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Intelligence Squared U.S.**The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged**

For the Motion: Federiga Bindi and Constanze Stelzenmüller

Against the Motion: John J. Mearsheimer and Carla Norrlof

Moderator: John Donovan

AUDIENCE RESULTS**Before the debate:**

73% FOR

20% AGAINST

7% UNDECIDED

After the debate:

24% FOR

71% AGAINST

5% UNDECIDED

Starting Time: (00:00:00)

[applause]

John Donovan:

Seventy-plus years. That is how long Europe and the United States have held together one of the most impressive and historic strategic partnerships ever.

Frequently, it's been quarrelsome, but basically, it's been fundamentally a family. But might that be about to change in this era of populism taking root in Europe and other places, and in the United States, some people using the slogan, "America First?" Or, is it fundamentally still sound? Are the fundamentals still there, such as shared values and common interests, and most of all, trust? I'm John Donovan. This is Intelligence Squared U.S. We are at the German Marshall Funds Annual Brussels Forum. We will take on these questions by putting on a debate around this resolution: "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged." As always, our debate will go in three rounds, and then the live audience here in Brussels will vote to choose the winner.

00:01:02

And if all goes well, civil discourse will also prove triumphant. First let's meet our debaters. Please, ladies and gentlemen, welcome Federiga Bindi.

[applause]

Federiga, you are a professor at the University of Rome's Tor Vergata, a scholar at the Carnegie Endowment, director of the Foreign Policy Initiative at the Institution for Women Policy Research. You advised four different Italian governments so far, published a lot of books, most recently, "Europe and America: The End of the Transatlantic Relationship?" Thanks so much for being here with us.

Federiga Bindi:

Thank you so much for having me.

John Donovan:

Thanks, Federiga. Let's meet your partner. Please welcome, ladies and gentlemen, Constanze Stelzenmüller.

[applause]

Hi, Constanze. Welcome to Intelligence Squared.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Thank you.

John Donovan:

You're an expert in transatlantic relations, German foreign policy, you're a senior fellow at the center on the United States and Europe at Brookings. Before that, you were a senior transatlantic fellow and Berlin office director with the German Marshall Fund. It's great to have you here.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Thank you.

00:02:00

John Donovan:

Now, let's meet the team arguing against the resolution. Please, first welcome John Mearsheimer.

[applause]

Hi, John. You've debated with us a few times before, so I want to say, welcome back.

John Mearsheimer:

Glad to be here, John.

John Donovan:

You're a professor at University of Chicago, a political scientist, a New York Times best-selling author.

Your most recent book is, "The Great Delusion Liberal Dreams and International Reality." John, thanks so much for joining us.

John Mearsheimer:
That's my pleasure.

John Donovan:
And your partner, please, ladies and gentlemen, welcome Carla Norrlof.

[applause]

Hi, Carla. You're author of "America's Global Advantage: U.S. Hegemony and International Cooperation." You're an associate professor of political science at University of Toronto. You research international cooperation with a special focus on great powers. Thanks so much for joining us at the Brussels Forum.

Carla Norrlof:
Thank you.

John Donovan:
Here they are, ladies and gentlemen, the four debaters getting ready to start on this resolution: "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged."

[applause]

00:03:01

John Donovan:
Let's move on to the debate. We go in three rounds. And round one is comprised of opening statements that will be made by each debater in turn. They will be six minutes each. And up to speak first for the resolution, "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged," Federiga Bindi, professor at of University of Rome, Tor Vergata.

The floor is yours.

Federiga Bindi:
Thank you so much. John, thank you. GMF and IQ Squared for having me. It's good to be back in Brussels at the Brussels Forum.

I'm humbled, honored, and as likely [unintelligible] I should say because for the past two days, all we have been saying was, yes, we have problems in the transatlantic relations, but we're going to fix them. And Constanze and myself are going to argue exactly the contrary. Unfortunately, this is beyond fixable. So, what we are going to do is we split the work a little bit. I'm going to dive into the past -- you know, I'm a professor; history matters within my students -- while Constanze will dig more into current times.

00:04:03

So, if you look back in perspective in transatlantic relations, E.U. and U.S. relationship -- and forgive me if I use E.U. sometimes improperly when I should say EC or EUC.

But if you look back, we see highs and lows in the relationship. Example of the highs are, certainly, the post-World War II period or the period right after 9/11, the only time Article V has ever been involved.

If we look at the lows, certainly the 1970s stand up. Middle East has been an issue of content for long time. Think of the differences between -- they are on the Arab/Israeli war. Think of the -- with the relative little [unintelligible], but those who think of [unintelligible] and difficulties with which Europeans responded to the U.S.'s invasion of Afghanistan or Martial Law in Poland or Sigonella or the differences over Moscow Olympics.

00:05:06

So, there were lots of troubles, which of course I know you're thinking, "See? We had troubles before. We are going to fix them once again." But no. And why is no?

In my opinion, it goes back to one special year, 1989. So, for the little history, in 1989 I was an undergraduate at John Paul, one of the very, very first Erasmus. It was called Erasmus Free Mover at the time. Spent the year there. That was a special year. You know, all the unrest that was taking place during the summer and the fall. So, John Paul organized these conferences every Thursday afternoon and [unintelligible] who was the specialist of Germany would commence current affairs. And it was the 9th of November 1989, and for those of you who have been at John Paul imagine [unintelligible].

00:06:01

Two thousand kids packing [unintelligible], and it was about two minutes before 7:00 p.m. and the [unintelligible] was finishing his pitch and he said, "You know maybe, maybe in two decades maybe communist won't be there anymore. We don't know."

And in that moment, the operator -- people were standing at the door -- rushed in.

I said [speaks french]. We are going to -- we are here because the Berlin Wall came down. And what came down in that moment was the amphitheater. You know, imagine 2,000 kids, all nationalities, screaming, hugging, kissing. The Germans were crying. I mean, I still have goosebumps when I think about it. It was, by all means, the defining political event of a generation, one that changed us forever.

00:07:00

And then I went on and I went to do my PhD at EUI. And I started teaching American kids in Florence and the kids were -- the kids were referring to 1989 as the year we won the Cold War. And I said, no, no, no, what are you talking about? There is no winner. That's the end of an anomaly in history.

But then I went to the U.S., and I realized that that was part of a general narrative, a narrative on which [unintelligible] like Wolfowitz or [unintelligible] jumped in to advocate for a unilateral war to where -- the polar war with the U.S. The winner of the Cold War would have a right duty to intervene and once they got the chance to go into government with GW, they actually enacted it. And then, GW relied that relationship with Europe need to be fixed in a second term, but you know, bridges had been teared down. And then came Obama and remember his triumphant war tour in Europe organized by our former colleague C. Gordon.

