than Barack Obama won in 2012. So, I guess I must be having some sort of impact on my friends and neighbors.

John Donovan:

Oh, it's all you? Pardon, okay, Gayle Trotter. Thank you and the team arguing for the motion, "Give Trump a Chance."

[applause]

And we have two debaters arguing against it. Here, making his third appearance as an Intelligence Squared debater, let's welcome David Frum.

[applause]

Hi, David. You are a senior editor at The Atlantic. You are a former speech writer. You were a special assistant to President George W. Bush. David, you are a conservative. You are arguing against giving Trump a chance, but you were not actually always in the opposition. In early 2015, you said you fell into the category of the Trump curious.

00:09:03

What did you find appealing at that point about candidate Trump?

David Frum:

As a Republican, I thought a lot of orthodoxies in the Republican Party needed to be shaken up on issues from health care, middle class economics, and immigration. And I thought Donald Trump could be a welcome shakeup. Obviously, it was impossible that he would every win the nomination, much less the presidency, so there was nothing to worry about.

John Donovan:

Oh, well. How it goes. And tell us, please, who your partner is.

David Frum:

My partner is Michael Waldman, president of the Brennan Center, author of books on voting rights and gun rights. But, most importantly, our sons went to preschool together.

John Donovan:

Ladies and gentlemen, Michael Waldman.

[applause]

Hi, Michael. Welcome to Intelligence Squared. You also were a presidential speech writer and special assistant, but you were in the Clinton Administration. You are a liberal, unlike your partner, so it makes sense that you actually would disagree with a lot of what our new Republican president is putting forward. But is there anything that Donald Trump has said that you can agree with?

Michael Waldman:

Well, as President Clinton once introduced me, he said, "He's the guy who types my speeches," so that's --"

00:10:02

I liked it when President Trump said he would "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution" and it's been kind of downhill since then.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

All right. That's your perspective. The team arguing against the motion Give Trump A Chance. Ladies and gentlemen, let's welcome them all.

[applause]

Now this is a debate. It's a debate on the specific motion Give Trump A Chance. It is competitive. One side will win and one side will lose. You, our live audience here in Washington, D.C. at George Washington University, will be the judges. You will vote -- you have voted already and you'll vote again at the end of the debate and again reminding you it's the team whose numbers move up the most in percentage points who will be declared our winner. We go in three rounds. Round one, opening statements by each debater in turn. Those statements will be six minutes each. First up will be Gayle Trotter. You can make your way to the lectern. Up first for the motion, "Give Trump a Chance," Gayle Trotter, a columnist, political analyst, and attorney. Ladies and gentlemen, Gayle Trotter.

[applause]

00:11:00

Gayle Trotter:

Thank you all for joining us tonight for this very important discussion. My partner Clive and I ask you to vote in favor of our motion, to give Trump a chance. The question before us tonight requires your focused attention. Let's talk for a moment about what we're not debating. The question is not whether you personally voted for Donald Trump. This being Washington, D.C., I suspect if we ask for a show of hands most of the people in this room would've voted for Hillary Clinton. Nor is the question would you vote for Trump if the election were held today. For the same reason, I am confident of the answer to that question as well. Nor is the question whether you like the electoral college system or would change that system if you could do so tonight. The same answer for the same reason. Nor is the question whether you think that Donald Trump should be president right now. The fact is, that he is the current occupant of the Oval Office.

00:12:02

Nor is the question whether you personally like Trump or his temperament or even if you think he's an admirable person. The question is not, do you like Trump? Given the sense of most of the people inside the beltway, that question here is also moot before we even begin tonight. The motion before you and the question we consider tonight is whether to give Trump a chance. Barack Obama insisted on getting a chance as a newly elected president. "Elections have consequences," he said. "I won." Giving Trump a chance simply means that we acknowledge what President Obama himself said, that elections have consequences, Trump won, and we can and we should be clear-eyed and realistic about the fact that Donald Trump is president. Giving Trump a chance does not mean endorsing his stylistic approach or approving his policy initiatives, although we will be talking about his policies.

00:13:02

Giving Trump a chance does not necessarily mean that you want his policies to succeed. Giving Trump a chance simply means that you're open-minded enough to allow the new administration to do its job and to succeed or fail on its own terms. Ironically, the failure to give Trump a chance has largely fueled his success. Overtly adversarial media, over-hyped predictions of calamity reflect -- reflexive comparisons to autocracy, dictatorship, Watergate, Nazi Germany, these over-the-top criticisms detract from the credibility of his critics and they reinforce Trump's popularity with those who elected him. My partner Clive is not a Trump supporter, yet he can see why we all should give Trump a Chance. In a few minutes, he's going to share his reasons why. Now, the premise of this debate is wrong.

00:14:00

It's unlikely that our gracious hosts, Intelligence Squared, would've hosted this debate if Hillary Clinton had won the election. We did not have this debate when Barack Obama won the election and was re-elected. For those who don't understand why many Americans want to give Trump a chance, let me share with you why I think that he will be a good president. Remember, you don't have to agree with me that he will be a good president in

order to see why we should give him a chance. We're only asking you to support the tiniest of propositions, the tiniest of propositions to merely give him a chance. Now, Donald Trump has up-ended the established order of politics, media, and culture in America. I would say he poses an existential threat to the media and government's coziness. He may not have the marital history of most Republicans who typically appeal to mainstream Republicans and conservatives.

00:15:00

Their surreptitious and well-timed release of the Access Hollywood secret audio certainly did not endear him to chivalrous men and women who care about respect and propriety. What does that say about his success? He was able to overcome these character flaws because he tapped into the issues and the patriotism of his fellow Americans. Where we had previously selected presidents from the ranks of the political elite, the voters decided to choose from outside of those ranks. In essence, Trump's election stands as a rebuke to the political class. I'm not enthralled with everything that escapes President Trump's lips, yet, I, like the millions who voted for him, became a supporter because of three reasons: his experience, some of his personal characteristics, and his policy positions. President Trump has the experience of a successful businessman with a large part of his success based in the United States.

00:16:02

He is not a politician and has never before been elected to political office. Just let that sink in. He has never held elected office before being elected as our president. President Trump's personal characteristics appeal to me. He is patriotic. He is plainspoken. No one would accuse him of being politically correct. He is empathetic to struggling Americans. Going out to Dover Air Force Base today when the body of our fallen Seal came back, shows his empathetic nature, especially to military families. President Trump won't bow to the media. He can bypass the media and speak directly to fellow Americans. This is especially appealing to conservatives like me, who see their views mocked and deliberately mischaracterized by the media. Trump has clear views.

00:17:00

He's a family man -- with a complicated family, like many of us have. He doesn't pretend to be something he's not. His religious participation mirrors that of many Americans. He appreciates what Larry Alex Taunton calls, "The grace effect of the Judeo-Christian heritage," even if he only loosely engages in religious participation. Trump is not part of the bicoastal elites. He has thick skin. He does not mind criticism, and he punches back twice as hard. Trump understands how to build a leadership team. He is project-oriented. He's 70 years old. He's not focused on enriching himself. He's not made a lifetime of saying one thing and doing something else. He isn't using the government to enrich himself and his family. He desegregated his club in Florida --

[laughter]

-- he has advanced women in his businesses. He doesn't demean women in the workplace by only seeing them as their gender. Instead, he sees them as what they can accomplish and asks them to reach for excellence as he himself does.

00:18:05

Trump is not a committed Republican, and that appeals to us -- those of us who are fed up with establishment Republicans who run on conservative principles to beat -- to get elected, and then once they come to the swamp of D.C., they abandon all of those principles. Trump is not bound by ideological consistency, right? Instead, he asks, "What will work?"

John Donovan:

Gayle Trotter, I'm sorry. Your time is up. Thank you very much.

[applause]

Our motion is "Give Trump a Chance." And here is our next debater. He will be speaking against the motion, David Frum, a senior editor at the Atlantic and former speechwriter and special assistant to President George W. Bush. Ladies and gentlemen, David Frum.

[applause]

David Frum:

Tonight's proposition is one to which it would seem impossible to say no. It appeals to the fair-mindedness in all of us. We want to give everyone a chance.

00:19:00

And it appeals to the realist in all of us. Donald Trump is the president -- the occupant of the Oval Office -- as Gayle Trotter said. And we, of course, hope for the best. True. He did arrive in the Oval Office after a career as the primary publicist for the racist lie that Barack Obama was not an American citizen, and true, his business career is built on crookedness, and deception, and fraud. And true, he does have a history of violent abuse with people and he does see women as something more than people who are distinguished for their talents. And true, he was helped into the presidency by the clandestine operations of the Russian secret police. But after all, people do grow in office.

[laughter]

So, we want to withhold judgment, if we can, but the core premise of this motion -- and this is the premise my partner Michael Waldman and I will call on you to reject. The core premise is

that the things that we need to know about Donald Trump lie in the future and not in the past -
- that we do not yet have sufficient information to form a judgment, but we do.

