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Transcript

PUBLIC OPINION 20 YEARS AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

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SUSAN GLASSER: Good morning. Thank you so much for coming here to Carnegie on what I think is an incredibly well-timed conversation we're planning to have here about not only the dramatic events in Russia this week, following its election, but a particularly well-timed and insightful report from the Pew Research Center on the political context in which these events are unfolding.

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I'm Susan Glasser, the editor of Foreign Policy Magazine. And as a former Moscow correspondent for The Washington Post, I couldn't be more pleased to have the opportunity to come and join all of you and this really extraordinary collection of people to talk about the events that are unfolding in Russia today

Because there's so much that we have to offer you today, I'm not going to go on at great length about the political context right now, but simply give you a quick introduction to the program that we have for you this morning and then let the true stars of the morning take it away. What we'll do is we'll start first with Andrew Kohut, who, as I'm sure all of you know, is the president and founder of the Pew Research Center. He's also the director of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and, most relevant to this conversation today, of the Pew Global Attitudes Project, which, as you know, is pretty much the gold standard in surveys that take account of international attitudes.

Today he will speak with us about a report that comes 20 years after a landmark report on attitudes in the former Soviet Union and will look at both the progress and the lack thereof. Many of you have seen the report on your seats today. There are copies around if you haven't. I think the title, in a way, says it all: Confidence in Democracy and Capitalism Wanes in the Former Soviet Union.

So first we'll hear from Andrew. Then we are very privileged and honored to hear from Former Secretary Madeleine Albright. And then we'll return and have a conversation, with the distinguished group I'll introduce to you at that time, about Russia. And of course, we're looking forward to all of your questions and comments as well. But let's get started first with this really incredibly well-timed survey of attitudes in the former Soviet Union from Andrew.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

[00:03:00]

ANDREW KOHUT: Thank you, Susan, and thank you for joining us. This is the second series of surveys that Pew Global Attitudes Project has taken to mark the collapse of communism. Two years ago we did polls across the Soviet republics in Eastern Europe timed to the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Both that polling and this polling suggests that people in the former communist world are looking back at the changes that they've endured over the past two decades with more reservations than we expected, and with more reservations than were apparently in the polling that we did – Secretary Albright and I did – back in 1990 and '91.

Twenty years – specifically speaking to this year's poll – 20 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russians and Ukrainians and Lithuanians are profoundly unhappy with the direction of their countries, with national conditions, the state of their politics. You – we're accustomed to seeing American unhappiness with these things,

but when you find 9 percent saying they're satisfied with economic conditions, you've got some profoundly low numbers.

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And as a consequence, we find people in all three of these countries much less approving of the change to democracy than what we saw back in 1991, when huge majorities approved of the switch to both democracy and capitalism. Today just 35 percent of Ukrainians and only about half in Russia and Lithuania approve of the switch to a multiparty system. And support for a free market system is even more tepid. Only 42 percent of Russians approve; 45 percent of Lithuanians and Ukrainians endorse these changes.

Let me say high up, that what we found is that a lot of this disapproval is not a dislike and a lack of desire for the values of democracy. People continue to say these things are important to them, but what they're saying to us – and what they're saying in their disapproval – is that the system and these approaches aren't working for them.

And in that regard, as we found 20 years ago, the change to a democracy and to a free market system remains more popular among those best positioned within the – in these societies to take advantage of them – the younger people, the well-educated, urban dwellers. They show the most continuing support for these transitions.

More generally, we see – as we have over the past 20 years – a disposition, especially in Russia and the – and Ukraine, to refer to a notion that a leader with a strong hand is a more effective way and a preferred – a more effective way than democracy to deal with the nation's problems. This is, again, especially the case in Russia and the Ukraine, where 57 percent and 62 respectively say this. It's not so in Lithuania. Most still there see democracy as the more effective approach.

And I should add that preference for democracy over – for a leader with a strong hand over democracy only lasted one year in the Soviet – in Russia, based on our polling. When we went back in 1992, compared to 1991, we saw – we had seen a switch already in one year, with Russians saying, well, maybe the strong leader is the more effective way to go for us.

Our polling – one of the most dominate findings of our polling was that people see the political and business elites as having enjoyed the spoils of the last two decades while average citizens have been left behind. Eighty percent of Russians say that business leaders and political leaders have benefited from the change to a free-market economy; just 26 percent say that ordinary people like themselves have.

And I should also add that the discontent with the changes that we question people about are very far-reaching. Large majorities say that democracy and the market economy have had a negative effect on morality, the way people in society treat one another, law and – and law and order. So it's not – it's a very broad-based set of discontents.

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Twenty years later, we still see the Russians and the Ukrainians struggling with Western values. Large majorities of Russians and Ukrainians continue to see individual success as coming at other people's expense, rather than as a product of a person's ability and ambition. And failure is not seen as personal failure, but society's failure. The value transitions have been very difficult in a former – with former Soviet republics – much more difficult than in Eastern Europe, I might add. Of note, over this period, most Lithuanians have come to credit personal success with individual achievement. And, by the way, so have Russians who have come of age after the Soviet Union – younger people.

Now, the polling found that nationalism is alive and well in Russia. Fifty percent of Russians say it's a great misfortune that the Soviet Union no longer exists. And compared with 1991, a much larger percentage now say – 48 percent versus 33 percent – say it's natural for Russia to have an empire.

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Well, to end on a more positive note, while most Russians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians feel that they have not been served well by democracy, they continue to say such things as: A fair judiciary, honest elections, freedom of the press, free speech and civilian control of the military are important to them – especially a fair judiciary. While they say that, when we ask them, well, does that match your experience, most – very large percentages say no. So there's a lot of disillusionment with – there's not a rejection of these values as much as there is a disillusionment with the fact that they've delivered for them – these systems have delivered for the people.

And I think I'll just leave it there.

MS. GLASSER: Great.

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT: Well, thank you very much, Andy. And I have to say, personally, it was a great pleasure to work with Andy 20 years ago when we did the survey, and now to have an opportunity to redo a lot of the issues. And what I find interesting is how many of the things that have come up in the new survey were actually already evident 20 years ago. We did ask people whether they wanted democracy and a free market, and they said yes. But then when you began to ask them about the elements of what I meant, you could figure out that they didn't know.

So, for instance, on free market – this is a little harder to say these days by an American than it was then – is they – you asked them, do you believe in banks? And they would say no. Do you believe in mortgages? They would say no. And so, they might have had the right idea. But the bottom line is – (laughter) – is that they – if you were to unpack it, it was very clear that these were notions that they thought were interesting, but didn't fully understand.