00:08:01

The Europeans loved Obama. But the fact that they loved Obama the person, did not mean they loved American politics. By that 20 years of rather useless wars had [unintelligible] what Woodrow Wilson referred to as American moral exceptionalism.

And what I've never been able to properly explain to my American colleagues and friends, it's the American moral exceptionalism, the American dream, Hollywood, public diplomacy, programs like GMF, Fulbright, the State Department visitors, any of the Europeans who had not been in one of those programs raise your hand. I mean, this is what made us dream about the U.S. This is what Federica Mogherini referred to as why we got in love with the U.S. The real strength of the U.S. is this [unintelligible] and with the wars [unintelligible] was no more there.

00:09:00

And, you know, with people -- and in politics alike -- it takes a lot of work to earn respectability, to earn trust. And it takes a jiff to lose it. And to rebuild it, it takes a long time. And I leave it to my friend, Constanze to tell you where we are now.

Thank you very much.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Thank you, Federiga Bindi.

[applause]

Our resolution, again, is "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged." Our next debater will be speaking against the resolution. Please welcome, from the University of Toronto, Professor Carla Norrlof.

[applause]

Carla Norrlof:

Thank you very much, Intelligence Squared, for inviting me to this event, and thank you very much to GMF, as well. It's a pleasure to be here. So, we are in strong agreement that the Transatlantic relationship is not irreparably damaged.

00:10:00

I am going to be focusing on the American interests in repairing the relationship. John will be discussing European interests. I think it helps to go back to defining what the Transatlantic relationship is.

It's a political security community -- a zone of peace in which disagreements are settled peacefully, without recourse to war. The primary institutional expression of this zone of peace, of this community, is NATO. In order for the Transatlantic relationship to collapse, we basically need to see a collapse of NATO. That's not happening. President Trump is a threat and has threatened the relationship. We do not deny that. But he's unlikely to follow through on the most important threats, because it's not in the United States' interest to do so.

00:11:07

The United States has profound security interests in maintaining the relationship. NATO isn't a burden; it's a pillar of U.S. power. NATO is the blue chip in the United States' vast global security network. In fact, it's one of the primary advantages that the United States has and will have long-term against systemic rivals, like China and Russia. Europeans are also increasingly doing the kinds of things that the United States wants them to do. It's increasingly aligning on U.S. foreign policy objectives -- labeling China a systemic rival, for instance; ramping up the fight against terrorism; increasing defense spending.

00:12:08

Even if President Trump wanted to pull the United States out of NATO, Congress, his closest advisors, overwhelmingly continue to support NATO. Economically as well, there are extraordinarily powerful links between the United States and Europe. The United States and Europe are each other's main trade and investment partners. In fact, it's the largest trade and investment relationship in the world. You will say, "Well, what about the looming trade war?" The United States' trade deficit with the European Union \$150 billion.

00:13:02

That's half the size of the United States' trade deficit with China. It's not worth a trade war, especially not one that the United States is unlikely to easily win. There's another

important wedge issue, and it's the Iran nuclear deal crisis, which kind of blends economic and security issues. The Europeans want to maintain the deal. The United States wants to abandon the deal. And in order to pressure Europeans to abandon the deal, the United States has imposed sanctions on Europeans doing business with Iran. It's a form of financial deterrence that is extremely effective in the short-term because the United States can weaponize the dollar-centered financial system to advantage.

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In the long term, however, it's counterproductive. It's counterproductive because it discourages the use of dollars, and it encourages other countries to devise alternative payment systems as the Germans have begun efforts to do. I also want to talk a little bit in closing about a social interest that the United States has in maintaining this alliance. When we talk about the transatlantic relationship, we really take for granted that we're talking about America on the one hand, and on the other side, we're talking about countries north of Spain.

00:15:06

We're not talking about African countries also facing the Atlantic. There is a strong perception of common values and a strong desire to maintain a shared European ancestry. And I think that this is a very powerful generator of a "we" feeling that is essential to keeping this community alive. Thank you very much.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Thank you, Carla Norrlof. And a reminder of where we are. We are halfway through the opening rounds of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate. I'm John Donovan. We have four debaters, two teams of two fighting it out over this resolution: "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged." You've heard the first two opening statements and now onto the third. I give the floor to Constanze Stelzenmüller, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

00:16:02

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Thank you very much. Thanks again for including me in this amazing event of this great lineup. It feels disturbingly like a cross between a FISA defense and the NBA finals.

[laughter]

So, I'll do my best.

I have been asked here to defend, together with my partner, Federiga Bindi, the thesis that the transatlantic relationship is irreparably damaged. And since this room is full of

people who know me, I have a confession to make, which, of course, is that I wish it were otherwise. How could it be otherwise? And I also don't quite think that we're there yet. So, what I can going to describe to you is my worst case vision of a daunting dystopia of international relations, a disordering so profound, an unraveling of order so dramatic, including its transatlantic pillar, that we are incapable of stopping it and incapable of turning it back.

00:17:04

So, let me first review the damage before I explain why this time is different than any other time. I see an extraordinary confluence of power failures on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the United States, I see -- I see high stakes, high risk, simultaneous brinksmanship on some -- on several continents at the same time. Breathtaking. On top of that, I see a U.S. administration using, or threatening, instruments of economic coercion, terrorism, sanctions, like no administration has done before, not in this quantity, not in this quality, not, as far as we can see, with so little of an ultimate plan.

00:18:03

And I don't see America winning. In fact, for now, I see it losing. What I do see is America alienating its allies and its friends. And what I fear, ultimately, is the undermining of American credibility and American legitimacy across the globe. And that ought to strike fear into all of us. Now, I don't think the European side is much better, although I think we have a little less agency than America does still. As we saw in the European elections, we've managed to keep the populists at bay, but barely, haven't we? The truth is that we have seen this continent in which we stand today gravely weakened, shaken by a series of successive crises following the global financial crisis.

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We are divided, profoundly, within our politics and across Europe on matters of security, on matters of social welfare, on matters of economic policy and growth, and on matters of immigration. I see a Europe that is surrounded by mounting crises and conflict. And that appears to me to be speechless and powerless in the face of America First. So, why is this time different? Why is this not the same as all the other crises that Federiga just described to us? I have three reasons for you. My first reason is that the disordering isn't just happening in far-away places of which we know nothing. Sea levels rising in the Seychelles or drug crises in Russian prisons. No, the disordering is happening at home in our own politics, rising social inequality, rising economic inequality, political polarization, and it seems to me a degradation of governance in the places where we feel them closest to home, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, and yes, of course, our national politics.

00:20:20

Let's keep in mind that a German politician was murdered at the beginning of this month, the first political murder by right-wing extremists in the history of my country since 1945. My second argument is that I think I see us all paralyzed in face of the authoritarians and the populists, not the ones in Brazil and in China, but the ones at home, who are cheapening, denying, undermining the fundamental values of representative democracy and a rules-based international order. And my third reason -- and it pains me to say this because I am -- I have deep affection for the country that I have been living in for the last five decades, and I have many American friends in this room.