00:20:02

And that is what we will show to you tonight. We know enough to know what to prepare for. And the action of asking you to withhold your judgment is an action that asks you to waste time in uncertainty when it is time to act, to stormproof the Republic and the Constitution against the most dangerous occupant of the office in American history.

[applause]

Donald Trump lies a lot. But, to give him credit, he never lies about himself. He has shown the country who he is and what he is and what he stands for and what he will do. And these are the things -- some of the things that we already know. We know that he has already decided to run the least ethical and transparent administration in the modern history of the presidency, and I would say in the history of the presidency period. And those decisions are not in the future, but in the past. He has already decided you will not see his tax returns. He has already decided that he will not put his assets in a blind trust and he will not separate himself from his business interests.

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He has already decided that people who want access to the Trump family will get it if they pay. He has already decided to charge Mar a Lago visitors or users to double their entry fee to give them a chance for \$200,000 instead of \$100,000 to have a few minutes with the next president of the United States. He has already -- he has already brought -- violated his first pledge to separate his sons from his business. They are mingling with senators. They are mingling with senators at the -- in ceremony to welcome the new justice of -- nominee to the justice of the Supreme Court. So, we know that, it will be unethical. That's a fact. You know that now. The second thing we know is that Donald Trump intends to run an administration that will attack fundamental American liberties. Gayle Trotter said it best. Donald Trump does pose an existential threat to what she called the media, and what I would call the free media.

00:22:00

He rejects the very concept of such a thing. The reason he -- and not only he but those around him lie so much about everything, about documentable facts, about how many people are in the Washington Mall -- many great presidents had less attendance at their inaugurations than Barack Obama. It's no slight to John F. Kennedy that he had a lesser turnout than John -- than Barack Obama, that Ronald Reagan did. They went on, each of them, to win places in the hearts of the American people. Turnout isn't everything. The reason he tells these lies -- partly it's for his own ego, but partly it is to discredit the very concept of truth. And that is the

foundation, as Gerald Ford said, "Truth is the fundamental proposition on which democracy rests." We have all --

[applause]

And we have already seen his attempt to create a state media in all but name which his preferential treatment of not only Fox, but Breitbart and Infowars next, which is soon to be accredited in the White House Briefing Room. Most importantly from my point of view, because I do speak as a Republican and as a conservative, we have already seen -- it is already a fact that he represents the gravest challenge to the western security system of any occupant of this office.

00:23:07

He has already said that he may or may not honor America's commitment to its NATO allies under Article 5. Having said that, you can never unsay that, that knowledge, that something that was certain is now uncertain. The biggest journey in logic, and that is the journey from zero to one, the chance of the United States not honoring its obligation to its friends was zero. Now it's one. Now it exists. Before, it didn't. And that you cannot take away. Nor can you take away -- nor can you take away the ever more sickening stink of the mysterious, but doubt -- but dangerous connection and possible collusion between this administration and the government of Russia. We don't know what that arrangement is. There's much about it we don't know. But while there are many secrets, there are no mysteries. We understand that something is terribly wrong.

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And we know this administration will not allow us to get to the bottom of it. But that's the job we have to do. We have to get to the bottom of that. We -- the call now is not to ponder or to deliberate or to wait on events. The call now is to say, "What are the actions that we as citizens have to take to defend free institutions, to defend the traditions of American government, to defend free media, to send -- to reassure America's friends around the world, that the word of the United States government is still good despite the present occupant of the office. That's our job. Don't waste time. And that is why we ask you to reject the motion tonight. Thank you.

John Donovan:

Thank you, David Frum. And that motion, again, is "Give Trump a Chance."

[applause]

And a reminder of what's going on, we are halfway through the opening round of this Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate. I'm John Donovan. We have four debaters, two teams of two arguing it out over this motion, "Give Trump a Chance." You have heard the first two opening statements.

00:25:00

And now onto the third. Clive, you can make your way to the lectern. Debating for the motion, "Give Trump a Chance," Clive Crook, a columnist at Bloomberg View. Ladies and gentlemen, Clive Crook.

[applause]

Well, that's an interesting way to start an Intelligence Squared debate, isn't it, with a call on the audience not to think and not to ponder. I am not a Trump supporter, as Gayle said. And after the past 10 days, I'm even less of a Trump supporter than I was before. I am dismayed by the executive order on immigration. I wrote on Monday that I was both amazed and disturbed by its reckless, blithering incompetence. So, having established my credentials as a Trump critic, how can I be arguing that we should be giving him a chance? I want to suggest several answers, but the main one is simple. We live in a Democracy, and Trump just got elected. Elections, as somebody once said, have consequences. Resolving now, just days in, to nullify his presidency, to stop him by any and all means, to give him no chance regardless of what he does is antidemocratic, plain and simple.

00:26:12

It's --

[applause]

It says to his supporters, "We hate you guys so much that we'll do all we can to make the election void." It says, in effect, "We refuse to accept the result," and that's a very dangerous doctrine. Trump was rightly castigated before the election for saying he might not accept the outcome. The argument applies just as well now with positions reversed. Now, I understand that the election was flawed, that Russian propaganda played a part, that Trump didn't win the popular vote, that he and his campaign lied about this and lied about that. Well, the rules are often unfair to losers, and politicians often lie, elections are always flawed. In a democracy, you take your complaints to the courts and, if you can't prevail there, you accept the transfer of power that follows from a less than perfect real world -- real world election.

00:27:09

Now, "Give him a chance," doesn't mean, "Give him carte blanche." It just means, "Keep an open mind." Oppose him when he's wrong. I was glad to see those judges push back against his order on refugees. Glad to see some Republicans criticize it sternly. Trump is going to put America's constitutional system under stress. The courts need to step up. Congress needs to step up. Career civil servants deeply opposed to his policies should be getting ready to quit. But we ought to acknowledge the possibility that he might do some good things, even

that, in the end, he might be a good president. It's obvious I don't share Gayle's optimism on this, but I hear her arguments, and don't think they deserve to be dismissed out of hand.

00:28:00

Trump has made some reassuring cabinet nominations, James Mattis, John Kelly and Rex Tillerson are competent individuals of experience and integrity. Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court is eminently qualified and sufficiently dedicated, it seems to me, to the Constitution and the rule of law, that Trump might actually come to regret the appointment. Trump says he'll bring forward a big increase in infrastructure investment. That would be great. He says he will force drug prices down by negotiating forcefully with the pharmaceutical companies. Again, that's something Democrats long proposed. Maybe he'll succeed in simplifying America's insanely complicated tax system. Maybe those tax plans and his infrastructure plans will even improve America's rate of economic growth. Now, I hesitate to mention trade policy because I think his proposals there are nuts. Abandoning TPP, renegotiating NAFTA and all that. But perhaps a few Democrats in this audience quite like those ideas.

00:29:02

Bernie Sanders said he does. "If Trump keeps this up," he said, "I'll be willing to work with him on some things. Well, come on, if Bernie Sanders is willing to give Trump a chance, shouldn't you be? I want to emphasize one last and very important thing. If you're opposed to Trump, your opposition would be more effective if you give him a chance. What's the best way to contain and, in due course, defeat Trump? Is it to energize the Democratic base to higher and higher levels of outrage, or is it to peel away the support of reluctant Trumpers? I think it's the second. There are plenty of reluctant Trumpers who voted for him out of exhaustion with normal politics, an understandable emotion, in my view. And those people, Independents, moderate Republicans, conservative Democrats weren't encouraged to think again by being called bigots and morons.

00:30:00

That kind of opposition, which states Trump is a would-be dictator and his supporters are either idiots or evil accomplices actually helps Trump. This cannot be over-stated. Trump is a brilliant manipulator of reflexive outrage. He provokes it. He thrives on it. An opposition that says give him no chance never collaborate, oppose him regardless, I think he'd like nothing better. So, give him a chance, not least as a gesture of respect to the 40 percent of voters who backed him. Oppose his bad policies case-by-case, but let's not assume as David does that the Constitution isn't worth the paper it's written on less than two weeks into this new administration. Give him a chance not to ease his path going forward, but to do just the opposite, to give his supporters space to have second thoughts.

00:31:00

In a democracy, that's how you win the argument.

[applause]

John Donvan:

Thank you, Clive Crooks. And our argument here, the motion Give Trump A Chance, and here to make the final opening statement and it will be against the motion, Michael Waldman. He is president of the Brennan Center for Justice and a former speechwriter and special assistant to President Bill Clinton. Here's Michael Waldman.

[applause]

Michael Waldman:

Thank you. Thank you everybody. You know, Clive and Gayle both have eloquently asked us to suspend judgment, to suspend what we see with our own eyes, what we hear with our own ears, to turn our minds away from what we see unfolding in front of us. My colleague, David Frum, and I suggest that that is not the wise course for the country. Now I'll admit that when the topic was chosen before the inauguration, should we give him a chance, I was happy to be invited to participate in this, but a little nervous about the topic, because what could be more sensible than giving someone a chance?