In terms of, for instance, privatization – at that stage, the only group of people that believed in privatization were young men who lived – private – the only area that should be privatized was going to be agriculture. And the only people who believed that it should be privatized were young men who lived in cities. And so there were all kinds of disconnects.

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But what was really there, and I think we agreed very much on this, Andy, is kind of a sense of disorientation – of not really knowing what had happened to them and where it was going, and some embarrassment about the loss of national identity, saying – and I won't mention the country – but a very small, developing country – we are like that country with missiles. And so kind of a sense that they didn't know who they were, and also some sense even then about a desire for an empire.

So – and you can't blame people, I think, who had operated under a system for 70 years and had been told a variety of issues. But it's interesting, Andy, I think, to see some of the elements that get picked up. The leader with a strong hand – that came up then. I think part of the issue is that whatever democracy they were served, it is not democracy, managed democracy, or whatever it has been called. And so I think that what is so interesting about this is that the polling data that Andy's presented, I think in light of Sunday's parliamentary elections, is really what

it's telling us now and how this works. And I'm very grateful to Carnegie for hosting us here and having the opportunity to really explore these issues.

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I think that – my own view is that it's really too early to be certain what the full impact of the elections are going to be. They clearly were fascinating – the numbers in terms of the percentages, the fact that the Communist Party did as well as it did, a number of questions that come up. What is very clear is that Putin is not immune to the crisis of confidence that is going on in – actually in a number of countries. I don't think I – as somebody who has studied international affairs for my entire life, I don't think I've ever seen such a period where there's so many questions about leadership generally.

And while Putin may have thought that he had a special kind of a permit for making decisions on behalf of his people, I don't – I think it's evident that he didn't and doesn't. I think that in some ways by his just making an announcement about – that he was going to take over the presidency or run for the presidency, as some have noted, has – it took away even the veneer of choice that the people thought that they might have. And I think that that is something that has to be noted.

I think also what could be there is that people in some ways have a renewed faith in democratic processes if they see that they can make a difference. Where these elections – the numbers don't add up at all – I mean, a lot of the people that lived in the Soviet Union got used to this kind of thing. But all of a sudden, I think partially because many of them – the system has been permeated by information, a lot of people travel, and that they know that rigged elections and rigged elections, and the numbers just don't add up.

I think that there's nothing more discouraging to citizens than the conviction that voting makes absolutely no difference. And so I think that this kind of a message is something that the Russians are going to keep looking at. And Putin, I believe, has to – is going to have to in some way take these signs into consideration. The question is what he's going to offer. And then, I think, we are going to be talking about comparisons with the Arab Spring.

I think, for me, I have believed all along that the Arab Spring was covered in a way that made it seem like a spectator sport with a limited amount of time. I'm not really good at sports analogies, but it's not even a basketball game with overtime; it is a long story and a marathon in the Arab Spring. And I think the same thing in many ways – whatever we're seeing now in Russia is not something that is just an overnight event.

And so I think that the lesson for me is patience is vital. Democracy's a process, not an event. And the question is what people's definition of democracy really is. And what is very, very interesting, and I'm sure we will talk about a lot, is the whole role of the social media and the penetration of information. You can't run a closed system anymore because of the penetration of information. So that's just putting some of the issues on the table.

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And I think that the polling data that Andy and Pew have come up with is very indicative of peoples' questions about what role they play in society, what is the – what is the relationship between the individual and any government and regime, what it is they learn from each other and the disillusionment that has, in fact – you can call something a democracy; if it isn't, it isn't.

MS. GLASSER: Secretary Albright, thank you so much for those incredibly timely remarks. I think I'll exercise the moderator's privilege by asking you just to follow up quickly on the question of whether these protests reflect a

renewed interest and perhaps faith in democracy that the poll doesn't necessarily suggest, right? It's such a turn-off – the numbers are very striking in the poll. And I'm curious how you reconcile those two things.

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MS. ALBRIGHT: Well, I think that what it is, is – this is probably not a technical term – disillusionment risen to the point of, I've had it – (laughter) – and kind of a sense that it's a precipitating event where, in fact, the rigging had not worked – gone too far. Plus, I think, what is out there in terms of the social media and certain people that have – Mr. Navalny and various groups – that have tried to figure out how to make clear to the public that they're not getting what they're supposed to.

But we're in the middle of something. I mean, there are supposed to be demonstrations tomorrow. The question is how big they will be, and then, obviously, what the reaction of the state is going to be to them. So we are in the middle of a – of a story that I think is going to take a while to, you know, roll itself out in many ways. But in many ways, I think – and Andy should speak to this – is, I think some of this is in these polls. I think that it is there as a sign of the fact that people are disillusioned, are unhappy: "They don't know what they want; throw the bums out" sense.

MR. KOHUT: Well, you know, there's a real disconnect here. First of all, the Communists did really well. So there's one theme going one direction. But the people who are taking to the streets, based upon what I see – maybe it's not correct – are the young, well-educated, urban people who are the people who have embraced democracy the most. And they are the most disappointed –

MS. GLASSER: You know, I think that's – yeah, correct.

MR. KOHUT: -- because they have the highest – they have the highest set of expectations and desire for this to really work.

MS. GLASSER: Well, and that's where there's the disconnect too, right? You have the sort of democracy advocates – who are a small but, you know, vital core of the urban population in Russia – and then you have this much broader sea of disengagement where they've never connected with the post-Soviet sort of order, which I think is a perfect opportunity to introduce our panel and especially Masha Lipman who – Masha, can you hear us – who's been very patiently joining us by video so that she can offer us a little bit of ground truth as we talk about both the political context and the events on the ground this week and looking ahead to tomorrow.

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Let me just very quickly introduce the rest of our panel, in fact, so that you can understand who's joining the conversation now. And we'll jump right in to asking Masha what's happening there in Russia. So in addition to Secretary Albright and Andy Kohut, we are joined by Masha Lipman by video there, who is with the Carnegie Moscow Center, and she is editor of the Center's Pro et Contra journal. She has a monthly op-ed column in The Washington Post, and has been a great friend and mentor and teacher to all foreign correspondents in Russia for at least the last 20 years – myself included. So you couldn't have a better guide today to the events that are unfolding on the ground and what we should make sense of them. So thank you, Masha, for joining us.

We also are joined by Les Campbell, who has been with the National Democratic Institute since 1994 and has directed the institute's programs in the Middle East and North Africa since 1996, overseeing a vast expansion of

NDI's programs in the region. He comes to us via the New Democratic Party in Canada, and we are thrilled to have him with us as well today.

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And we also have Stephen Nix, who has been the regional director for Eurasia at the International Republican Institute since 2000. Is that right? And both groups, as you know, are extremely active in Russia and the former Soviet Union and bring a wealth of context and understanding to today's conversation.