00:21:06

But my third reason is that the chief of these challenges is currently President of the United States of America. So, to conclude, my concern is that what we are about to face is what you could call a silent spring of international governance. To borrow the title of a very famous book by the American ecologist Rachel Carson, a disordering so profound that we are unable to stop it and unable to turn it back. Thank you.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Thank you, Constanze Stelzenmüller. And our final debater in this opening round will be speaking against the resolution, Chicago professor, John Mearsheimer.

John Mearsheimer:

Thank you, John. What I'd like to do is build on Carla's excellent presentation about the importance of interest by asking a very simple question to start that I think lies at the heart of the revolution -- resolution.

00:22:07

Carla Norrlof:

[laughs]

John Mearsheimer:

And that simple question is, what is the glue that holds the transatlantic relationship together? What's the glue?

And our argument is that the principal glue are common interests. What Carla and I are saying is that the United States, on one side, and Europeans on the other side, have a common interest in keeping the transatlantic relationship intact. Now, there's no question that values and trust matter. They're part of the glue for sure. But what really matters the most is the interests of the states that are involved in this relationship. Interests almost always trump trust and values.

00:23:01

That's because statesmen are mainly concerned with the prosperity and security of their citizens, and they will do what is ever necessary to protect those citizens. Just to give you two examples that highlight the fact that interests trump things like values. In 1941, December 1941, the United States allied itself closely with the murderous regime of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union. Why did we do that? Because it was in our interests for the purpose of defeating Nazi Germany. We sacrificed values for interests. Think about America's relationship today with Saudi Arabia, our long-standing relationship with Saudi Arabia. Is there any country on the planet that has values that are more antithetical to American values? I can't think of one, maybe North Korea. But in the case of Saudi Arabia, we have had remarkably close relations with them for a really long time.

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And the question is why? And the answer is very simple, because it's in our interest. Why did we ally with Joe Stalin? Because it was in our interest. Now, this is not to deny that there's certain cases where your values and your interests line up.

But when your interests and your values clash, you go with your interests. So, what really matters here when we think about whether or not this transatlantic relationship is going to hold over time is the question of whether we both, the Americans and the Europeans, have a vested interest in keeping this thing intact. Now, what Carla did is she explained to you quite clearly why it's in America's national interest to keep the transatlantic relationship alive. Now, I want to do -- what I want to do is explain to you why it's in Europe's interest, and I think the case is quite straightforward. First of all, it's in Europe's economic interest to continue to trade with the United States.

00:25:06

It's in Europe's interest to think very carefully about how to deal with China and to work with the United States on the economic front to deal with China. But I actually believe that's not the main reason that it's important for Europeans to have a very close relationship with Uncle Sam. The real reason is security and the fact is that Europeans have a deep-seated interest in keeping the United States of America firmly implanted on the European continent, and I'm talking about the American military here. Many people wonder why there has been no war in Europe since the Cold War ended. Why has Europe been so peaceful? A lot of people say it's because it's the -- because of the E.U. and the success of the E.U. This is fundamentally wrong. The reason there's been no trouble in Europe is because the United States is here. The United States serves as a pacifier.

00:26:01

I have never heard a single European leader say that he or she would like to see the United States leave Europe. And in fact, when I tour Europe these days, what I find is that many European leaders, European elites, are worried that Uncle Sam is going home.

Why? Because they understand intuitively. They'll rarely say it out loud because it's not politically correct, but they understand we are the pacifier, and keeping us here is very important for maintaining security in the heart of Europe. And for those of you who believe there's a Russian threat out there, and my experiences talking to European tells me that almost every one of you believes that, contrary to me, and I don't matter in this case. Right? The fact is you want the Americans here. You want NATO here. You all understand that the American presence means NATO. You want NATO. You want the Americans here to deal with the Russians should they get aggressive in eastern Europe. So, all of this is to say the United States really matters greatly for the security of Europe.

00:27:05

Not to mention economics as well. And therefore, Europeans have a deep-seated interest in keeping us here. And as Carla said, the Americans, given their view of their role in the world, and as you all know we're very interested in running the world, right, and Europe is part of that whole enterprise. We have deep-seated interest in staying here. So, what we have here is a situation where America's interests and Europe's interests still match together to make a case for staying in Europe and keeping the Americans here and maintaining the transatlantic relationship for the foreseeable future.

John Donovan:

Thank you, John Mearsheimer.

[applause]

And that concludes the first round of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate where our resolution is "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged."

00:28:02

So, we move on to round two. And Round two is where the debaters address one another directly and take questions from me and from you, our audience here in Brussels. Our resolution is this: "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged." On the side arguing for the resolution: Federiga Bindi and Constanze Stelzenmüller. We have heard them describe the current situation as the Silent Spring of international governance -- state governance. They argue that while there have been strains before, in fact, this time is different; there is a significant power failure on both sides of the ocean -- that the tenor of discord has reached levels never seen before.

They make the argument that the disordering is different this time; that the elites are paralyzed in the face of those who are challenging the fundamentals of liberal democracy. And they point very specifically to what they describe as the problem of Donald Trump himself. They say that the thing that held the alliance together when it was most effective -- the Cold War ended in a way that the United States misinterpreted, in a sort of moment of triumphalism, which has not been conducive to the continuing health of the relationship.

00:29:14

The side arguing against the resolution -- John Mearsheimer and Carla Norrlof -- argue that it's not so different this time.

They make a very strong argument that common interests will trump values. They're not saying values don't matter, but in the end, common interests will trump that -- that is the glue that holds together the relationship.

They point out that NATO is the essential skeleton of that relationship and that NATO is not going anywhere. Nor will the relationship dissolve, ultimately, they say, because it's just not in the interest of either side. On the United States' side, there are too many economic links -- and actually that that goes both ways -- but that basically, Europe also needs the United States for its security. And that interest is just too strong to ultimately threaten the overall relationship.

00:30:06

So, there's a lot to dig into here. I want to start with a question. Going, first, to Federiga Bindi -- your opponents have made the case -- an interesting case -- that it's -- the commonality of interests, of realpolitik interest, is so strong that that will ultimately prevail, and it's just too powerful in influence to be diminished, and that therefore, the relationship will persist in a healthy way --

[talking simultaneously]

Federiga Bindi:

The reason that you ask me this -- I -- zillions of years ago, I wrote my PhD thesis on the national interest. And the hardest part in writing about national interest -- I compared, clearly, to case studies, but -- [unintelligible] at the time -- but the hardest part is actually defining national interest. I mean, our opponents lay down a perfect rational analysis, which would make very happy some of our colleagues, but the reality is that the national interest not only is hard to define -- not only by us academics, but most of all, in government.