00:32:05

It sounds so wholesome and American. And I care about the presidency. I care about our system working. I've lived through changes in administration and some of them I like and some of them I don't like, but I believe this is different. This is not a normal presidency and this is no ordinary time. As you know, David Frum and I come to this through different paths. He is a proud conservative. I am a proud progressive. But we both believe, and I think millions of Americans passionately believe that we need to stand up to the potential abuse, to the potential threats to the Constitution, to the potential extremism of this administration and this president of a kind that we have not seen in this country in years if ever.

00:33:00

The fabric of our democracy is stretched thin in some very basic ways. So, give him a chance. I mean, in a sense I would say we've already given him a chance. So, put aside, put aside the ugly divisive campaign. Please, put it aside. Put aside the fact, as David said, that a hostile foreign power intervened in our election to help elect Donald Trump. Put aside the fact that he entered office the least popular president since the invention of polls having, among other things, lost the popular vote. Put all that aside. Let's only look at what he's actually done since being sworn in. It seems like a million or two years ago; it was 10 days ago. I know I'm not the only one who wonders how any of us are going to be able to keep this up over four years. Put all that aside. Did he scramble the decks? Did he reach out? Did he come up with some new ideological firmament that would reach out to the Democrats?

00:34:03

We all know what's happened. No president in a century has installed an administration this extreme. A chief strategist who previously ran a white nationalist website, a national security advisor who peddles conspiracy theories and who said Islam is "a cancer," an attorney general nominee so far on the fringe that the Senate controlled by the Republican party rejected Jeff Sessions for judgeship because of racial insensitivity. No president in this century or last has posed this kind of threat to civil rights and civil liberties. Just days in, the president of the United States, who swore to uphold the Constitution, started peddling the nonsensical argument that there were three million illegal votes in this country. This is not some random guy on the internet.

00:35:00

This is the President of the United States. And think about how absurd that is. Three million votes, not 50 years ago, not 25 years ago -- two months ago -- and nobody noticed. Not the Republican Party, not Fox News. Nobody noticed. But the president is insisting he's launching an investigation which will likely be a witch hunt, and he's promising legislation to come out of it. And what could go wrong with that? And no president in the beginning of his administration has provoked a constitutional crisis one week in. We all know, because we've been living through it, that the President hastily drafted an executive order banning travel from seven Muslim-majority countries -- has provoked a crisis in so many different ways. The order was a travesty. It was basically a Tweet turned into an executive order. Four federal judges blocked it one week in. He had to fire the acting Attorney General of the United States, who properly and correctly pointed out that the law was illegal, one week in.

00:36:06

Again, folks, this is not a matter of projecting in the future. This has happened in front of our appalled eyes all within the last 10 days. There are so many things to be concerned about. It is the case that Clive has written eloquently about what a fiasco the president has made of his first 10 days in office. I will do him -- I don't need to quote it. I will only say that given the things you've said, I want to tell you that we welcome refugees. We're happy to have you come over to our side.

[laughter]

That's the spirit we need. In the last day --

[applause]

-- in the last day, the President has backed off on his pledge to do something about drug prices. He's backed off on many of his things. And if you really believe there's going to be a

genuine infrastructure bill worked out with the Democrats, I have some infrastructure to sell you in Brooklyn, because I don't think it's going to happen.

00:37:06

For all those reasons and there are many in which of course I think the potential consequences of policies are wrong -- we say and we ask you to say stand up, take advantage of our role in -- as a democracy -- as citizens. Say no to abuse and do not give President Trump an untrammelled chance to trash our institutions, or the constitutions, or the law. Thank you.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Michael Waldman.

[applause]

And that, again, is the motion, "Give Trump a Chance." And this concludes Round 1 of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate. Now we move on to Round 2. And in Round 2, it's less structured. The debaters can address one another directly as they take questions from me and from you in our live audience. But to -- to lay out where we are, we have two debaters, Gayle Trotter and Clive Crook, arguing that we should give Trump a chance -- basic argument being that it's a matter of fairness, that this is a democracy.

00:38:02

He won. He won according to the rules. He won with the votes of people who want him to be a disruptor, and that's exactly what he is doing. They argue that to try to bring about the equivalence of avoiding of his election through opposition is essentially anti-democratic. They're not saying give him carte blanche, but keep an open mind. Judge him on what he does, not on what he has done. They also point out the opposition, in the long run, will be more effective if they give him a chance now. The team arguing against the motion, David Frum and Michael Waldman, we have heard them say, "This time is different. This is not a normal presidency. It would be exceedingly unwise to suspend judgment on this president," which is what they say their opponents are asking for. They talked about how we already know that Trump has crossed too many lines ethically, and in terms of his challenges, they say, to the nation's security, to the constitution, to a free press. We already know enough to have -- to be able to make the decision that he's been given his chance, and he has blown it.

00:39:04

Those, I think, are basically the dividing lines between the two sides. And the first question I want to put to the side arguing in support of the motion -- and I'll take it to Gayle Trotter -- is your opponents' basic argument that the litany of sins that they lay out, that they say that Donald Trump has already committed, are of such breadth and depth that they are already disqualifying, that it's -- he's had his chance, essentially. What's your response to that, Gayle?

Gayle Trotter:

Well, I wouldn't agree with any of the points that they made. And I would like to know if they had any of these concerns when Barack Obama was president and was attacking our civil rights under the First Amendment by getting into a lawsuit with nuns about contraception, attacking religious liberty by telling people that if they did not violate their conscience, they should close their businesses, attacking our Second Amendment rights to defend ourselves and to protect ourselves against tyranny.

00:40:00

Did they object to any of the lawsuits where Barack Obama and his administration took lawsuits to the Supreme Court and lost unanimously? Did they -- were they outrage about the -- as --

John Donovan:

Can I stop a second and jump in? I understand where you're going. I just want to say, in the spirit of the Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate, "What about the other guy?" arguments, we don't consider enormously persuasive if that's the thrust of the argument. And we, as I said at the beginning, we did 10 debates on President Obama over the last eight years. And what we really want to do is be -- our -- debating about Donald Trump tonight because the question is giving him a chance.

Gayle Trotter:

Right, but I think --

John Donovan:

So, I want to repeat the question.

Gayle Trotter:

-- he's putting out there that it's the fabric of our -- the fabric of our culture is being torn apart because this president is different.

John Donovan:

Yes, yes.

Gayle Trotter:

So, I think my response goes to the very core of their argument because, if they're saying he's different, they have to prove that he's different than the other president.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Okay, fair enough point. Let's take that to David Frum.

00:41:00

David Frum:

John, my last appearance on an IQ Squared stage was in London where I argued in the affirmative resolve, "Barack Obama is a Failed President." I voted against him twice and would do it again. So, I -- but --

John Donovan:

But Gayle is saying --

David Frum:

We're --

John Donovan:

Gayle is saying --

David Frum:

I --

John Donovan:

-- that you need to show that we're in a different zone.

David Frum:

Exactly. So, I thought Barack Obama was an unsuccessful president. I thought he was an admirable man and I understood why people gave -- put hope in him and he was also someone who profoundly proved he was willing to do business with people. You might not like the deal he was offering, but you could -- he was a reasonable person. You could talk to him. You could do business with him. I sometimes wish the Republicans had accepted some of those propositions --

John Donovan:

Okay, but same point. Let's bring it back to Trump.

David Frum:

Let me -- the core argument -- here's the core argument of the other side. They allowed -- there is -- at some point before voting day, 2020, where you're allowed to conclude that Donald Trump is dangerous, is it two weeks out, three weeks out, four weeks out? How much stealing is too much?

00:42:00

How many attacks on free press are one attack on the free press too many? And how many allies are you allowed to betray and how many -- how many trade arrangements are you

allowed to blow up before we say, "You are an attack on global leadership?" And our argument would be, "You already know all of those things." Now, I'm not saying -- if Gayle Trotter approves of what Donald Trump has done, God bless her. It's a free country still. Let her approve. But do not ask us not to know what we know. That is what the affirmative side is asking --

John Donovan:
Let me --

David Frum:
-- not to know what you already know.

John Donovan:
Clive Crook, please.

Clive Crook:
I think there's a huge disconnect in this argument. David, you said before that we are asking people to suspend judgment. That's not quite right. We're asking people to keep an open mind about what comes next. Don't suspend judgment about what he's already done. I agree with a great deal of what you two have said about what he's already done -- about what he's already said.

00:43:04

But he's there now. What I want to know from you is, "What purpose is served, by saying, by resolving and agreeing not to give him a chance?" Think about the message that sends to the people who voted for him and ask whether it's likely to impress them. Ask whether it's likely to persuade them to change their minds which is what you should be aiming to do.

John Donovan:
Michael Waldman?

Michael Waldman:
The question is, "Will those voters be benefited by policies that cast aside the promises that were made to them or that hurt them?" This is the moment that checks and balances were made for.

John Donovan:
But, Michael --

John Donovan:
-- what about Clive's -- Clive's point is different.

Clive Crook:
That isn't the question.

John Donovan:

Yeah, Clive's question, as I heard it, was, "Can you really be deciding after 13 days that the presidency is so off kilter, so out there that judgment should be suspended for where it might be in March or April or in December this year?"