So I was actually thinking, well, how do you start this? And how do you marry, sort of, the political context of two decades' worth of experience with democracy to a fairly dramatic running news story? And I kept thinking back to Carnegie's 10th anniversary event in Moscow, actually, which was a few years ago.

And Grigory Yavlinsky was at that dinner in Moscow, and there was a learned panel discussion – as, of course, all occasions must be marked with panel discussions – and he was asked, well, what – you know, tell us, Grigory, what you think of the future of democracy in Russia. And he thought for a second. And this was a fairly depressing crowd, I must say. We were deep enough into Putin to realize that, you know, things, perhaps, were not going originally as planned.

And Yavlinsky was silent for a few moments and then he looked up, and he said, you know, all I can think to offer you is an old Soviet joke about an ambulance driver, who picks up a guy and starts driving him to the morgue. The patient in the back realizes this, and he sits up and he says, hey, what's going on here? Why are you taking me to the morgue? I'm not dead. And the ambulance driver turns to the back and he says, well, listen, buddy: We're not there yet. (Laughter.)

So, you know, that's my effort to connect up the two sides of our conversation today. Having exercised the moderator's privilege, Masha, maybe you can, sort of, give us your take on what we're expecting to unfold at the protest tomorrow and what to make of these demonstrations this week.

MASHA LIPMAN: Thanks very much. Actually, I think what is going on is pretty impressive and amazing. And nobody expected this only a week ago. So let me say just a few words, first, about the mood in Russia. So there is nothing new about the mood of resentment of the government, and it's fairly broad. It does not apply only to those urban dwellers, the well-educated, modernized Russians.

Actually, if you look at the polls of recent times, you find over 70 percent of the people who say that abuse of police authority is routine, not just individual breaches; about the same number of people who say Russian civil servants do not live by the law. So there's nothing new about the mood of resentment. What is new is how this mood, suddenly, was translated into action, and resentment translated into defiance. Of course, this time the actual movement is reduced to urban dwellers most of all, to the so-called online constituency.

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But it is in itself amazing. And I think what happened here was the mood had already existed, but it left especially these constituencies apolitical. It's not that they didn't know what they thought about the government. They knew, but they preferred not to even think about it. Most of them would turn their backs on the government and pursue their own lives, which, by the way, are not all that bad – for urban youths, these days, in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

And then what happened – actually, two things: one, the way Putin and Medvedev traded places, which was seen by Russians, quite broadly, as really evidence of full and deep contempt of the people. Medvedev said we decided this several years ago, this way making it clear that, you know, it's them who decide who the Russian leadership should be and how it should be elected, selected, chosen, whatever.

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And another factor was Putin's comeback, which is – even though anticipated, came as a shock to many, and a reaction such as, "oh, no, not for 12 more years, I can't believe it" was actually fairly common. And sensing this mood, I think the government opted for – or rather, administrators at various levels opted for really shameless falsifications.

It remains to be seen whether the actual scope of the falsifications was higher than four years ago, but it was certainly more shameless. Administrators didn't even try to hide their unlawful tricks and manipulations and fraud. And this actually pushed the constituencies that we're talking about, the online constituencies, toward activism. Suddenly, there was this mood of defiance: Let us show them. Let us do just anything to show United Russia will not have a high showing.

And anything wins – actually, electoral behavior differed from – I'll come to the poll, and I'll tear my ballot right there. I'll come to the polling station and I will write something insulting and funny on the ballot so that it would be invalidated. Or, I will vote for just any party which has a chance to make it beyond the 7 percent hurdle so that my vote will not be lost and United Russia will have a lower showing. And we know that these tactics worked.

Moreover, the activism of volunteer observers was amazing. So many people volunteered to do monitoring the elections, and many just simply recorded and reported what they saw as violations at their polling stations. So the Web was filled with this information. And at the very last moment, also, Golos, the organization that has monitored the elections nationwide was under assault. And the most popular websites in the country were under a concerted cyberattack – those same websites that tried to post the information about the violations.

And this gave a further boost to this effort to defy, to do something to defy, and we saw the result. And it was clear to these people that the election – that whatever result would be announced, that the reaction would be, no, we don't believe you. You falsified. And this is what drove people out into the streets Monday, the day after the election on December 4, then Tuesday, and then tomorrow, which is the most interesting thing of all.

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The Russian Facebook, last night, had already over 30,000 people who said they would come to this rally. What is even more interesting is that – I spoke to one of the organizers, who had been speaking early in the day to the Moscow authorities, to the mayor and to the police chief, and he said they were very cooperative, they really seemed concerned that everything is the way it should be, appropriate – that there is no excessive use of force, that the event is well-organized.

And the person I spoke to would be the person who would least buy into, you know, the sugary language of the authorities. He is shrewd, and he said he's positive, they are really concerned that everything looks good, and everything – that order be sustained there, and not at the cost of the use of force – which is really, really amazing, given how people were roughed up where they were a mere 1,000 only a few days ago.

And now they are facing the prospect of having 30,000 – something that we didn't have in Moscow for over the past 20 years, that's for sure.

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MS. GLASSER: So, Masha, in a way, do you think this is, sort of, the system acting to protect itself, right? You know, you could argue that this is what managed democracy was built for – you know, for just such an event – to avoid one of the color revolutions that was triggered in Ukraine, for example, or in Georgia, after, similarly, elections were held with allegations of vote fraud. Do you think the system is ready for this kind of a crisis?

MS. LIPMAN: Well, I don't think any system can be ready for a crisis like this. Actually, they – I'm sure they did not expect this to happen. And actually, I would say just a couple words of why this is different from the Orange Revolution – because on the surface, it looks like an election fraud and people take to the streets.

In fact, a major difference here is that in Ukraine, the crowd knew exactly not only who stole the election, but from whom, and whom they wanted to see as their president. And that was Viktor Yushchenko. And Viktor Yanukovych, in the mind of this huge crowd, was the one who stole the elections, and they wanted this – to bar this from happening. Here, they know who stole the election, but they don't have a force, a figure or a party that they think should benefit.

Already, three parties benefited, who, in the least, expressed the interests of these urban youths. It is the Communists; Zhirinovsky's party; it is the party called A Just Russia, Spravedlivaya Rossiya. People voted for – this constituency voted for all three, not because they wanted to support them or because they wanted them to have a bigger impact on policies, but because they wanted to defy United Russia.

And now, all these three parties have benefited, but they are in no way linked to the – well, let's call them online constituency – that is taking to the streets. This is a very peculiar situation, and the cause of this movement is very vague. What is it that these people want is not clear. They don't have an organization. They don't have a single leader that would unify all of them. And they don't – and their cause is vague.