00:31:13

And the changes across time and across circumstance.

And at the end of the day, what counts more is not the interest per se, which is an esoteric term, but the perception of national interest. And I completely agree that the U.S. matters. That U.S. is a pacifier. The question is that the perception of the U.S. national interest has been changing.

John Donovan:

All right. Let me take this to John Mearsheimer.

John Mearsheimer:

I actually don't think that's true, Federiga. I think that it is quite clear that the vast majority of American policymakers and members of the foreign policy elite believe that the United States has a vested interest in maintaining peace in Europe. And by staying in Europe, we keep the peace.

00:32:04

And there are two reasons for that. One is we believe that it is economically important to keep the peace in Europe, because if a war breaks out in Europe, that will have disastrous consequences for the international economy.

And secondly, it's widely believed that we will get dragged in. So, why not just stay there to begin with, prevent war, rather than leave and have to come back?

Federiga Bindi:

You know, I'm completely convinced that it is in my interest to win the lottery and retire before a time.

But that doesn't happen -- that doesn't mean it's going to happen. And you're [unintelligible] exactly what Constanze had -- Constanze said. It's unilateral. It's alienating, what you're saying, which is exactly what Constanze said. You may want to elaborate on that.

John Donovan:

Well, let's let Carla --

Carla Norrlof:

I would like to --

John Donovan:

-- come in first.

Carla Norrlof:

Yeah. So, I think that we probably do not want to get into too much of an academic debate about, you know, interests. You also say the same thing for values.

00:33:01

What we mean by interests is that there are some shared goals. There are security goals, and there are economic goals, and we try to put a little bit of meat onto those to describe what those look like. When it comes to values, this is also a kind of morphous [spelled phonetically] term, right?

So, some people think that democracy is a value. Sometimes values are more synonymous with something that resembles norms or principles. So, I think that the more specific we are about what we're talking, I think that that will kind of push forward the debate.

John Donovan:

Well, Constanze, to a certain degree, there's a lot of overlapping what both sides are saying, but you have made this argument that what's going on is different this time. It's fundamentally different, so can you push that point in response to what you're hearing so far?

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

All right, two things. I want to push back, with all due respect, against John's point that we need American military in Europe to stop us from killing each other. Forgive me, John, but that's ludicrous. I think that that is just the least likely thing to happen in Europe right now.

00:34:04

John Donovan:

Okay, let's -- did somebody start to clap? Because we're good with that, as I said in the beginning.

[applause]

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Okay. That was not necessary but thank you.

John Donovan:

No, actually, it is necessary though.

[laughter]

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Okay, thank you. All right. But, look, I mean, it is actually insulting. I mean, you are surrounded here by Europeans who have grown up with each other, traveled in each other's countries, whose parents have married each other, and who have worked in each other's country. Some of us have double nationalities and some of us have green cards. To say to us that we still need GIs in Europe, so that this place won't explode is ludicrous.

John Mearsheimer:

Then why do you want --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Okay, no, no. Wait, wait. For a different reason, because you need us too. And I'm coming to that. So, I've been reading both of your parents, "Europe's Bound to Fail,"

your [unintelligible] one's really good. Both of you talk about economic interdependence. You, in fact, point out, Carla, that economic independence works both ways.

00:35:01

You seem not to be willing to consider that. The truth is that we are a great power economically, and you need us. And in fact, without us, you are weaker in the world with regards to China, with regards to Russia, and elsewhere.

John Mearsheimer:
And I support that point.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
But -- no, no.

[applause]

Carla Norrlof:
First point.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
No, no, no. No, because you are destroying, you are trying to undermine the E.U., or not you, John Mearsheimer, but this American administration. I take that back.

[laughter]

John Donovan:
Well, let's let them jump in a little bit in response --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
No, wait, wait, wait. One final point.

John Donovan:
Sure. Yeah.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
The final point here is -- and I know that you're not going to like this one, but I'm going to make it anyway, which is that you also need us in terms -- in security terms. You have first ordered strategic interests in Europe that your troops in Europe protect, and you would be less able to protect them, you will be less able to pursue those goals, if you weren't in Europe and if we weren't letting you.

John Mearsheimer:
[unintelligible]

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
And I'm not saying you're not protecting us too.

John Donovan:
Okay.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
But you're protecting us against external risks, not internal.

00:36:00

John Donovan:
All right, Constanze, I want you to yield to let your -- you've got a lot out there, and let's let your opponents respond to some of that.

John Mearsheimer:
Look, I believe that the reason European elites, European policy makers have been so deeply committed to maintaining NATO and are so afraid that NATO is going to collapse, is they understand that the United States serves as a pacifier.

As I said, when I was making my initial comments, it's not politically correct to say that because they know that people like you will jump down their throat.

But the fact is that intuitively --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
I'm still over here.

John Mearsheimer:
-- intuitively --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
I'm not going to say another word.

John Mearsheimer:
People understand that the United States is the pacifier, and it also can deal with the Russians, which people worry about.

Federiga Bindi:
This isn't exactly the American view that does not understand what the European Union is all about. I'm sorry. You continue to see it as something completely different, so just an economic entity. It reminds me when -- remember when we were working on the single market, New York Times and other papers would write, oh, a single market is never going to happen because Europeans haven't been able to do it.

00:37:05

Euro, oh, the Europeans were never going to have a euro because the Europeans are -- The Europeans had worse. We still have people who went through the wars, and there was a commitment never to do that again. And that came from the Europeans by the Europeans. It was supported at the time by the American administration. If you remember, Achison came to Europe, came to Paris the day before Schuman was -- pronounced his Schuman Declaration, but then, the Schuman Declaration had already been agreed between the French and the Germans.

I mean, this is Europeans which is --

Carla Norrlof:

So -- so --

John Donovan:

So, Carla -- can we let Carla come in?

Carla Norrlof:

So, I think that it's one thing to argue that Europe does not need the United States in order to prevent war amongst European countries.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

You followed me there.

00:38:01

Carla Norrlof:

So -- but that's quite a separate question from Europe not having an interest in the United States being committed to NATO.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Absolutely.

Carla Norrlof:

But that's because there is the Russian threat and there are other common goals that NATO and the -- through the United States can secure.

And so, it doesn't seem to me that you're actually addressing our main argument that there are these common security interests.

And we -- you know, we kind of addressed the American interest in --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Happy to.

Carla Norrlof:

-- maintaining committed to NATO because that's what's in dispute.

John Donovan:

Can you -- do a response to what Carla just said because I know --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Sure.

John Donovan:

-- you're ready to go for that.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Absolutely. I mean, I absolutely agree with you, Carla, and John, that we have a common interest in maintaining NATO, not so that the Europeans don't kill each other but because we have shared external challenges.