00:44:08

Is it not too early to be saying it's too late?

Michael Waldman:

I think we all know that the frenetic activity that, as Gayle said, burst through the established relationships, burst through the way things are done, the magnitude of what is being attempted compels that checks and balances be called into effect. I just reject the idea that the only person with a democratic mandate happens to be the President.

John Donovan:

Do --

Michael Waldman:

Those who were opposed to him who were elected also have a mandate.

John Donovan:

Gayle Trotter?

Gayle Trotter:

I just am still not understanding the fundamental difference that you're saying that this President represents because it seems like you're saying, "Well, his voters are too dumb, just like Clive said, to understand that his policies are going to hurt them." And I think that is so disrespectful to his voters.

00:45:00

And there are people who are from all walks of life all around the country who resent being told that the person that they supported, to undo the last years of an assault on our constitution, whether you agree with it or not, that their president -- that their candidate that they elected to the presidency who is all of our president should not even be given a chance?

John Donovan:

David Frum.

David Frum:

The practical effect of the, "Give him a chance," question -- here's a practical question before us, "Shall we have an independent commission with subpoena power to find out what the Russians did in the American election? Yes, or no? Shall we know the truth to that question?" I think it's a pretty important question. Now, the practical effect of saying, "Give him a chance," is to say, "We will never know the answer to that question," or, at any rate, "We'll leave it to the historians long after the administrations gone." I need to know that now. I need to know it now and our allies need to know it now. Are they safe in America's hands? Are our friends in Estonia safe? We've given our word. We promised to go to nuclear war to defend them.

00:46:00

We need to know who and in what interest is that nuclear button controlled? We need to know that. The give him a chance question says, "You will not know that." We need to know what this president is right now, actively taking bribes from all over the planet. We need to know that now. It's going on, I believe, now. We need to know if that's true. But what -- the question, "Give him a chance," are you going to be able to find that out? Are --

John Donovan:
All right, let's let --

David Frum:
-- because he will not --

John Donovan:
-- I need to --

David Frum:
-- disclose it voluntarily. He's already told you that. You know that now.

John Donovan:
David, I want to give the floor to Clive Crook.

Clive Crook:
This is simply preposterous, the idea that, to say, "Give him a chance," means we turn off the checks and balances -- what -- neither of us suggested that for one second. I pressed exactly the opposite point. We need the checks and balances and, with a president like Trump, we need them more than we've ever needed them before. So, by all means, the checks and balances are there for a reason. Use them. Saying, "Give Trump a chance," does not mean we won't have an inquiry in --

David Frum:
Yes, it does. It --

00:47:00

Clive Crook:

Well, you're saying it does, I --

David Frum:

It's impractical that -- as a practical matter, it will.

Clive Crook:

With respect, I disagree. I want to give him a chance, but I also want to know exactly what the Russians did in the election. Saying, "Give him a chance," does not mean you close down and kind of, you know, lie back and take it. It means, "Give him a chance."

John Donvan:

Let me take it --

Clive Crook:

Don't close your mind to the possibility he might do some good things.

David Frum:

There's already --

John Donvan:

Let me -- let's --

David Frum:

-- there's already an American soldier --

John Donvan:

Michael --

David Frum:

-- dead after Donald Trump has alienated our allies in the region in which the soldier was killed. That has already happened.

Clive Crook:

Oh, please.

John Donvan:

I want to bring in Michael Waldman.

Michael Waldman:

Well, again, there's plenty of room at this table for a third seat. The --

Gayle Trotter:
I think he's staying.

Clive Crook:
No, he's -- I actually --

John Donovan:
I believe that there's a clear line on here.

Clive Crook:
I wish you would listen to what I'm saying.

Michael Waldman:
I am listening to what you're saying and the question is not, "Is he president?" He is. The question is not, "Was he elected?" He was. The question is, "Should the response to his presidency be a period of suspended disbelief, a honeymoon, and --"

Clive Crook:
That's not what I'm proposing.

00:48:02

Michael Waldman:
Well, but that is what the question is, and the answer to that --

Gayle Trotter:
No.

Clive Crook:
No, no.

Gayle Trotter:
That's not the question.

Michael Waldman:
Well, the answer to that question is, "It should not be." There should be utter vigilance by the press which is under assault, by the courts which have already begun to reject his first major actual initiative that he did, the executive order, by the Congress where I am very pleased that Republicans have begun to wake up as well as Democrats, and by the millions of people who fled into the streets to protest what they see as unconstitutional and norm breaking actions in his first week. To me, that means of course he's president, but we shouldn't give him a chance, we should be on guard and stand up for the Constitution while we have a chance.

John Donovan:

Let me bring it to Gayle Trotter to respond and then I want to move on to a slightly different topic. Gayle Trotter to respond.

Gayle Trotter:

I feel like that's such a muddle, it's hard to even respond appropriately to it because it seems inconsistent to call Donald Trump out.

00:49:00

David wrote this very long tome on how to build an autocracy in which he says essentially that Donald Trump is the second coming of Hitler, but he's not good enough to be Hitler because fascists – “fascism fetishes hardihood, sacrifice, and struggle, concepts not often associated with Trump.” And I think it's so ironic that someone would criticize Donald Trump for making enemies of Europe, making enemies of our allies, you know, using outrage and exaggerated language and to sit there and call Donald Trump a fascist and the second coming of Hitler just is an outrageous accusation.

John Donovan:

All right, let's let David Frum respond. You wrote this piece?

David Frum:

And it said exactly the opposite to what Gayle Trotter just said. It made -- that passage comes to the question, "Is Donald Trump --" it raised the question, "Is Donald Trump a fascist," as some people have said.

00:50:02

And I explained why that question is the wrong question to ask, because it doesn't matter what he is, what matters is how we respond to him and it very explicitly says that the threat of authoritarianism in the modern world, and we live in a period of de-democratization, there are fewer democracies in the world today than there were in 2005, is going to be nothing like, nothing like the totalitarian era of the 1930s and 1940s. That's what it says in so many words. They're printed and put on the internet for all to read, and that -- but the risks are real. The risks are not always the same. The risks to liberty in the 2010s are not one in the same as the risks to liberty in the 1930s. That doesn't mean they don't exist as people in de-democratizing countries like the Philippines, like Hungary, like Poland, like South Africa can tell you. They know what Donald Trump is. They have seen it before and when he says the press is the opposition, I quote a journalist from South Africa who's warned American journalists, get ready for a president who's going -- Donald Trump does not want to fight Democrats.

00:51:06

Barack Obama is 20 points more popular than he is. He wants to fight the media, but the media is indispensable. It's not an existential threat. It is indispensable to the function of a free society and a president --

John Donovan:
All right, David --

David Frum:
-- who hates them and wants to shut them down. That is a dangerous president.

John Donovan:
Let's take the example of the press, because in fact his aid, Steve Bannon, has described the press as the enemy. It seems that he wants the press to be the enemy. It does seem -- the argument can be made that this campaign tried to discredit the free press by calling it a partisan press. Understandable why a lot of people think the press is partisan. Nevertheless, it's role traditionally has been to be adversarial. So, your opponents are saying that that one example of where Trump has already committed an unpardonable sin.

Clive Crook:
Well, a couple of points. I hardly think it's an unforgiveable sin for Trump to criticize the press.

John Donovan:
But that's not what I -- I just said he's -- their argument is to discredit --
00:52:00

Clive Crook:
It would be an unforgiveable sin when he starts locking journalists up, and when he does that I will join our colleagues on the other side on the barricades, okay?

Gayle Trotter:
As would I.

David Frum:
What about when his wife incites death threats against the journalists? Is that an unforgiveable sin? Because that happened.

Gayle Trotter:
Wait. What did you say?

Clive Crook:
I think that --

David Frum:
What about when his wife incites death threats against the press?

Clive Crook:

I think that's a little bit hysterical, actually.

David Frum:

The journalists --

Clive Crook:

We --

[talking simultaneously]

John Donovan:

Wait, wait, wait. Wait. Hang on one second. I just -- I'll let you come back to that point, but I don't think -- it's not editable in a way where anybody will have heard what has just been said in the last 30 seconds. So, Clive, why don't you make your point and let David come back to that point? Or maybe it should go the other way. What is this accusation?

Michael Waldman:

So many of you in the room may be familiar with the work of Julia Ioffe, a colleague of mine at the Atlantic. Julia Ioffe wrote a profile of Melania Trump for GQ in which she discovered some things about Melania Trump's background that are not terribly dishonorable, I would think that Melania Trump found unacceptable.

00:53:00

Julia Ioffe, a Jewish woman, immigrant from Russia, was then bombarded with vicious anti-Semitic, pornographic images and threats of a terrifying kind, and when Melania Trump was then -- short -- in the middle of this storm of threat, not just abuse but threat, Melania Trump was asked, "Do you have something to say to your followers who are barraging Julia Ioffe with these threats," and she said well, Julia Ioffe provoked them. And the threats, of course, continued. That is not -- when Donald Trump got into that match with the union head -- the head of a union local in Indiana, he tweeted out his name and denounced him, and that man was driven from his home by threat. That is how threat -- it's not --

John Donovan:

So, with those --

[talking simultaneously]

David Frum:

-- driven into internal exile by --

[talking simultaneously]

John Donovan:
-- to Clive Crook.