Call this, actually, a product of managed democracy, of Putin's rule. Putin's system, Putin's leadership have taken very effective care of cleansing the political field of any relevant, genuine political forces that could be a challenge to the government. It cleansed the field from any figures that could be a challenge to Putin.

They actually co-opted nongovernment organizations, or created, masterminded their own, so that today, these organizations cannot – do not do what they should do, because they are easily split between those who are more loyal, less loyal; and they are not effective. This sort of deinstitutionalization of the system is now, in part, working for Putin and helping him. This is why this paradoxical situation has emerged in Russia. We have people in the street. We had an election, and it's not quite clear what they even should want.

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MS. GLASSER: Right, so that's – in a way, right, it is that the system has produced this effect. Quickly, I want to ask you – and then I want to go to each of our panelists with the same question – another thing that we've seen that perhaps has echoes in earlier aspects of President Putin's rule is his response to the crisis, and his immediate turn to criticizing shadowy, unseen forces in the West.

He came out the other day and he was very critical of Secretary Clinton for her words of concern about the freedom and fairness of the balloting. What do you make of President Putin's, sort of, anti-Western rhetoric? Is that going to play? And then I'll ask each of our panelists as well how they think the West factors into the response to Russia's crisis.

MS. LIPMAN: Well, this is like a knee-jerk reaction. People take to the streets and they should be stooges of the West, they should be financed – paid for to be in the streets. We had exactly the same reaction after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and the same kind of rhetoric was actually targeting nongovernmental organizations in Russia back several years ago when that happened. So there's actually nothing – unfortunately, nothing unexpected about this kind of reaction.

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But Putin is facing a problem here. Putin is certainly weakened by what happened. Putin is already, and will try to distance himself from United Russia, the party whose showing was inferior to what it was four years ago. But Putin's own ratings have gone down, which is also interesting.

And if we look at the polls of how people respond to the question, would you vote for Putin or anybody but, the numbers have gone down for Putin quite impressively, quite significantly over the past year. He needs now to reconsolidate his power and break this negative trend. And at the same time, the election, the presidential election, is only three months ahead. And he needs to win in the first round. I think this is a must for him.

However, I'm sure the drive to monitor the election will be strong after what people have achieved. And the drive to make sure that they don't cheat once again will also be strong. And it's interesting what he's able to do to actually reconsolidate and re-emerge, once again, as a strong – as a strong leader. He's used to, or spoiled by, the monopoly, the political monopoly, and the monopoly on decision-making that he's achieved and enjoyed. But it seems that life will no longer be as easy for him.

MS. GLASSER: Thank you, Masha. Secretary Albright, I'd like to turn to you – and, sort of, what you make of President Putin, or future – once-and-future President Putin's rhetoric this week.

MS. ALBRIGHT: Well, I think what is interesting is that he read his own propaganda, and basically thought he was permanently popular, and the less clothes he had on, the better, and that he really represented the new Russia and the national identity. I mean, Andy, you've got some stuff on nationalism generally.

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And I do think that, going back to my earlier statement, what came out of the 20-year-ago survey which said that people were concerned that Russia had lost its identity – so he represented, kind of, a renewal of Russia on the international stage. What's very interesting is I was asked – I had been the chairman of the group of experts group for the – a new Strategic Concept on NATO. And when we went to Russia to talk to them about it, they blamed everything on NATO.

And so I think that the combination, now, of blaming the West and Secretary Clinton specifically is part of, kind of – this is not our fault. Whereas if you look at the material – and maybe Andy should speak to this more – is that a lot of these were homegrown problems. They had not delivered. Governments have to deliver.

And the question is – that he had not seen what the problems, the domestic problems that were out there. One of the things that happened 20 years ago was that when oil prices were up, the Russians made no real reforms. And that has come back to bite them a couple of times. And so I think the problems are domestic. He is going to make a big point of trying to make them seem foreign.

MS. GLASSER: So, Les and Steve, I want to bring you into the conversation now too. Both of your groups obviously do a lot of work on the ground in Russia. First of all, how does this climate affect your ability to do work? And were you able to participate in the election monitoring efforts?

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STEPHEN NIX: Well, first of all, thank you for convening this group today. And thank you for inviting me to be part of it. Going back to Andrew's introduction, I think that the data that has been compiled here is fascinating, very useful – I think, particularly, to compare the three countries, Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania – one of the countries being a NATO and EU member. It is fascinating, and I commend it to the audience today to read the data that's been compiled here to show attitudes.

We have done, historically, a lot of polling in the Russian Federation. We've not done any recently. But there are a couple things, I think, worth pointing out, that we've done. We utilized Bashkirova i Partnery to do our polling, and the last poll we did was several years ago. But again, in terms of trying to determine Russian attitudes towards democracy – as Andrew alluded to and the secretary alluded to – and other core values – you know, how can we talk in terms of commonality, West and Russia, on these types of issues.

So we tested a number of things. And one of the first things we tested was we'd heard our colleagues in Brussels talk about appealing to the European nature in Russians. And our response was quizzical. We didn't think that there was a substantial European sense among Russians, but we tested the question. We asked, in a national survey, do you consider yourself to be more Russian or more European?

And it was very clear-cut. I think it was 80, 88 percent of Russians consider themselves to be Russian. Only 4 percent consider themselves to be of some sort of European heritage or nature. And so we encouraged our friends in Brussels to use a different means to communicate and try to resolve differences within the OSCE and other organizations, because it's very clear-cut that people identify, self-identify, as Russians, and not Europeans.

The other thing we tested was democracy, and how people view democracy, how do you define democracy. And it's fascinating. First of all, we asked the question, what do you consider to be the best system of government? And in Russia – and this poll was done two years ago – 62 percent of Russian citizens consider democracy to be the best form of government.

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Then you get into the discussion of how do you define democracy, what does it mean to Russian citizens? Do they think the same way we do? And they don't. We followed up with, what are the features that would make you consider – or are essential for you to consider a government to be a democracy? And the two largest responses were, A, the government provides social protection for its citizens, and B, the government takes care of the poor.

Now, that's not exactly the same sense of democracy that we might have here in the United States. It sounds a lot more like, maybe, a social democratic system that exists in some countries in Eastern and Western Europe. So in

terms of the viewpoint of how people view democracy, it's quite different. And we have to start thinking in common terms in talking to our Russian counterparts about democracy.