00:39:04

Now, the problem is that this U.S. administration, not America overall, but this U.S. administration is doing things in security policy and in its trade policy that undercut the trust and cohesion of the alliance because they are increasing the insecurity of the world and of the region around Europe, thereby undermining European security.

And because they are undermining, actively and quite malignantly, one of the key factors in European stability that backstops NATO in all -- in a lot of important ways, and that is the European Union. The European Union is -- provides the political, social, and economic resilience that you need in a security environment where adversaries are using instruments short of war, hybrid warfare, propaganda, buying politicians, funding political parties, all these kinds of things.

John Donovan:

Okay. And --

00:40:01

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

And it's an act of self-harm because it undermines American interests.

John Donovan:

John Mearsheimer, can you respond to that?

[applause]

John Mearsheimer:

It seems to me that much of what you said concedes our point that there is a need for NATO, that we have a mutual interest in sustaining NATO.

So that, you know, is manna from heaven for us. Now, your argument that President Trump is a problem is basically correct. I'm not going to defend his policies with regard to, you know, putting sanctions on allies in Europe, his attitude towards the E.U., his attitude towards NATO. He is definitely a bull in a China shop. Nobody will deny that. But the question you have to ask yourself is just how much damage can he do? And the fact of the matter is, as Sec. Stoltenberg said yesterday, if anything, America is increasing in its commitment to NATO.

00:41:01

The United States is not in a position to destroy the European Union. It can cause some problems with tariffs, but there are even limits there. And the United States and President Trump are ultimately going to be forced to work with the Europeans to deal with the Chinese problem.

John Donovan:

I want to ask Federiga this question. Your opponents have cast this -- and, so far, we've been arguing the questioning of common interests in a sort of real politic way. But they made an opening statement that the values, while they might matter, don't matter that much. But can you make an argument that the values issue does matter? Which gets us to common commitment to liberal democracy, for example, which seems to be under threat in some parts of Europe, perhaps some parts of the United States. Are you rushing aside and conceding their argument that the values are not the critical thing?

Federiga Bindi:

No. The values is exactly what made the U.S. attractive to us. I mean, what made the U.S. the beacon of hope and that everybody looks at. If you take the values away, there is nothing left because of the fact that interests changes across time.

00:42:07

Just think of the definition of national interest, Monroe, P. Roosevelt, and Wilson. They had [unintelligible] different definition of what was the American national interest. The national interest is linked to the moment. The values is a process that goes across centuries.

John Donovan:

And you think that is eroding as we speak?

Federiga Bindi:

Yes, it is.

John Donovan:

And you feel the same?

Federiga Bindi:
Very much so.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

I do. Let me try and make a slightly different argument from Federiga just to add on to her excellent points, which is that I want to -- I want to make both a moral argument and a more -- a less moral argument for values. One is, yes. I'm sorry but representative democracy is to me the system that has proven to be best at preventing cruelty, at preventing cruelty from the majority to minorities. And I, as a German, know of what I speak.

00:43:01

And so, it is a system that I wish to preserve, and if I am faced with an American president and other American officials who, on a daily basis, discredit those values I have a problem with my -- with the alliance and I think that that also translates into a toxic relationship within NATO and --

John Donovan:

And why -- I didn't mean to interrupt your --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

May I make the other point?

John Donovan:

Sure.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Just very quickly?

John Donovan:

Yeah.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Which is that the other thing that we forget, I think, as we admire the authoritarians in Russia and China because somehow, they seem to be keeping their countries together, and we're afraid we're not. Representative democracies remain the best at repairing, at recognizing the flaws in their systems and at repairing them. That is the one thing of which I am convinced and where I'm going to contradict my own position.

I -- that is the hill on which I die. That is what we are best as and it's -- if I am faced with allies who deny that fact, that divides us.

00:44:01

John Donovan:

Okay. Carla, before I move on to other questions --

[applause]

So, the argument that you've just heard that in fact the corrosion of values, which I think you might be conceding. I'm not sure, but whether you are or not they're arguing that the corrosion of values is dispositive.

And I think you're saying would outweigh common interests because, as I said, common interests come and go. What's your response to that?

Carla Norrlof:

So, I think that a lot of the fissures that you've pointed to within the United States, some of those problems also exist in European countries. So, inequality and populism and particular extreme right populism, extreme right political parties are very much a problem in Europe. And so, I'm -- I'm not convinced that there is an erosion in the relationship between America and Europe that you've shown me.

00:45:02

What kind of values are you thinking about that have been so eroded that affect fundamentally this relationship?

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

It's so hard to know where to start.

Look, simply -- just look at the news images from today. Vladimir Putin and President Trump sitting together and laughing about the fake news when 58 journalists have been murdered in the reign of Vladimir Putin. Journalists are at risk around the world and the president of the United States and the president of Russia are laughing about this. How does that not undermine the alliance?

[applause]

John Donovan:

Okay. Let's go to some audience questions. Again, if you just raise your hands, I'll start right in the front row and a mic will come. If you could stand up and tell us your name, please.

Male Speaker:

My name is Jerry Green [spelled phonetically] from California, so Americans don't all look alike. I question -- we actually have a debate between two North Americans and two Europeans. The question is how permanent are the cultural consequences of a malignant administration, which is only two years old and will not live forever?

00:46:08

John Donovan:

That's a great question. So, you're saying this time it's different. The question is saying it might be different this time but it's not going to last that long. What's your response to that?

Carla Norrlof:

Well, I worry that the reasons that I just described are not -- do not have -- are not limited to leaders and their personalities and their impact. I was talking about structural reasons. I was talking about the profound dysfunctionalities of our policies, or our governance at home and our inability to repair them. And that's why I'm concerned that a change in government or in party in 2020 in the United States won't change the situation that we're in.

And I also really want to reinforce the point, but it is one that I made in my opening statement that we have the populous in Europe as well, but they're only in government in Hungary and to a -- some degree in Poland -- if my Polish friends here will forgive me.

00:47:01

John Donovan:

Federiga, you wanted to join in.

Federiga Bindi:

Yeah. Well, I just came back from California. Totally want to move there. So -- but you know, the value of the presidency in the U.S. goes beyond politics. It's an example. And what we are witnessing today is a total change in ethics and I can tell you, as a woman -- for a woman, even if they don't live in the U.S. -- you can feel it on your skin that things have changed.

There are things that, two years ago, would be judged completely unacceptable that today -- nothing happens. Think of the -- I mean, think of the border. Think of the kids that have been separated. Think of the kids who are dying in the custody of the government. I mean, two years ago, had it happened during the previous administration, it would have been a revolution.

00:48:03

And today it's just, "Well, six kids is dead." So, the more -- our moral values are being eroded. And God forbid, this last six more years, there's not going to be coming back from that.

John Donovan:

John Mearsheimer, would you like to respond as well?