Clive Crook:
I wish she hadn't responded that way. She could've responded more intelligently, but are you seriously contending that the American press is intimidated by Trump?

00:54:07

I mean, for heaven's sake, get real. Look at the -- pick up the New York Times.

[applause]

Pick up the Washington Post. The press is -- it's doing its job. I actually think the mainstream press has made a mistake in announcing that the normal rules don't apply to Trump, because I think that tells Trump supporters they no longer need to worry about what the New York Times might think or about Washington Post might think, because those papers have declared they're no longer being neutral, but just don't tell me that the press is cowed, that the press is afraid of Trump.

Michael Waldman:
I strongly encourage people to do exactly that. Pick up the Washington Post and pick up the New York Times. News organizations are doing the job of digging up facts that the people in power, not just stray people yelling on the internet, but the people with the power of the federal government do not want the rest of us to know.

00:55:02

John Donovan:
But Michael, that's not the point Clive was making --

Michael Waldman:
Well, no [inaudible] --

John Donovan:
Clive was making the point that the press is free, powerful, vocal as much as ever, and that the threat -- so, he's arguing against David's point that there's a real threat to the free press.

Michael Waldman:
There is a threat to the free press. Thank goodness it has not succeeded yet.

Clive Crook:
[laughs]

Michael Waldman:

You have the new president -- during the campaign -- saying, "Let's change the libel laws." You have the new president saying during the campaign, "Let's use anti-trust and regulatory enforcement to crack down on the media companies that are giving me trouble." We just learned today that the inspector generals of the agencies -- these are the independent people who go from administration to administration and dig into corruption, dig into the kind of self-dealing that we've heard about -- that the Trump transition asked them all to get ready to be fired. We've had stuff like this in American history before. The most recent example -- the most dangerous example, was during the Nixon administration. And that did not work out well. The other thing is, when the government -- not just some reality star -- but the government lies, and lies, and lies, that is itself a threat to the press.

00:56:08

And it was astonishing --

[applause]

-- how many lies we heard --

John Donovan:

Okay.

Michael Waldman:

-- in the first week.

John Donovan:

Gayle Trotter to respond --

John Donovan:

Let's bring in Gayle.

Gayle Trotter:

Sure. This is so funny to me, because I remember, it wasn't back to the Nixon administration. It was just the Barack Obama administration, where we had Democrats in the Senate trying to convince the Senate to repeal the First Amendment. We had Democratic lawyers who were doing an oral argument --

Gayle Trotter:

-- in front of the Supreme Court, who -- when the Supreme Court justices asked them if they could ban books, if the government had the power to ban books, they responded, "Yes, under the law." And when we think about Inspector Generals, we think about the Inspector Generals under Barack Obama's administration, and they were not able to get the information they wanted, and they talked openly to the press saying that they were frustrated that they could not have sufficient --

00:57:02

John Donovan:
Okay. But --

Gayle Trotter:
-- investigations of --

John Donovan:
Gayle, you're again doing "Those other guys did this" thing --

Gayle Trotter:
But that's what he's doing.

John Donovan:
And the question -- but --

Gayle Trotter:
He's saying it's different --

John Donovan:
-- the question is --

Gayle Trotter:
-- than the president.

John Donovan:
-- the question is whether these things that they're talking about represent a threat to the free press today.

Gayle Trotter:
Right. And the easy answer to that is, if it -- if those things were not a threat in the last eight years, why are they suddenly a threat now?

David Frum:
We need to think very seriously about what the word "press" means in the social media age. And let me give you a concrete example of one way Donald Trump has already changed the press. Twitter is an important media institution, I would say. Two weeks before the election, Twitter suspended the accounts of a number of people they regarded as racist provocateurs. I, by the way, don't agree with that decision. I wrote about why I thought Twitter was mistaken -- but it was their website. They didn't have to host them, and they suspended the accounts. Donald Trump soon after -- and I heard from people in the Trump campaign how outraged the Trump campaign people were and how they're -- because some of these people

were quite close to the Trump campaign, and they were thinking about what they could do. Should there be anti-trust actions or some other measures?

00:58:00

Shortly after the election, the -- Donald Trump had a meeting with tech executives. Twitter was pointedly not included. Donald Trump's favorite social media platform. All the accounts were immediately reinstated and given a checkmark. Now, if Donald Trump told the New York Times or the Washington Post, "That columnist you fired? I like him. Put him back on your page," we would all understand, "If you don't, you'll be -- there will be consequences" -- we would understand what happened. That happened to Twitter. Twitter was forced to publish, again, people it did not want to, under threat -- pressure and threat from an administration. That is reaching into and changing the nature of the media as it exists in the 21st century.

John Donovan:

Okay. I want to --

Gayle Trotter:

And see, I'd have to disagree with that, because --

John Donovan:

Gayle, hang on a second. I'm going to come back to you. I just want to let you know, after Gayle's comment, I want to go to audience questions. And the way that will work is just raise your hands. I'll call on you. A microphone will be brought to you. Please wait for it. I'll remind you if you forget to wait for it. Tell us your name, ask a question. Please make it tight. Please make it a question. If you're talking more than 30 seconds, I'll have to move on to somebody else. Gayle.

Gayle Trotter:

It's not only Trump supporters who realize that social media is run by very leftist people in Silicon Valley.

00:59:03

And a lot of times, the information that people try to get out on social media is blocked, or lowered, or, you know, people are banned from Twitter because they have unpopular views. And so, even if you don't agree with any of Donald Trump's policies, the fact that he would be able to speak out for people to have the platform, to have the ability, to have the same access, to stand on a soapbox and say what they want to say -- that's a good thing, and we all should support that.

John Donovan:

Okay. Questions?

[applause]

Down in front here. If you could tell us your name. Stand up and tell us your name and come out with the question, please, thanks.

Male Speaker:

My name is David Cyde [spelled phonetically]. And this is a question to the proponents.

John Donovan:

The side arguing "Give Trump a Chance."

Male Speaker:

Yes.

John Donovan:

[affirmative]

Male Speaker:

Let's assume you're right, and we should give him a chance. The question is, until what?

John Donovan:

A great question.

Male Speaker:

Until when?

John Donovan:

That's the perfect question.

Male Speaker:

And so --

John Donovan:

You've nailed it.

Male Speaker:

Is it for --

John Donovan:

Well --

Male Speaker:

-- let me just -- let me --

[applause]

With 20 seconds left, let me elaborate.

01:00:05

John Donovan:

Well, it's 17, but go.

Male Speaker:

Is it four years? The next election? Is it impeachment? Is it when a journalist is imprisoned until when quantitatively and qualitatively?

Clive Crook:

Can I --

John Donovan:

Let's take that to Clive Crook, please.

Clive Crook:

First of all, I think it's a very interesting question. But, before I answer it, I want to say I don't think it's a terribly relevant question, all right? Because, if it's any point in the future, I think you owe us your vote. If it isn't now that we say, "Don't give him a chance," if it's sometime in the future when something else happens, you owe us your vote. But I'll try to answer the question nonetheless. If he does something impeachable, then he should be impeached. You know, if he breaks the law, he should be held to account. A lot -- a lot of what I think differentiates our position from the other side is that we have -- we appear to have more trust in the Constitution.

01:01:02

I believe in these checks and balances. I think American democracy is strong. I think the press is uncalled. I mean, it's actually -- they're extreme. The press is rabidly hostile to Trump. And I think you could argue that's a good thing. I think it's slightly counterproductive, as I mentioned at the beginning, because I think it enflames his supporters. But the fact is the checks and balances of the system -- they're working. They're already working. The civil service is resisting. Judges are ruling against him. And Trump -- what can Trump do? He is bound by the law. Now, if a point comes where he says, "I'm not interested in what that court says. I'm not interested in the fact that the Supreme Court has said I can't do this. I'm going to do it anyway," then you're talking about high crimes and misdemeanors and we don't need to wait for the next election.

John Donovan:

Let me --

Clive Crook:

But if it falls short of that, then I say, "Yes, give him a chance until the next election."

01:02:02

And, with any luck, if Trump's opponents play their cards right, Trump won't win the next election.

John Donovan:

Michael Waldman, your response?

Michael Waldman:

I would say that we need to take issues as they come and resist in real time. The civil servants who we just heard were gloriously able to resist and gloriously able to protest -- as you probably know, there's something called the descent channel in the State Department. And the unconstitutional Muslim ban executive order has been protested through this channel --

Gayle Trotter:

Not a Muslim ban.

Michael Waldman:

We'll get to that. The president, by -- the president, by the way, said, "Oh, yeah, you can call it that," in the last 24 hours. So, we need to update the talking points, please. The --

Gayle Trotter:

Oh, please.

Michael Waldman:

-- descent channel is required to have no retribution. Sean Spicer, the Press Secretary said, "They can get with the program or get out." These are real challenges, not only to the laws, not only to the constitution, but to the norms of how our democracy and how our system have to work.