And then finally we get back to Andrew's question – it's an important one – you know, freedom, equality, freedom, comfort; you know, what's more important, what is at the forefront of Russian minds when it comes to these important values? And when we ask the question, you know, what is more important to you? Is it equality, generally, social equality, or freedom? Fifty percent of respondents said that equality was more important; 40 percent said freedom. So there's a lot to be learned in terms of Russian attitudes towards democracy – a lot for Americans to learn and to deal with and learn in terms of communicating with our Russian counterparts on these important issues.

With regard to the second half of your question, you know, the events of last week – IRI did not have any observation efforts in the Russian Federation. We're working more in the areas of civic participation and on local issues. But we are certainly monitoring these events very, very closely.

[00:41:12]

MS. GLASSER: (Inaudible) – do you want to –

LESLIE CAMPBELL: Sure, I'll be quick. My role actually on the panel is to draw some parallels with the Arab Spring. And I was joking earlier that drawing those parallels seemed a little difficult last week when we first conceived of this, but it doesn't seem as difficult today. But I also had the privilege – my first posting with NDI was in Russia in 1994, early 1994, so it does, I – you know, some of this does bring back some of my memory from those times. But I'll just make two quick points in terms of comparative Arab Spring issues.

One is that, working in the Middle East for many years now, I have become accustomed to having to incorporate ambiguity and paradoxes, because the Middle East is nothing if not ambiguous and full of paradoxes. And I actually don't find it as difficult to internalize the idea of the polling data that Andy Kohut presented – people seeming to be disenchanted with certain aspects of democracy. Steve explained perhaps that democracy is viewed differently. Freedom, even though we use the same term, I'm sure it's translated properly, but people may view the idea of freedom, "freedom" as more freedom from want than it is freedom to do whatever you want.

And actually in the Middle East people feel the same way. Freedom in the Middle East often is not freedom to do whatever you want, which is often viewed very negatively because it's associated with social licentiousness and, you know, social issues that people don't like. But it's more freedom from oppression, it's freedom from corruption, it's freedom from, you know, a state that is unfair. You're talking about how Russians may want equality. So I think that it's quite possible for populations both in the Middle East and in Russia to be driven by the idea of dignity, freedom, equality, and also to be very, very skeptical about democracy, because that's certainly what we see in the Middle East.

[00:43:15]

And that's why you see in the Middle East – in fact just last week in Egypt, you had people simultaneously in Tahrir Square protesting against everything – boycotting, at least that's what they said – but also voting with a 6(00) or 700 percent increase over previous elections. How do you square that circle? They did it all at the same time, and I don't think that they saw inconsistencies in that, because they're simultaneously against the system, they're against sort of Big Brother, but they're also willing to put a vote of confidence in what comes next.

The second point I'd make is that – what I find interesting is that you're seeing on Russian streets, or potentially tomorrow again – from what I understand, an educated middle class socially connected through the Internet clearly have some prosperity in terms of being able to afford the connectivity and computers, and so on and so forth. But you're also seeing, I think, a population in Russia that I would describe as small "c" conservative – again, the Pew research findings, which are basically people looking to go backwards. You know, not just conservative but almost paleo-conservative, wanting to turn the clock backward.

[00:44:25]

Again, this may seem paradoxical – I don't think it is as hard to understand as it seems – in the sense that what the middle-class people are demanding, I think the masses would probably agree with, in the sense that they're tired of corruption, graft, the inequality of outcome. They want integrity, honesty, the – you know, stolen elections are emblematic of that arrogance and graft and corruption that they hate. It doesn't have to be, again, about democracy as we define it. But it may be that the masses, they probably – I mean, I guess if I had to make the parallel with the Arab Spring – the masses may not, in the end – if there is a new election or there is another event on – (inaudible) – they may not turn to, quote, the liberal parties, as they haven't in, say, Egypt, or even in Tunisia. They may turn to the groups that they believe will help address the issues of corruption, graft and arrogance –so, you know, the groups that have, in their minds, clean hands.

So I'll end there because I think I could probably go on longer about the parallels, but I just – I think my contribution would be that what we're seeing in the Arab Spring is that the seemingly contradictory impulses, and the seeming gulf between the middle-class protesters and then the masses who turned to the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East, and perhaps maybe still trust United Russia to some extent in Russia – these can be understood in a way by virtue of the fact that, first of all, they can live with the paradoxes and ambiguity more than we can, but secondly that freedom from voracious corruption and arrogance may be the kind of freedom they're looking for, as opposed to our sort of economic freedom, which is freedom to sort of pursue whatever your heart's content is, which is maybe not as important. Thanks.

MS. GLASSER: Well, no, thank you. I think it's incredibly important to have that perspective, and it's a perfect way to go back to Andy. I think we have lots of questions for you about, sort of, what the data tells us. First of all, in terms of – do you see some comparisons between the attitudes in the Middle East that you're registering now and those very first surveys after the breakup of the Soviet Union? And then I also want to get back to this question that Secretary Albright had, which is, give us a little bit about the context of Russian nationalism and how that plays potentially into their political attitudes.

[00:46:50]

MR. KOHUT: OK, first on the Arab Spring comparison. The similarities are the hopes and expectations – (background noise) –very similar to the hopes and expectations of the Soviet people – (background noise) – European people. They wanted a better economy, and they want – they wanted to exercise – they wanted to exercise democratic rights. What's different, though, is that the polling that we've been doing in Arab countries over – in recent years suggests that the Arabs are more in tuned with what democracy represents than the Russians were back in 1991. They just have a much clearer notion, perhaps in part in response to a globalized world, in part in response to a more diverse situation than the Russians have experienced.

The other thing that I think is really important to bring into the Russian discussion is, what's different now compared to four years ago? Now four years ago we saw the same levels of discontent with democracy, but what's clearly different is the percentage of people who say the economy is good has fallen by 30 points. So a lot of this

pressure for change, which people feel thwarted – feel is thwarted – has to do with economic – with economic discontent.

[00:48:09]

The other thing, Susan, before I mention the issue of nationalism, is that America is not a good whipping boy. We've seen in Russia for the first time in recent years, a majority of Russians saying they have a favorable view of the United States. So it – we're not the – we're not the whipping boy that we once were. And whether – the question is whether Putin's strategy of saying that we're behind this is really going to be very effective.

As to the nationalism, large sections of Russians continue to have a – have a very nationalistic point of view. And to a certain extent my – I think you'd agree that, you know, Putin has tapped into that.

MS. GLASSER: So Secretary Albright, "it is the economy, stupid," right, even in a semi-authoritarian system; I think that's one of the takeaways from Andy's point.

MS. ALBRIGHT: I do think – we've had lots of discussions. One of the things that goes on in academic as well as political circles is, what comes first, economic development or political development? The bottom line is, they clearly go together. And I have always said that people want to vote and eat. And so I think there's this issue about – in specifically, whether it's in the Arab world, where there really was a call for better economic conditions and dignity, and in Russia, where there had been this promise that everything was going to get better.