John Mearsheimer:

I mean, the question on the table is whether or not this is going to lead to irreparable damage in the Transatlantic alliance. I mean, what's happening here is we're put -- being put in the position where we have to defend Donald Trump. And we --

John Donovan:

No. I don't think that's the case.

John Mearsheimer:

-- we --

John Donovan:

I don't think you're being asked to do that.

John Mearsheimer:

[inaudible]

John Donovan:

I think you were given a description that actually clearly answered the question that's been floating around.

What is this dissolution of values? And it is a cancer that's permanent --

John Mearsheimer:

Right. But to talk about what the Trump administration is doing and what we don't like has to be linked to the claim that this is going to undermine the Transatlantic relationship. And they're not making that argument at all.

00:49:02

And to the extent that they talk about the Transatlantic relationship, they give out arguments that support our position.

John Donovan:

Are you making that argument?

Federiga Bindi:

No. No. Absolutely not.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Okay. How about --

John Donovan:

I do want to get some more questions, so can you answer -- I know it's hard -- in 30 seconds.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Yes.

John Donovan:

Thirty-five.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Look. The point that I'm making very simply, in one line, is that the actions of this government are so toxic, and so disruptive, and so destructive that they will undermine the cohesion and the --

John Mearsheimer:

There's no evidence of that.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

-- allegiance that we in the United States --

John Mearsheimer:

There's no evidence. Look at what's happening to NATO. As Sec. Stoltenberg said yesterday --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

But if you blow up --

John Mearsheimer:

-- if anything, the American commitment to Europe is increasing.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

But if you blow up our entire surroundings, as you reinforce NATO's Eastern [inaudible]

--

John Mearsheimer:

We have been blowing up your surroundings for over a decade now.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Okay.

[laughter]

Federiga Bindi:

[unintelligible] --

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

I rest my case. Thank you.

[applause]

John Donovan:

All right. Let's go onto another question.

John Mearsheimer:

And it has had no effect on the Transatlantic --

Federiga Bindi:

That's exactly.

John Mearsheimer:

-- relationship.

Federiga Bindi:

That's exactly our point.

00:50:00

So, the relationship before -- this has been going on for 20 years. But at least the relationship -- there was a decency at the level of leadership, which doesn't exist anymore. And it permeates the whole society. It's a cancer for the whole society.

John Donovan:

Did I feed the word "cancer" into this conversation?

[laughter]

As the moderator, I'm not supposed to do that. So -- okay. Why don't you step forward, please? And tell us who you are. Thank you.

Female Speaker:

[inaudible] Affairs. So, we've got this debate going beyond the interest, values, Trump, no Trump --

John Donovan:

Thank you.

Female Speaker:

-- sort of paradigm. My question really is whether you're not missing -- in particular, you, John and Carla -- the broader structural story to all this. Now, Americans may indeed have an interest -- because I think Europeans have an interest of seeing Americans remain in Europe, and Americans may indeed have that interest too. But given that their big strategic challenge is China moving forward -- perhaps not today or tomorrow -- but will the United States have the ability to remain in Europe, as it is today?

00:51:01

John Donovan:

Thank you. Carla, you want to take that?

Carla Norrlof:

So, I think that's a great question. And I think that the Europeans' willingness to do more on terrorism is actually enabling the United States to pivot more towards China.

And Europeans spending increasingly more on defense will also free up resources for the United States to focus attention elsewhere.

John Donovan:

John, quickly?

John Mearsheimer:

Yeah. Just very quickly, to build on Carla. I think that it is possible, 30 or 40 years now -- from now, if China continues to grow at an impressive economic rate, that it will become so powerful militarily, that the United States will have no choice but to pivot completely out of Europe and put virtually all its military assets in Asia. But that's a long way off.

00:52:01

And for the foreseeable future, the United States clearly has the capability to contain China in Asia, and at the same time, maintain substantial forces in Europe.

John Donovan:

I want to give your opponents -- if you want to -- a chance to respond, or we can move on to another question.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Why don't we go on?

Federiga Bindi:

No.

John Donovan:

You can take a pass? Yeah. Let's take another question from this side. Thanks.

Female Speaker:

Hi, my name is Donatella Kopanovaki [spelled phonetically]. As a Britt, I want to bring Brexit into this debate.

John Mearsheimer:

Thank you.

Female Speaker:

So, we're assuming that there are just two actors, but actually, Europe is multifaceted.

And E.U. is a large part of Europe, but it's not Europe as a whole. How do you feel the U.K.'s withdrawal from the E.U. will impact the Transatlantic relationship? Thank you.

John Donovan:

Let's take that first to Federiga.

Federiga Bindi:

Well, first of all, we still don't know whether Brexit is going to take place or not. We can take bets in it today and see who wins. But that being said, the -- whether the U.K. exit or not, it's a weak actor. United States is way weaker than it used to be, which undermines the [unintelligible] United States arguments within Europe because traditionally the relationship has played in favor the special relationship between the two has played in favor of the U.S., and they don't have it.

00:53:11

So, this is part of a general disintegration trend that we are talking about.

John Donovan:

Other side. John?

John Mearsheimer:

I just say very quickly; I think that Britain is still going to have extensive economic relations with the European continent and with the United States. And in terms of security, Britain is not pulling at NATO. And that is what matters the most, as Carla pointed out in her opening comments.

John Donovan:

Sir?

Male Speaker:

Tuma Stine [spelled phonetically] of Welkoff [spelled phonetically] German Marshall Fund, question to Carla and John. When the United States first entered Europe in 1917, it confronted great powers. It was a great power war. Same thing in the second World War. Please adjust your argument -- your interest-based argument of the United States staying in Europe to the reality of European absolute decline.

00:54:02

Isn't it the case that the U.S. interest in Europe is much weaker than it used to be, and couldn't America care less about Europe even if Europe was threatened by Russia?

John Donovan:
John or Carla.

Carla Norrlof:
Yeah. So, I'm actually not really a declinist. I don't think that the United States is in decline to the extent that the -- that people presuppose.

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
He meant Europe.

Male Speaker:
That Europe is in decline, not America.

Carla Norrlof:
Okay. So, Europe is in decline, and therefore your question is?

John Donovan:
As I understood the question, doesn't that provide less incentive for the United States to give a damn?

Male Speaker:
Yeah, exactly.

[laughter]

John Donovan:
That's it. That's cutting to the chase.

[laughter]

What'd I do?

[applause]

Carla Norrlof:
Okay. That's just so surprising to me, and I assumed the opposite because usually the argument is that the United States is in decline, and so Europeans can actually do more to tend to their own security.

00:55:05

John Donovan:
Okay. I'm going to go down to another question. Sir.

Male Speaker:

I'm with GMF, too. The question is actually the transatlantic relationship has been irreparably damaged, not the transatlantic alliance; the transatlantic relationship.