01:03:05

And, you know, again, the question of, "Give a chance," is really a question for those of us who are troubled. When -- how do we respond? I think that people respond rightly when they take very seriously what's happening whether it's on health care or on these legal issues or on other things and are as energized as they are right now.

John Donovan:

Another question unless there was a strong desire to rebut?

Clive Crook:

I'd like to respond to that.

John Donovan:

But there are a lot of questions, so --

Clive Crook:

I understand. I hesitate to instruct a constitutional lawyer on the law, but it wasn't a Muslim ban. If it was a Muslim ban, that would be straightforwardly unconstitutional and it would be struck down. It isn't a Muslim ban because it doesn't apply to all Muslims. And calling it a Muslim ban, even though you know it isn't, is playing into Trump's hands. That's why he said, "By all means, call it a Muslim ban." He loves it, for you call it a Muslim ban.

01:04:01

Michael Waldman:

And I'm not talking about its popularity. I'm talking about its constitutionality. We all saw him call for it during the campaign. He went on television on the Christian Broadcasting Network and -- the other day, and said, "Don't worry, this doesn't apply to Christians." It doesn't ban all --

Gayle Trotter:

He didn't say that.

Michael Waldman:

It does not band all Muslims.

Gayle Trotter:

He did not say that.

Michael Waldman:

But it only bands Muslims from these countries. And, by the way, I am sure that if it gets up to those --

Clive Crook:

It doesn't only ban Muslims from those countries.

Gayle Trotter:

No.

Michael Waldman:

-- if it gets up to the Supreme Court --

Clive Crook:

It does not only ban Muslim --

John Donovan:
Hang on. Clive --

Michael Waldman:
If it gets up to the Supreme Court of the United States, which it has not, it will be found unconstitutional.

John Donovan:
Clive.

Clive Crook:
Well, then, that will be a good outcome, won't it?

Michael Waldman:
It would.

Gayle Trotter:
And that's not the case. A key leader in the United Arab Emirates said, "It is not a Muslim ban." It is not a ban. It is a pause and it -- what you just said about -- this is why conservatives get so frustrated because you sat there --

David Frum:
Some conservatives.

Gayle Trotter:
-- and you said that the -- that Trump said -- yeah, sorry David. Trump said that it didn't apply to Christians, and that's not true.

01:05:01

And people are saying that in the refugee program that Christians would be prioritized. That's not true. It could actually even apply to some Muslim groups in countries like Burma where there are Muslim sects where they are being oppressed in those countries that would give them preferential treatment, too. So, it's so frustrating when you are arguing about something and you're allowed to just kind of get away with these kind of, I don't know, fake news headlines that are not accurate.

John Donovan:
Well, okay, let's pause. I want to remind you that we are in the question and answer section of this Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate. I'm John Donovan, your moderator. We have four debaters, two teams of two, debating this motion, "Give Trump a Chance." I want to move on to another question right down here. Yeah, a mic is going to -- it's -- second row -- actually, a

gentleman -- you seized the mike. I am going to reward your -- what's the word I want to use -- your enterprise or your aggressiveness, but go for it.

01:06:00

Male Speaker:

My name is Tyler Humphrey and I have a question that I would like to pose to both sides of the debate which is, "To what degree, if any, is a president's qualification to be given a chance effected by his administration or his Cabinet?"

John Donovan:

Let's let the opening -- opposing side start with that first. David Frum.

David Frum:

I'm not sure I understand the question.

John Donovan:

I think what he's saying is you -- you actually said in your opening statement that he has packed his White House and staff with extremists. Is that a disqualifying --

David Frum:

All right, I think it -- Michael --

John Donovan:

Michael said that, sorry.

David Frum:

Michael made that point.

John Donovan:

Is that a disqualifying --

David Frum:

I'll just say briefly I think the Trump Cabinet, at least its senior positions looks relatively normal. It's a little forward in that normally administrations say one billionaire to a Cabinet. A half dozen is typically considered excessive. But the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State would not have been my first -- these are very competent and capable people. I think the Cabinet on the whole, especially the senior national security positions reasonably reassuring.

01:07:00

John Donovan:

Okay.

David Frum:

The White House is the cantina from Star Wars.

[laughter]

David Frum:

It's that if the interview question is, "Did the people you know tell you whatever else you do you should never work in government?" if the answer to that question is, "Yes," you're hired.

John Donovan:

Okay, I'm assuming that you will just disagree with that. But, so if you're good with it, I would like to go on to another question. I do want to give you the right to answer. Do you want to defend Steve Bannon and Kellyanne Conway and Sean Spicer?

Gayle Trotter:

Well, I would like to say yes --

John Donovan:

Yes, you do.

Gayle Trotter:

Yeah, I would like to say --

John Donovan:

Go for it. Go for it.

Gayle Trotter:

-- I would like to answer David and say that I think, and I've written a piece on this, that Donald Trump's selection of military veterans is a show of strength and a real confidence booster to military servicemen around the country and to the military families who feel like they've been sidelined for the past eight years.

01:08:00

And we've seen that Barack Obama's strategy of leading from behind has made a complete conflagration of the Middle East. And so the fact, I would say, that this is definitely true that, if you look at the people, the men and women that he selected to put into this administration, people of expertise and areas that he does not have in foreign policy and military strategy, I think that that should encourage you when thinking about our proposition here to give Trump a chance that you're right, it's not just Trump it is also his administrative team and that should just I think give more comfort to everyone that he has picked people who are proven patriots, proven leaders and men and women who have decided to sacrifice -- put their lives on the line for America, for American people, and that should only inspire more confidence in --

John Donovan:
Okay, but let --

Michael Waldman:
It probably gave the men and women in uniform less confidence when they kicked the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff off the Principles committee of the National Security Council.

01:09:05

[applause]

Gayle Trotter:
I think you don't understand the --

John Donovan:
Okay. Debaters, I need to move on to more questions, please, and I haven't come to this side for a while. Sir, over there in the far back. You're wearing a baseball hat. The mic's coming around behind you.

John Donovan:
Can you tell us your name?

Male Speaker:
Oh, sorry, J.C. Hempfield [spelled phonetically]. Is it fair to represent the argument has being 13 days old when we've all been thinking about these issues since 2015 at least?

John Donovan:
I'm going to pass on that question because I feel that this side has argued that point. Thank you for it.

Male Speaker:
Okay.

John Donovan:
It's a fair question, but I think we would retread some ground. Far back row near the camera. Thank you for the question, though.

Male Speaker:
Hi, Dan Bowers. This is for the, "Give Trump a Chance," side. There's several constitutional law scholars who have argued that he is already in violation of the Emoluments Clause like Laurence Tribe at Harvard.

01:10:00

Is that sufficient for me to stop giving him a chance.

John Donovan:
Clive Crook.

Clive Crook:

Well, you mean it's sufficient to -- you're arguing that it might be sufficient to stop giving him a chance that some lawyers are arguing that he's violated the Constitution? I mean, I find that hard to take that question seriously. There will be lawyers arguing that he hasn't. The time to stop giving him a chance is when the court finds that he's broken the law and he refuses to back down. I think we should -- can't we take it for granted that lawyers can always be bound to represent both sides of any given argument?

[applause]

John Donovan:

Did you still have a question? Yeah. I'm sorry for before. The mic's coming down this side if you can wait for it. And if you could stand up so that they can see where to find you. Great questions tonight, by the way, folks.

Female Speaker:

Hi. My name is Annaliese Tamky [spelled phonetically] and my question is for the side against the motion.

01:11:01

What do you believe are the benefits to not agreeing with Trump or not giving him a chance? Do you think that there's anything that would really benefit Americans being --?

John Donovan:

I was almost going to say we've been arguing that all night, but I kind of like the question, so I -- what's the up-side of not giving him a chance?

David Frum:

That's a great question.

John Donovan:

Yeah.

David Frum:

I think it's an important question.

John Donovan:

David Frum.

David Frum:

It puts you into the right frame of mind to guide your actions as a citizen. Donald Trump will remain president and his cabinet nominees will continue to operate the government. As Clive Crook says, if they break the law, things will happen. If they -- but the risk from this presidency is the things that -- a lot of the things that we're afraid of are not actually illegal. You know, in American law, it's very hard to convince a politician, for example, of taking a bribe and since the Governor McDonnell case in 2014, it's become pretty much impossible. Politicians don't take bribes because they think it's wrong. What if you have a politician who doesn't think it's wrong?

01:12:00

The check on the president -- presidents are not supposed to operate like criminal defense lawyers, like go at -- like Saul Goodman from "Breaking Bad," saying, "At what point will the police arrest me and the courts convict me." They're supposed to act with a bigger ethical compass and you need to be ready, because it's -- the president is already selling access to his office. He's already doing business over -- deals overseas. He is already receiving flows of money. We will never know how much because he won't release his tax return unlike every president in the past has.

John Donvan:

Okay. I definitely want to hear the other side have a chance to respond to that. Either of you?