I think it's very – so whether it's managed democracy or democracy – our – real democracy, ultimately, part of the duty of a developed and developing country is in fact to provide economic distribution so that you don't have – there's clearly something going on in the economy, but what had happened, both let's say in Egypt and in Russia, is that the richest people take away the goods and move out. And so it does not leave enough for everybody else.

I have had interesting work also with Hernando de Soto, who has looked at the Arab Spring in many different ways in terms of they – the fact that the informal economy was never delivering properly and that people want to be able to know what they're going to get. There certainly was an informal economy also in Russia. So, yeah, I think a lot of it is economic.

MS. GLASSER: Well, you know, I – think back to the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, and Vladimir Putin, you know, came out very early on with a sort of triumphalist, this is not going to affect Russia, and actually it shows that the American system isn't holding up so well.

[00:50:51]

And yet I want to go back to Masha and ask how much you're able to see this kind of economic strain to it. You know, we've talked a lot about the political context of post-Soviet Russia, but, you know, Andy's poll has some really interesting data that actually even less accepted than, sort of, what we would consider to be American-style democracy is the free market economy in Russia and Ukraine. How do you see those factors playing out? Is there a level of discontent with Putin that is economically driven, Masha?

MS. LIPMAN: I think actually much less so economically. And again, if you look at the polls and at the number of people in the polls, we answer the question about their economic situations. And one of the questions asked is: Which group do you belong to? And the lowest group is, don't even have enough means to buy basic food. Now people in this category have gone down from 22 (percent) to 8 percent under Putin. So Putin delivers. He delivers

economically, but what he does not deliver – and what I think drives this mood of discontent, of defiance now – is things such as the disparity of income, the injustice, the abuse of – the blatant abuse of authority. I cited the numbers earlier – people who realize that their daily routine is about abuse of authority by people with money and by people with power, and of course by the police. This is what Putin has not just not delivered, but the situation is getting worse.

I think this is, by the way, what is actually different between Russia and the Arab world. Because there, the bulk of people in Tahrir Square in Egypt were young people, many of them unemployed. We don't have this problem in Russia outside of North Caucasus, actually. Unemployment is not a problem. And those who are in the square – who will be in the square tomorrow, I think hardly anyone among them are unemployed, or unemployed to the extent that it's really a problem. This is what makes it different.

[00:53:11]

Another thing that makes Russia different from the Middle East is demographics. We are an aging – an aging nation, not a young one. And there's one more factor that puts the two apart, and this is, we actually – it may be fair to compare what is happening in the Middle East to what was happening in Russia in '91, but not with what is happening today, because there is a lot of disillusionment in mass action, in mass protests. We had it, we had enough people 20 years ago, which toppled the regime. And what happened afterwards was very vividly illustrated by the numbers that Andrew cited. Disillusionment actually began to set in fairly soon. And as we have those – I would not call them middle class; I would call them online constituencies in the street. These are people who do not remember the disillusionment. But their parents, their elder brothers and sisters, probably do. And this is what makes the situation not so hopeful.

In terms of – a factor of democracy that I think we haven't touched upon in the discussion: public participation. I want to have a say, and I may have a say, and that's very important. Eighty percent in the polls in Russia say, I do not make a difference in national affairs or regional affairs. What is happening now is interesting most of all because people said not just, politics matters, suddenly, after being apolitical, but also, I want to have a say.

MS. GLASSER: Masha, these are really important points. In particular I think to try to look at, like, this is Russia 20 years after a Tahrir Square-type event. I'm also struck by – we ran a piece on foreign policy today by our colleague Yulia, who was quoting somebody saying, this is Putin arguably as a victim of his own success, right? That – if the social compact in Russia of the last decade was basically, we will provide a certain amount of economic betterment, you know, your pensions are going to go up, and that sort of thing. But the deal is that you're not to be involved in politics.

Now that deal is fraying in some way because arguably you've created a group of people that, if not middle-class in the Washington sense of the word, have spent the last decade with rising expectations, with increased incomes, with perhaps a little bit more incentive to create a system that is more transparent, that works better, that enables them to participate in a way. And I think that's an interesting way of looking at it.

[00:55:43]

MS. LIPMAN: Yes indeed, and I think the relations between government and society in Russia over Putin's decade can be described as a non-participation pact: You don't meddle in our affairs. We make decisions, government decisions, on our own, and we will not intrude in your lives. And this is a deal. This is a deal that's acceptable for both sides. So the two, the society and the government, live in, like, parallel worlds: individual pursuits for the people, government affairs for the government. It's like a divorce, if you like.

And what makes an election so special in this system – and the system worked. People said, OK, you don't want us to meddle in your affairs? Fine, as long as we can have reasonably satisfying individual pursuits. But an election is, by definition, a situation in which you cannot have a divorce. You have to come back together in the same apartment, maybe the same bed. And now you realize how you actually strongly dislike each other. And you are not – you will not respond to the government encouragement, pledge allegiance to us. I think the situation of bringing the nation back together and – with the government saying well, we didn't want you to meddle in our affairs, but now vote for us.

[00:56:59]
This is something – this is something that – actually, hypocrisy of it – the government would have been happy if this particular constituency would have stayed home. They have their core constituency, the less advanced, more provincial, less educated, less entrepreneurial – but these guys they expected, OK, this is no – stay home.

MS. GLASSER: Well, that's right.

MS. LIPMAN: And suddenly there was this urge – this urge to come and take part and show them.

MS. GLASSER: Right. This is the constituency that was supposed to be off on their cut-rate vacations to Turkey or buying a new car, something like that, I think, rather than participating in the streets.

We're now going to turn to our very patient audience and give you a chance to weigh in and ask our great panel here some questions. I'm going to ask you each to identify yourselves and also to please make it a question. Thank you very much. We have some – do we have microphones here? OK, great. Right here on the aisle I guess.

Q: Rich Kauzlarich, George Mason University. Two questions. You talked about the – Putin's use of the United States as sort of an excuse for what happened. Is there a potential, say, for Putin to find another foreign policy opportunity to raise his popularity, say, resuming a war against Georgia? The second point is, why does corruption matter so much now? This is not new for the Russian people; it certainly isn't new for anyone who's been observing it. Why is it different?

MS. GLASSER: Great questions. Do we have any takers? Do you want to maybe weigh in on the corruption front?

MR. KOHUT: No, I'm not going to talk – to respond to that. I'd love to hear what maybe Masha has to say.

MS. GLASSER: Masha?