And I respectfully submit that the transatlantic -- that the United States, much of our relationship, post 1945 in the Marshall Plan, was based on moral legitimacy. And in Europe, the United States has lost its moral legitimacy, and that is what I think is a profound change --

John Donovan:
Okay.

Male Speaker:
-- and is irreparably damaged --

John Donovan:
No, no. There is a deliberate choice of words in our resolution, so thank you for doing that. I'd like to take it to John Mearsheimer.

John Mearsheimer:
Yeah, I don't think that the American commitment to Europe was based on moral values. The American commitment to Europe, from roughly 1949 forward was based on pure strategic interests. The fact of the matter is we wanted to get out of Europe after World War II, and we left in good part.

00:56:04

And during the 1950s, the historiography shows very clearly the Eisenhower administration wanted to leave. One of the reasons that we promoted the European coal and steel union was so that the Italians, the British, the French, and the Germans could come together, form a cohesive whole.

And they could deal with the Soviet Union, and we could go home.

Carla Norrlof:
John.

John Mearsheimer:
Right? It was pure strategic interests. What guides American foreign policy over time is nothing but naked strategic interests. And we cover it up all the time with moral rhetoric that's very popular here in Europe but has very little to do with how we actually behave.

John Donovan:
Okay, let's hear from your opponents.

Federiga Bindi:
I'm sorry, John.

John Donovan:
Federiga.

Federiga Bindi:
But to say that there is a -- the European [unintelligible] community promoted by the U.S. is [unintelligible] representing history and reality. The United States learned the day before, with the [unintelligible] on visiting, in the hope of their U.S. ambassador to Paris.

00:57:01

He was informed by Schuman and Monnet what was going to happen, and they supported because they saw the strength of the project because they saw it would reinforce Europe against communism. But it was not being shared by the U.S.? By all means, this is an all-European initiative. Because the Europeans understood -- and John Monnet brought in his memories really well, but many others, people of like what Spinell [spelled phonetically] has as well brought. They understood that the only way to stop a war was to put the Europeans work together on what were, at the time, the two most important issues because coal at the time was -- had the same importance of oil today.

But that was a European initiative, was not a promoted initiative. And the U.S. supported -- supported across a European [unintelligible] after the [unintelligible].

John Mearsheimer:
I disagree on the history, but I would just say to you, if you're correct, you're telling a story where European interests and American interests came together, not values.

John Donovan:
And that concludes --

Federiga Bindi:
Interests and values.

John Donovan:
-- round two of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate --

00:58:04

[applause]

-- where our resolution is the "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged." Now, we move on to round three, and round three are closing statements by each debater in turn.

These will be two minutes each. They will, once again -- each debater will once again stand and address you.

And making her closing statement in support of the resolution, "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged," Federiga Bindi, professor at the University of Rome Tor Velgata.

Federiga Bindi:

Thank you, John. Thank you, everybody, for being with us and for asking and supporting us. Yeah, you remember at the beginning I said I love -- we love the U.S.? I do love the United States dearly. And our former colleague, Jeremy Shapiro, and Pete Gordon wrote an article recently, and they said that the E.U. is like a battered wife who can't get over the fact that her husband doesn't love anymore. And I don't know about that. But what I know is that when we put in our analysis, love, and beliefs, and we let that guide us, chances are the analysis is not correct.

00:59:10

Up to this, the fact that we are small human beings in a much larger course of history. So, Constanze talked about the troubles which are oppressing us, that reminds me the late years of the Roman Empire. In 395, when Theodozio [spelled phonetically] decided to split the empire into parts and give it to his sons, he thought he was doing a good thing for the empire. Instead, it doomed it. It was the beginning of the end, but without understanding at the time. Fast-forward, I as an academic in the family, I inherited my great-grandfather's library. He was a scholar of colonialism, so I visited and payed the rent just to keep the books there.

01:00:02

And it's fascinating to read those books. At the end of the colonial empire, the belief of the colonialists was that colonialism was good and for good. And luckily, it was not. The reason why the U.K. -- one of the reasons why the U.K. did not enter into European [unintelligible] community is because they had the empire, and they thought that would last forever. But if you read historians like Niall Ferguson. It was clear, at the time, that colonialism was doomed. So, what I'm saying, I don't like it, but a cycle is finished. Where are we going next? I don't know.

John Donvan:

Thank you, Federiga Bindi.

[applause]

Our next speaker will be speaking against the motion. Again, the floor, you have two, Carla Norrlof, professor at the University of Toronto.

Carla Norrlof:

So, I think that we strayed somewhat from the central question, which is what counts as irreparably damage.

01:01:04

And we ventured into a conversation about the values and the morality. And I don't think that those things are irrelevant and neither my partner here, nor I, care to defend the particular ethics of the Trump administration.

But it seems to me that the United States has throughout the years -- and certainly since the second Bush administration -- we have this conversation about the moral rectitude of the United States. And it's in the nature of great powers to be held to certain standards, and I'm not saying that they shouldn't be, but sometimes it's simply the dissatisfaction of the great power pursuing its own fundamental interests when they do not align with their partners interests.

01:02:13

I still fail to see how the values and what the Trump administration actually, the concrete steps that they have taken so far, how it's damaged the fundamentally strong relationship between America and Europe. We might not like the way that the Trump administration, and President Trump in particular, is behaving or the way that he negotiates, but how actually has it damaged this particular relationship to the point of it becoming irreparable. I do not see that. Thank you very much.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Carla Norrlof.

[applause]

Our next speaker making a closing statement, Constanze Stelzenmüller, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution to make her closing statement against the resolution.

01:03:06

Constanze Stelzenmüller:

Thank you very much. And thank you for this very rich and fascinating debate.

The reason why I closed my opening statement with a reference to Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" was that I think we need to begin thinking of international relations not as just great power competition, not just as economic interdependence, which we all consider separately, but as an ecosystem where all these things flow together and where very small events and very small failures can have ultimately catastrophic consequences.

That is what I worry about. And I also don't want to pin the problems that we are talking about on individuals or even on one single administration whether in America or here in Europe, although there would be enough to keep us going.

01:04:00

My concern is, and that comes to your point, Carla, of who -- why do the values matter? Because of the people who are responding to the breaking of the taboos, because of the people who are feeling enabled, who are surging gleefully, raucously, and marching on the streets because they think their time has come.

Whether it's neo-Nazis in Dortmund or in eastern Germany, or whether it's thugs with Tiki torches in Charlottesville, whether it is a German neo-Nazi who holds a gun, a pistol to the head of a German elected politician and pulls the trigger. These people feel enabled by these taboos being broken and that is what distinguishes this moment in our relationship and not in the alliance, which we will not be able to keep separate from that fact. Thank you.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Constanze Stelzenmüller.

[applause]

01:05:01

And now making his closing statement against the resolution, John Mearsheimer, professor at the University of Chicago.