Gayle Trotter:

Clive.

Clive Crook:

I simply want to say that -- I said it before, if he commits impeachable offenses he can be impeached and I think it's very --

Clive Crook:

I think it's very important to note that, you know, the possibility of impeachment is not theoretical in the U.S. I mean, Richard Nixon was --

Gayle Trotter:

You should know.

Clive Crook:

Richard Nixon was forced to resign under threats of impeachment. Bill Clinton was actually impeached, though not convicted by the Senate.

01:13:00

This is a real factor in the calculation, as I said before. The question is, how far do you trust the Constitution. The checks and balances are there, and I don't see that we need to be quite so alarmed as the other side in this debate, so alarmed, in fact, that we have to tell Trump supporters we aren't interested in anything he has to say or anything he might do because our minds are made up and that's that.

John Donovan:
Okay.

Michael Waldman:
Those checks and balances have never been put to the test when the president and the Congress are of the same party and the real thing we all have to think about -- the question really again is what is our attitude. New presidents are often given, in effect, a honeymoon by both parties. Let's all calm down. Let's all work together. We are arguing that the actions of this president suggest that would be very unwise.

John Donovan:
Over here in the corner, and if you could stand up there's your mic.

Female Speaker:
Hi. Thank you very much. Rachel Evanson-Waldman. One of the things that's been striking me --

John Donovan:
Wait. Are you related to --

Female Speaker:
No. No relation.

John Donovan:
Because there was going to have to be a bell ringing and a disqualification.

[laughter]

Female Speaker:
One of the things that strikes me is that the question almost seems a little bit misframed, that it would make sense to ask if we should give him a chance if we could then fire him or not depending on what the answer is and obviously, we can't. He will presumably be around for some number of years.

John Donovan:
So, what's your question?

Female Speaker:

So, I wonder if the question is really -- at this point knowing what we know should we presume -- should we give him the presumption that he is acting in good faith, a presumption that we often give even to people with whom we disagree? And so, I guess I'd particularly be interested in hearing Clive Crook's answer to that question. Can we assume he's acting in good faith?

Clive Crook:

Actually, I think that would be a dangerous assumption. I don't assume he's acting in good faith, partly because I can't read his mind, and as I said before, you know, I disagree with so many of his policies. I deplore so many of the things he's said.

01:15:00

Gayle Trotter:

But you're not deplorable.

Clive Crook:

But that isn't the point. The point is, what do we say? What does this audience say to the close to half of the electorate that voted for Trump? Are we so disgusted by your choice, so appalled by your choice that we're refusing to have anything to do with your candidate -- that that's that?

John Donovan:

So, you're --

Clive Crook:

That we will oppose him by any means necessary. Now, I think that's wrong, even though I'm not willing to assume he's acting in good faith. I think, actually, he has lied. In other words, I do suspect him of, you know, uttering intentional falsehoods. That doesn't incline me to say the guy should not be given a chance. We shouldn't close our minds to the possibility that he might do some good things, and we owe the people who voted for him some respect.

John Donovan:

David Frum.

David Frum:

I want to protest against two things that Clive has said repeatedly that I think are really, you know, seriously detrimental to understanding this issue properly.

01:16:02

And the first is -- the first is, his repeated use of the phrase, "By any means necessary." We're not talking -- when we talk about exercising critical judgment, we're not saying, "Oppose the President by any means necessary." We're not even talking about opposing the President by all

peaceful means necessary. There are many peaceful -- we will use no violent means, obviously. Although the President himself has often incited violence against his opponents, we do not do that.

Clive Crook:

May I just --

David Frum:

And they're -- and no, let me finish the --

John Donovan:

Let --

David Frum:

-- protest. And there are many, many peaceful means that I think both of us would rule out. We don't think that his nominee should be rejected without -- we both approve of the confirmation of General Mattis. We both, I think, approve of Mike Pompeo as CIA director. I approve of Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State. There are a lot of things that we don't think we should do. We're just telling you, don't be suckers. You're being invited to be suckers. I'm telling you, don't be suckers.

John Donovan:

Okay, David. Stop there --

John Donovan:

-- for the second point. I want to let Clive respond to that. Then you can get back to your second point.

01:17:00

Clive Crook:

Unfortunately, that's not the motion you're defending. And --

David Frum:

It doesn't -- the phrase "by any means necessary" --

Clive Crook:

It --

David Frum:

-- do not appear in the motion.

Clive Crook:

If the motion were, you know, "Don't be suckers," then I think we would probably --

David Frum:
That's what the motion --

Clive Crook:
-- I --

David Frum:
-- literally means.

Clive Crook:
I think we would --

[laughter]

Gayle Trotter:
No. It actually doesn't --

Clive Crook:
John, I -- could I just put in a word for simple logic, for, you know, reasonably precise use of the English language?

[laughter]

John Donovan:
Let me --

Clive Crook:
We are not --

John Donovan:
-- let David make his second point.

Clive Crook:
-- voting that motion --

John Donovan:
David, your second point.

David Frum:
My second point is this. When we say, "Do not give Donald Trump a chance," -- this continued smuggling onto the stage of the great and good American people -- say, when you suggest Donald Trump, the former director -- or was it president of Trump University? When you suggest that this man, the man who mocks the disabled, this man, who received help from the

Russian secret police, this man may not be a worthy occupant and should be viewed with mistrust -- you're insulting the great and good American people. The American -- the great and good American people, I think we can leave them off the stage. We're talking about one person.

01:18:00

And it is a mark, by the way, of how little confidence the proponents have in that one person. They keep wanting to say, "In" -- well, no, no. You're not talking about him. But it is not his voters who are enriching themselves, alas. It is not his voters who have some kind of contact with the Russian secret police. It's him.

John Donovan:
Gayle Trotter.

[applause]

Gayle Trotter:
David, I think we have really uncovered a crucial point that we need to flesh out a little bit here. I believe that when you and Michael take this position, that we should not give Trump a chance, even though you're unwilling to pick up arms, and march to the White House, and violently oppose his leadership, there are people who will listen to this debate and will listen, not only to this debate, but to the larger conversation of whether this duly-elected president should even be given a chance to fulfill his constitutional role. And they will take action against it.

01:19:00

So, I think that truly, when you get down to the very basic level of this discussion, it is fine to be sitting here and having an academic debate about this. But you talk about Melania Trump, and Donald Trump, and this and that -- inciting people to violence. Are you not doing the same thing yourself, by saying that the will of the American people should be disregarded?

Michael Waldman:
Complaining and --

John Donovan:
Michael Waldman.

Michael Waldman:
Let me say something to the people in this audience --

Gayle Trotter:
No. Saying --

Michael Waldman:

-- and anybody listening at home.

Gayle Trotter:

-- he shouldn't be given a chance.

Michael Waldman:

We urge you not to take up arms against Donald Trump --

[laughter]

[applause]

-- based on whatever you heard us say today. Well, and you will hear from us if you do.

David Frum:

And you're for gun control, are you not?

Michael Waldman:

And I thought you were for taking up arms, but that's a different debate. The big question is -- we -- I take seriously the voters on all sides seriously enough to debate the issues, to fight hard on the issues, and not just to say, "Well, the election is over. That's that. Let's see how far this guy can push things before we have to impeach him."

01:20:04

Clive Crook:

Well, that's --

John Donovan:

And that concludes round two of this Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate where our motion is, "Give Trump a Chance."

[applause]

And now we move on to Round three. Round three will be closing statements by each debater. In turn, they will be uninterrupted. They will be two minutes each. Once again, the motion is, "Give Trump a Chance." And here making his closing statement, in support of this motion, Clive Crook, columnist at Bloomberg View.

Clive Crook:

I think one thing we can agree on is that Trump's election was partly an act of protest against politics as usual. I am a British immigrant, as you've probably gathered by now, and I just returned from a trip to the U.K. The country is bitterly divided over Brexit, the vote to leave the

European Union. It's as bitterly divided as the U.S. is over Trump. And I think the parallel is very close. Brexit supporters did a reckless thing, something they may come to regret, partly out of a sense of desperation.

01:21:04

We can give up on democracy and say it no longer works. And I think David's argument comes very close to that. Or we can agree that something has gone wrong and ask how to fix it. The common factor in the U.S. and Britain and in France and in the Netherlands and in Germany, wherever populism is on the rise, is a political establishment that is ignored or disdained, a large segment of the population. Certainly, the populist draws support from racists and extremists. But don't tell me that all the people who voted for Trump or all the people who voted for Brexit are stupid or vicious and unfit to vote. Recognizing the legitimate concerns of Trump and Brexit supporters is the key to winning them round to normal politics. That doesn't mean pandering to them, but it sure doesn't mean insulting them. The British equivalent of, "Give Trump no chance," is, "Ignore the referendum."

01:22:03

And I think we're seeing exactly the same dynamic play out in each case. The more that argument is pressed, the more resentful that half or close to half of the population will become and the happier Trump and his friend Nigel Farage will be. So, vote for our side to give democracy a chance and vote for their side if you want eight years of Trump unbound.