[00:58:44]

MS. LIPMAN: OK. Well, I think a new war – a new war with Georgia is real bad, at least for the time being. I truly, strongly hope so. As for corruption, I think, A, corruption is getting bigger and bigger. And my point that I made earlier was, the dissatisfaction with corruption has been there for a while. What mattered here is that the mood of discontent translated into a desire to act and defy. And corruption is part of the basis for the mood, not for the action. What is really, really driving people deeply unhappy, and especially in the business community – and it's not this community which is actually in the streets these days – is not corruption per se because you can't adjust. And some even say that corruption is a grease. You use it – or a lubricant – and you use it to, you know – the

bribe-taker is happy, the bribe-giver is happy, and it's only the government that suffers because it does not – it is not part of the – of the transaction.

What is so – really bad about Russia these days is what is called "raiding." And that is predatory grabbing of other peoples' businesses, and usually it applies to successful medium-sized businesses by law enforcement officials. By using the power of their authority, they find ways to grab peoples' businesses, and this is predatory seizure. This is not about corruption.

They say – they come and say: Well, you know, something is not quite right about your paperwork. And the understanding is you should give your business to them if you do not want to end up in jail, and many people do – and many Russian businessmen are in jail. And this works. This is a result of the unaccountability of civil servants in Russia as a result of Putin's system of no political competition. And what it leads to, of course, is to dis-incentivize the people who could be the vehicle for Russian organization, people who want to achieve something and have success.

MS. GLASSER: Do you want to weigh in –

[01:01:03]

MS. ALBRIGHT: On the foreign part – let me just say this – I think that since Putin is clearly not an outsider – he is an incumbent writ large – he can't blame a lot of what's happening inside on somebody else. He's done his best with trying to show that there's certain people that he's put in jail, but they can't be responsible for the fact that the airplanes are crashing or whatever various problems there are.
Therefore, I think that he is going to pick on some foreign aspects. I don't think war, but I think it already started a little bit with Medvedev attacking whatever the missile plans are for NATO. Also, for instance, I think we have to look at what the cooperation is going to be on Syria and Iran, various ways or on supplies in Afghanistan – so more of a matter of: Don't take me for granted. And, but – I think he'll play the foreign card. I think it's an easier card to play, and I say this in my personal capacity as whoever I am now – but, basically, I think that that's an easier card for him to play than to take responsibility for what he's clearly been in charge of, so –

MS. GLASSER: Well – and it's something he's always done. It's always been in his playbook, so. OK, more questions. Right here in the very front row. She's been very patient, so.

[01:02:29]

Q: Thank you, very interesting. Erica Marat from Voice of America's Russian service, and my question is to Secretary Albright. You partly mentioned this already, but how do you think this ongoing crisis – whatever – processes in Russia – will influence Russian-U.S. relations in the coming year, coming months? Thank you.

MS. ALBRIGHT: Well, I mean the United States has spoken about the importance of reset. They have found that it is an important aspect of policy, and under that the New START treaty really was able to come into place. I think we'll have to see the extent – I think Americans, the American – at least from what I know – want to continue in terms of having a functioning, good relationship with the Russians. We have an awful lot of things that we need and want to do together.

The Russians also wants to be in the World Trade Organization now, so I think that there are a number of incentives to continue a good relationship. On the other hand, as I've just said, depending upon the way that the

election campaign goes in Russia, it will affect how the relationship evolves in terms of areas of cooperation like the Middle East or Afghanistan or in other areas.

[01:03:36]

MS. GLASSER: Thank you. Right here.

Q: Yes. My name is Mark Botsford from Botsford Global, and this is a question for Secretary Albright.

What I've been hearing – well, first of all, having focused a lot of my background and experience in Latin America over the last 30 years, the Pew Research Institute has had tremendous, tremendous impact in South America, and I was struck by the words in the discussion today about the similarities in Latin America both about – you talk about managed democracies. I think opposition groups throughout South America and Latin America, in fact, would talk about the de-institutionalization and the hyper-presidentialism that occurs right after elections over the last 20 to 30 years.

So I wanted to ask your opinion, Secretary Albright, about whether or not you think that leaders such as Putin can count on their core constituencies to remain in power indefinitely, in spite of – because of the fact the online constituencies are really going to remain in the minority for the foreseeable future. Thank you.

MS. ALBRIGHT: Well, I – my own expectation is that he has somehow managed to pull this through, and that he will use whatever tactics he can. On the other hand, I've been surprised by some of the things that have happened in the last few days.

The question is – what has happened in some of the Latin American countries is it goes back to a statement I made earlier that democracy has to deliver. There has to be some connection between what the leaders do and what the people want. And for a long time, in a number of Latin American countries, the core group of elite remained and the indigenous peoples or other peoples were not sharing in whatever was going on. That is what happened in Venezuela, for sure. But even in Venezuela, people are getting a little tired of that.

And so there is a length of time, I think, that this can go on, and it depends on what the strings or the levers are that the leaders have – and as the Soviets used to say, controlling the commanding heights. So in many ways I think that will – he's got – Putin does have the tools to stay in power; I believe that.

[01:06:20]

MS. GLASSER: Yes. Sir?

Q: Thank you. My name is Misha Belkindas. I'm independent consultant now.

I want to switch to Lithuania, and I want to ask, probably, Mr. Kohut the question. I mean, it's basically two. One is: Have you looked at the nationalism problems in Lithuania? Because Lithuania is one of the – I would say – most nationalistic countries at the moment because, you know, the slogans "Lithuania for Lithuanians" are heard everywhere. The point that six EU ambassadors had to write a letter to the president, Grybauskaite, saying, you know, enough is enough – when they wanted to kick out a high government official who was basically, you know, meddling these waters. That's one.

And, secondly, the economic situation. Their economic policies during the last crisis are – one of the most austerity measures. And so, you know, the pensions were slashed, the government – the pay for the civil servants were slashed, and people remained kind of calm. In any other country, people would probably go to the streets. So does the poll capture anything of that?

[01:07:35]

MR. KOHUT: Well, two things. On the issue of nationalism, the Lithuanians are clearly more positively oriented toward the United States than toward Russia. There's a Western orientation in Lithuania. And I think that this affection that we see in this poll in Lithuania has a different basis than what we see in Russia and in Ukraine. And, speaking to the economic situation, Lithuania is where we have that 9 percent saying that economic conditions are good, which is only matched, only matched by the people in Ukraine.

So I agree with the tenor – the tenor of your question, but it also gives me another chance to – it gives me a chance to make a point that I think is important relative to Russia and the Ukraine. These folks have an especially difficult time in adapting to Russia compared to other former Soviet people and people from communist countries of – two years ago, when we did our polling, we had the same mixed views of democracy in Russia, and certainly even more so in the Ukraine. But 75 and 80 percent approval ratings in Poland, in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic – the transitions are really quite different in these countries, despite the problems that they're having. I'm not saying that there're no issues in those countries, but the polling does point to the very difficult problems that the Russians and the Ukrainians have had – quite distinct from the Lithuanians, I might add.