John Mearsheimer:

Well, needless to say I disagree with Constanze. I know she's shocked to hear that. But the fact of the matter is that these sort of -- the shifting of the tectonic plates that she describes both in terms of the international system and in terms of domestic politics, just hasn't taken place.

The United States remains a vibrant liberal democracy. Does it have problems even though Donald Trump is the president? Yes. But the United States has had lots of problems over time. When I was a young kid McCarthyism was in the air and in many ways the politics in the United States were more poisonous than they are today. I'm not denying for one second that Donald Trump is a real problem, but he is one person.

01:06:00

He is one person and there is huge opposition in the United States to him, and when I come here to Europe and go to places like Britain and travel around the continent I think in most places liberal democracy is alive and well reflected in the comments of you, two.

So, I think the crisis you see is just not there -- at least yet, maybe it will be. But I don't see evidence of that. And in terms of the international system, I think the tectonic plates are moving somewhat, with the rise of China. But I think the rise of China may present an excellent opportunity for the United States and Europe to work together to deal with

the Chinese economic threat. So, let's see what happens there. But the idea that the system is changing -- the international system is changing in ways that undermine the alliance, I find that just hard to understand. So, I think, you know, over the long-term, what you're going to see is a vibrant transatlantic relationship.

01:07:02

It will change somewhat, for sure, but I think it will remain firmly intact. And it certainly won't be irreparably damaged, which is what the motion calls for.

John Donovan:
Thank you, John Mearsheimer.

[applause]

And that concludes round three of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate, where our resolution is: "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged."

At Intelligence Squared for, we aim for -- you know, we set out -- our founder's vision, Robert Rosenkranz, put this together in order to raise the level of public discourse by bringing intelligent issues to a competitive format that energizes it, but with a set of rules and expectations that keeps the whole process civil and respectful, and the four of you were spectacular at that.

So, I just want to thank you very much for that.

[applause]

It's been such a pleasure, working with the German Marshall Fund the second year in a row. Ian, I want you to know that your team is spectacularly good to work with. I've been using the word "spectacularly" a lot in the last two minutes, but it's the truth.

01:08:04

It's been, really, a pleasure, to be part of this event. So, we're going to be tabulating the results. And I get the results by an iPad in just a minute. But while we're doing that, this is not for the competition -- but we were curious about your views on the thing that I'd like to ask all of you, since it came up pretty apparently throughout the course of the debate that Donald Trump is not most Europeans' favorite option for president, but we're in a place where two dozen people are running for the Democratic nomination.

Is there anybody that any of you see in the current prominent Democratic lineup who you think actually might step up to the process in a way that could be good for the relationship? I'll start with you, Federiga.

Federiga Bindi:

You know, this is really one of the cases where the passion and the love makes me less objective in analysis.

[laughter]

I have a clear preferred candidate, which is Biden.

01:09:03

But -- so that's -- it's hard for me to say -- but what I can tell you is that when we had the elections in 2016, at the time, I was [unintelligible] with North Carolina. And to me, it was clear that Trump was going to win.

And that was completely unseen. And you had these little things -- you know, there were not as many backyard signs as you had with the previous election. So, it was like -- you could smell it. And that being said, I am deeply worried -- and I would love for a Democrat to close the primaries this summer and just fight the current president.

Male Speaker:

If a Democrat won, what would be the effect of the transatlantic relationship -- if a Democrat --

Federiga Bindi:

They didn't.

John Mearsheimer:

No. No. I'm saying, in 2020 --

Female Speaker:

Hypothetically.

John Mearsheimer:

-- if your chosen candidate, Biden, won, what would be the effect on the transatlantic relationship?

John Donovan:

I guess we're back in the debate.

Federiga Bindi:

He --

John Mearsheimer:

Yes. That's right.

[laughter]

Federiga Bindi:
You know, he would have --

John Donovan:
The votes are in, but --

Federiga Bindi:
-- if he wins, because my bets are where I don't want the elections to be.

01:10:06

And the two more years -- even only two more years of this could be too much.

John Donovan:
Carla? On the question of the Democrats.

Carla Norrlof:
On the question of the Democrats, I do not have a preferred candidate.

I'd actually like to take this opportunity to address something else that was said before, which is, I'm not North American. I work in North America, but I'm actually Swedish. So, there are three Europeans and one North American here.

John Mearsheimer:
I was highly outnumbered.

Carla Norrlof:
[laughs]

John Donovan:
John, I know you're saying it's irrelevant, but curious to see if you have a Democrat you would like to-- I don't know your personal politics. I'm not asking you if you are a Democrat or a Republican, just if you had to choose a Democrat that you'd like to see up there, would you like to talk about that?

John Mearsheimer:
I actually would like to see Bernie Sanders win, in large part because I think the greatest problem the United States faces today, and Europe faces, is economic inequality.

01:11:03

And I think if we don't do something to address that problem --

Federiga Bindi:
Let me ask you a question. What would be the consequences on transatlantic relations?

[laughter]

John Mearsheimer:
Actually, that's an excellent question.

[laughter]

Because he may be the one candidate who has the most isolationist [unintelligible].

Federiga Bindi:
You're conceding [laughs].

John Mearsheimer:
That's because the cameras are turned off.

[laughter]

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
But I have to say -- I have to say that because I think the reason for the decline of the relationship is structural, it doesn't matter that much. And I can't imagine a democratic version of Trump, although I don't see one in the circular firing squad that is the current Democratic lineup. I finally want to do a defense of Donald Trump because he's been criticized several times here, including by me, which is that I think that he's actually showing us our weaknesses, all of us, in a very important way. He holds up a mirror to us. And in that, I see a possibility of change and of adaptation that is necessary.

01:12:06

So, I'm actually somewhat grateful. Thank you, Donald.

[applause]

John Donovan:
All right. So, I now have the final results. The final results have come in.

Remember, once again, you voted before you heard the arguments, again, after you heard the arguments, you voted again. And we give it to the team whose numbers have changed the most between the first and the second vote.

Here are the results: On the resolution, the "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged," before the debate, in polling the live audience, 20 percent agreed with the resolution, 73 percent were against, 7 percent were undecided. In the second vote, again, "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged," the team, their first vote was 20 percent, their second vote was 24 percent. They pulled up 4 percentage points. That's the number to beat. The team arguing against the resolution,

their first vote was 73 percent; their second vote was 71 percent. They lost two percentage points.

That means that the team winning the debate is the team arguing for the resolution in favor of the motion, "The Transatlantic Relationship Has Been Irreparably Damaged. So, congratulations to [unintelligible].

01:13:11

Constanze Stelzenmüller:
I did not want to lose.

John Donovan:
Thank you from me, John Donovan and Intelligence Squared U.S. We'll see you next time.

01:13:23

[end of transcript]

This is a rough transcript. Please excuse any errors.