John Donovan:
Thank you, Clive Crook.

[applause]

The motion is, "Give Trump a Chance," and here making his closing statement against the motion, David Frum, senior editor at the Atlantic.

David Frum:
One of the ways you know a debater is losing his debate is when he repeatedly insists on arguing against words not only that were not spoken but that were explicitly repudiated. And you have heard that again and again from the proponents of this debate. And when they insist on shifting the topic away from the question at hand, which is, "Should you trust Donald Trump," to another question entirely which is, "What do we do about the problems of people that have been left behind by globalization?"

01:23:05

I speak as someone who actually is probably more sympathetic to many of the things that Donald Trump purports to want to do than Clive Crook is. That is not the question tonight. The

question is, "Give Donald Trump a chance or no?" One of my predecessors at The Atlantic, years ago, coined the phrase about the American constitution, called it a machine that would go of itself. But he coined that phrase to argue against the motion. It's not a machine. It's not a mechanism. This phrase, "checks and balances," that you hear, there's no mechanism. There are no checks. There are no balances. There are only people. There are only people meeting their responsibilities as citizens or failing to meet their responsibilities as citizens. People viewing with a watchful eye, using their judgment, reading media critically or people believing lies and being misled by lies and turning on institutions that are crucial to a free society like a free press. The proponents of this argument of -- the proponents of this debate again and again are urging you not to know what you already know.

01:24:03

Not to take action based on that knowledge, not to be a citizen, to be a passive consumer, to wait until the president has committed a high crime and misdemeanor. Then you may act. Until then, stay home, watch the Kardashians, leave the power to the powerful. We reject that idea. Be citizens now before it is dangerous, when you have warning, when you understand the risks at hand. Be citizens now and vote -- and I therefore reject the motion. But, more importantly, act vigilantly and, of course, peacefully and legally to keep this president under control and to make sure that the constitution you bequeath has received as little damage as possible as compared to the constitution you inherited.

John Donvan:

Thank you, David Frum.

[applause]

The motion again, "Give Trump a Chance." And here making her opposing statement in support of the motion, Gayle Trotter, columnist, political analyst, and attorney.

Gayle Trotter:

I last stood on this stage exactly four years ago, to this day.

01:25:02

I found myself here to participate in a nationally televised CNN town hall discussion hosted by Anderson Cooper. Two days prior, I had testified before the United States senate judiciary committee about gun violence in America. The hearing took place about a month and a half after the Newtown shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. I shared with the Senators that guns make women safer and reverse the balance of the power in a violent confrontation. This common sense point is one that most Americans between the coasts and not in Democrat controlled cities understand. I wanted the senators to hear this common sense point before they enacted sweeping restrictions of our civil rights, one right that also might be useful if Trump's critics are right, that he is the second coming of Hitler. In the two

days between my testimony and standing on this stage in 2013 for that CNN town hall, I was mocked, I was called vulgar sexist names.

01:26:05

I was physically threatened and I was verbally harassed, mostly by strangers, but also by some friends. The New York Times called my ideas dangerous. And my hometown newspaper, the Washington Post, joined the chorus. I know what it is like to not be given a chance, when you stick your neck out because you believe in America and our highest ideals and our precious rights. It's not pleasant. It's not comfortable and it's not safe. Perhaps that very personal experience makes me particularly willing to ask you to give President Trump a chance. He is our president, let him succeed or fail on his own terms. Thank you.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Gayle Trotter.

[applause]

And that motion, once again, "Give Trump a Chance," and here making his closing statement against the motion, Michael Waldman, president of the Brennan Center for Justice.

01:27:03

Michael Waldman:

Thank you. This debate is enjoyable to be a part of. It's fun. But this is really not a fun time. This is a time that many of us believe is a time of real testing for us, for our generation, the way other American generations have had to be tested before. As you think about this, I want you to try to remember what you thought before the deluge of outrage of alternative facts of Tweets by the President before 6:00 in the morning. Remember what you thought and remember some things, some words the President did not say in his inaugural address. Very unusual to not say these things. He did not talk about the Constitution. He did not talk about liberty. He did not harken back to the values that we were all created equal, from the Declaration of Independence.

01:28:00

These are the things that bind us together as Americans, not what we look like, not our religion. And all of us have to every generation renew ourselves to fight for that. And we may not like it. It may feel uncomfortable, but we've got -- all of us, we've got to fight for that now. Like a lot of people who write about this stuff, I find myself rummaging through James Madison's notes from the Constitutional Convention quite a bit. And it's really an amazing thing to read. Madison and his fellow framers were really, really worried about a moment like this, about a strong man, about someone like Cromwell. He was worried that we, the people, would become, as he said, tools of opulence and ambition. They warned us. When Ben Franklin left

that last day, he went out and a woman asked him, "Well, what is it, Doctor Franklin, a monarchy or a Republic?" He said, "A republic, madam, if you can keep it."

01:29:00

We all have to keep it together. We ask you to vote against the motion.

John Donvan:

Thank you, Michael Waldman.

[applause]

And that concludes our closing statements and Round three. And now it's time to learn which side you feel has argued the best. I want to ask you again to go to the keypads at your seat and vote as you did at the beginning. Again, push number one if you agree with the motion, with this side's argument. Push number two if you disagree. That's you're siding with -- you were persuaded by this side. And number three, if you remain or became undecided in the course of the evening. And we'll have -- what we'll have is the results in about a minute and a half, maybe two minutes. I want to remind you again that it's the difference between the two votes, the movement, that determines victory for us. While we're waiting for that to happen, I want to say this. This was -- this was a hard fought debate with very, very clear dividing lines and I think strong feelings and passions of a most serious and mature kind on both sides.

01:30:02

We're not -- this isn't a game we're talking about. This debate was about the reality that we're in on both sides, and given that and given the strong feelings, I really want to congratulate the quality of civility that all four of our debaters brought to the evening. It's something that we aim for and I think we hit it tonight. So, thank you to all of you for that.

[applause]

And thank you to the people who got up and asked questions, and that does include the questions that I passed on. It takes a lot of guts to do that. I respect it. Some of the questions tonight were some of the best we've ever heard in any debate we've ever done. So, thank you for all of that and applause to yourselves for that one.

[applause]

We're -- our next debate is coming up. We're -- very often, we debate in New York. We come to Washington, D.C. on a regular basis. We will be back. You will know about it. We would love to see you return, but if you get the chance to go up to New York City, we very often put on -- we're usually at the Kaufmann Music Center, which is near Lincoln Center.

01:31:02

And on February 8th next week, we're going to be debating this, the U.S.-Saudi relationship has outlived its usefulness. We will, through the rest of the season, be debating charter schools, the universal basic income idea, the role of Walmart in American society, that motion I believe right now is Long Live Walmart. We will be debating whether video games make us smarter and in June we'll be in San Francisco and in that debate we're going to be looking at tech companies and government demands for customer data and the constitutionality of those demands. You can get tickets to any of our debates through our website and as I pointed out tonight we live on to a much larger audience who will hear all of your applause so you're going to go out into the world through our podcast and through our various streams and through our presence on a number of public radio stations. You can check in with your local stations to see if and when these are being carried.

01:32:03

Also, you can visit our website to vote on all of the topics that we put up there and you can listen to podcasts. All of our debates -- we've done now 134, I think, 131, God I wish I'd make the mistake the other way so they could raise the number. No, it was only 131. That's a lot, and they're all on our website and also on our app which you can get through Apple TV, Roku, Android, Google Play, iTunes, et cetera, and so you just check our website for up-to-date information. The last thing I want to say about this, Intelligence Squared U.S., I know that you've had to buy tickets to get here tonight. The ticket prices don't come close to the cost of even moving this thing from New York. We are a non-profit philanthropy. We put on these debates and then we release them into the wild with the mission of raising the level of public discourse, which is why I was so delighted about how this went tonight.

01:33:03

We wanted to show by example what could be done. And so, we put it out there and we're used in many, many schools now, school curricula and we're very proud of that, but we depend a lot on public support. So, if you're moved to see more of this happening, if you're moved to help us grow, which is our intention to doing more debates per year than we do now, please consider making a donation and you can go to, again, our website iq2us.org and make a donation there. So, that's it. I'm just waiting for the results and I'm going to look for the signal that tells me to keep on dancing or -- keep on dancing.

[laughter]

Oh, phew. Thank you. Okay. So, I have the results now. Once again, the motion is, "Give Trump a Chance." You have voted twice. It's the difference between the first and the second vote that determines victory, according to the rules of Intelligence Squared U.S.

01:34:01

Let's look at the first vote. In the first vote, 27 percent agreed with the motion, 43 percent were against the motion, 30 percent were undecided. In the second vote, the team for the motion, their first vote was 27 percent, their second vote was 22 percent, they lost 5 percentage points. Let's look at the team arguing against the motion, they went from 43 percent to 72 percent, they picked up 29 percentage points. That means the team arguing against the motion, "Give Trump a Chance," is our winner. Our congratulations to them. Thank you from me, John Donovan, and Intelligence Squared U.S. We'll see you next time.

[applause]