MS. GLASSER: Secretary Albright.

MS. ALBRIGHT: I just want to add two sentences to my last answer. I do think that Putin has the tools. The question is: What actually is going to surprise us and happen? I mean, because the elections were a surprise, the demonstrations in the streets are a surprise, the availability of social media are a surprise. So I think it's going to be a story to watch, and it depends on how he – how he plays it and how he uses the tools. But what – clearly, something is happening from the ground up, so it makes it a little bit less clear.

MR. : Thank you.

MS. GLASSER: OK. Do we – right here in the front. Time for a couple more.

Q: Hello, I'm Edwin Taxin. Question for Secretary Albright: If we take as a premise that we would like to promote some of the good outcomes that we seek in Russia and the former Soviet Union, what might we, the West – speaking about the business and political establishments – do differently to engage these countries and to promote some of these outcomes?

[01:10:52]

MS. ALBRIGHT: Well, answering generally, in terms of – I have believed in engagement, and I have also – maybe it's because of my new life – believe in the role of the private sector and the importance of public-private partnerships in trying to figure out how to have a context with a variety of other elements within any society, and the belief that it isn't just the government, but that there are a variety of other contexts that can work – something that I've been involved in, for instance, now – in following up with President Obama's Cairo speech, and something that Secretary Clinton asked me to do – which is called Partners for a New Beginning – in Muslim-majority communities, developing different relationships in civil society, so I am all for that.

I think that sometimes it is hard to do within any particular country, Russia being one of them, in terms of a kind of less than clear investment climate and rules and a variety of aspects, which is why the application of the membership in the World Trade Organization has value of bringing the Russians into an international system that, in fact, has rules that are arbitrated from outside. But I am definitely for a variety of contexts across the board.

[01:12:18]

MS. GLASSER: Thanks so much. Now, we're going to have time for one more question, and then I'll go back to each of our panelists for a very quick closing word. So thank you. Who's going to get the last question? Any takers? All right, we're all questioned out. Secretary Albright has been so gracious in answering all of our questions.

Masha, we're going to go back to you then quickly for what to expect tomorrow, what you'd like to leave us with.

MS. LIPMAN: Well, I think it's pretty amazing and interesting and exciting what is going on in Moscow. I do not think that we should expect breakthrough changes in the political system right now. What is missing in Russia today is political skills, so coalition-building, party-building, doing politics – not Putin-style, but in a more genuine democratic style. This is something that people should learn how to do, and this is something that people in all countries learn the hard way, and I think this is something that's in store for us.

MS. GLASSER: Masha, thanks so much for being with us today. Steve.

MR. NIX: Sure. Let me close, really, by saying, by alluding to the importance of utilizing survey data in formulating policies and responses. Survey data is important for political campaigns and other efforts, but it's also important, as we said earlier, for understanding and reaching common understanding not just with our Russian colleagues but Ukraine and Lithuania. And so we hope to continue to do national survey research in the Russian Federation. And, again, I think that the body of work that Andrew has developed – over the last 20 years, but most recently with this comparative polling he's done between the three countries – is well worth additional analysis and discussion. So thank you.

MS. GLASSER: Thanks, Steve.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thanks. Well, I'll just quickly react, actually, to something that Masha said earlier. And I think there – and, believe me, I'm not here to stretch the analogies with the Arab world and Arab Spring. I really don't want to do that, and it's not – it's not appropriate in this case. However, Masha was mentioning that the Arab Spring protests, the uprisings were very different.

[01:14:29]

In fact, the uprisings in the Arab world, in terms of the demographics of the people in the squares that were there, that are there now in Tunisia, in Yemen, in Egypt – these were relatively prosperous young people. They were not protests about unemployment – wasn't really even mentioned, ever. Or even in Libya – never came up. These were people who could afford – maybe, by virtue of living with their parents and so on – afford to be protesting. They were wired with phones, iPhones, computers. Still are – the people who're still in the square.

They're actually not supported by the unemployed or by street vendors or anyone like that. They try to drive them out of these squares. And they were brought there – the spark – I mean, there was many, many things preceding this, but the spark was the self-immolation of a street vendor who was not protesting so much his economic status in life, but protesting the abuse of state authority.

So it really has been, in the Arab world, about the abuse of state authority, about arrogance, about the sense of, you know, that the powerful can get away with anything. And in the Arab world, there was a strong loss of fear. People no longer feared the consequences of getting out in the street and protesting. So I think without stretching the analogies, there's something amazingly similar to what's starting to go on in Russia in terms of what went on in Tunisia, Egypt, and so on.

[1:15:51]

MS. GLASSER: Well – and I think, you know, as Secretary Albright said: It's a process, not a moment. Right? It's hard to imagine, but that was actually December 10th – December 17th, a year ago. So a year ago next week would that these events began with that dramatic self-immolation in Tunisia. And think of it. We still consider it to be, you know, pretty much early days when we're thinking about what's going to happen with the elections in Egypt. You know, perhaps, Tunisia is on a different course, but so much uncertainty in Yemen, in Syria, of course. So, you know, I think it's an important point. Right? Somebody wrote, actually, in our magazine this summer that these are still early days for the Russian revolution of 20 years ago. (Chuckles.) So I think that's a good sort of note to end it on. But – Secretary Albright?

MS. ALBRIGHT: I think actually Deng Xiaoping said it was too soon to tell about the French Revolution, so – (laughter.) But I think that, for me, what this shows, yet again, is something that I've said my whole life – is that we're all the same. People definitely – wherever you live – want to make – be able to make decisions about their own lives, and are seeking a structure that will allow that. And it's the endlessly interesting discussion about the relationship of the individual to the state: You know, who gives the power to the state, or does the state give the power to the people? I believe, obviously, that the individuals give the power to the state. But this is this unfolding story, and endlessly interesting, and we don't know the answer.

[01:17:15]

MS. GLASSER: Thank you so much.

MR. KOHUT: Yeah. I think that to what extent the genie is out of the bottle in Russia is in part – and the analogies with the Arab Spring are in part qualified by the fact that the Russians, I think – as someone said – are inherently conservative people, with a small "c" conservative. And their predisposition to orderliness is an issue that is quite unlike, I think, the Arab countries that we've experienced, that we've seen.

MS. GLASSER: Well, I want to thank everyone on this wonderful panel, and also to you for coming out today, and to Carnegie for hosting all of this. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

(END)