

Conspiracy Theories, Antisemitism, and Democratic Decline



SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

Washington: 2025

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE].

The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 57 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is an independent U.S. Government commission created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

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Conspiracy Theories, Antisemitism, and Democratic Decline

September 17, 2025

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held from 2:02 p.m. to 3:19 p.m., Room 2358–C, Rayburn House Office Building, Shannon Simrell, Senior Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Ms. SIMRELL: Welcome, everyone, to today’s briefing by the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission. Today’s topic is “Conspiracy Theories, Antisemitism, and Democratic Decline.”

Unique from other forms of racial or religious bigotry, antisemitism represents terminal phase conspiracy thinking. Throughout history, autocrats have scapegoated Jews in order to stoke fear, cement their rule, and distract from societal ills.

As such, flourishing antisemitism can indicate an underlying decay in societies in which it prospers. In Russia, for example, leaders for centuries have relied on antisemitism as a means of internal repression and as a pretext for external aggression, from the Tsarist Security Service fabricating the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” to Vladimir Putin using antisemitic propaganda in a feeble attempt to justify his war on Ukraine.

This briefing will explore antisemitism as the world’s oldest and most destructive conspiracy theory, expose it as a threat to democracy around the world, and propose means to address it.

We have the pleasure of hearing from three expert panelists. After I introduce them, they will deliver their remarks, and we will have time for questions.

Speaking first on millennia of the insidious adaptability of antisemitism and the existential threat it poses to democracy is James Kirchick. For more than two decades, Mr. Kirchick has written about antisemitism for prominent publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Wall Street Journal. Mr. Kirchick is a writer at large for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, based in Prague.

Mr. KIRCHICK: Former.

Ms. SIMRELL: Former.

Mr. KIRCHICK: Sorry.

Ms. SIMRELL: He has also served as a fellow at the Brookings Institution’s Center on United States and Europe and the Project on International Order and Strategy.

Then Ms. Izabella Tabarovsky will discuss Russia's long history of weaponizing anti-semitism, including as a tool in its malign foreign influence operations. Ms. Tabarovsky is a fellow at the Wilson Center and a scholar of Soviet Jewish history and antisemitism. She holds fellowship positions with the London Center for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, the Comper Center for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism at Haifa University, and the Z3 Institute for Jewish Priorities in Palo Alto, California.

Rounding out today's panel is Dr. Brian Hughes. Dr. Hughes will highlight the risks and opportunities that today's dynamic media environment poses and offer approaches that successfully counter antisemitic attitudes and behaviors. Dr. Hughes directs the Countering Antisemitism Laboratory at the University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation. In this role, he develops evidence-backed interventions to prevent and reduce antisemitic attitudes and behaviors at scale online, offline, and with a focus on the needs of impacted communities and survivors.

Mr. Kirchick, to get us started, can you tell us a little bit more about the unique nature of antisemitism as a terminal conspiracy theory and how it can serve as a barometer of underlying decay in the societies in which it prospers?

Mr. KIRCHICK: Thank you, Shannon.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the invitation to speak with you today about a subject the importance of which cannot be understated. That is the rise of global anti-semitism.

Just over 20 years ago, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe promulgated its Berlin Declaration which stated that, "antisemitism, following its most devastating manifestation during the Holocaust, has assumed new forms and expressions which, along with other forms of intolerance, pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization, and, therefore, to overall security in the OSCE region and beyond."

Not since the Second World War has this observation been more pertinent. The growing scourge of antisemitism, I will argue, today constitutes a major threat to the liberal world order America has led for some eight decades.

One would have hoped that the largest single-day massacre of Jews since the Holocaust would have resulted in an outpouring of sympathy for the Jewish State and the Jewish people. While that has been the case in some quarters, the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel also ignited an explosion of antisemitism here in the United States and around the world.

On elite American college campuses, student demonstrators have echoed the terror group's call for the destruction of Israel and harassed Jewish students and their allies. In May, less than a mile from this building, a pro-Palestinian activist shot and killed two employees of the Israeli embassy outside the Capitol Jewish Museum, where they had attended a reception for young diplomats.

During last year's parliamentary elections in France, a left-wing lawmaker asserted in respect to supporters of Israel's military campaign against Hamas that, "Gaza has shown that, no, we do not belong to the same human species."

This is just a small sample of the antisemitic bile that has rippled across the OSCE region in the wake of the October 7 pogrom, a grisly repertoire featuring hostile rhetoric, discriminatory initiatives, and outright violence.

In the United States, though Jews represent just two percent of the population, they account for nearly 70 percent of all religiously motivated hate crimes. That is according

to the FBI. A poll published earlier this month found that more than a fifth of British adults hold entrenched antisemitic views, with a similar number of young Britons saying that the October 7 massacre was justified.

I will spare you the recitation of polls surveying antisemitic attitudes in other OSCE member states, but suffice it to say that the situation is not encouraging. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine any other identity group being subjected to this sort of widespread, intense hatred in the aftermath of such a horrific slaughter.

Ordinary Russians do not endure anything near this level of vituperation as a result of the actions of the Putin regime, nor are Chinese people made to answer for the deprivations of the Chinese Communist Party's oppression and, some say, genocide of the Muslim Uighur community in Xinjiang province.

Unlike Jewish cemeteries and synagogues, Chinese burial sites are not routinely desecrated, and Russian Orthodox churches do not require 24/7 security. More than any other group, Jews are held responsible for the sins of their fellow Jews, real or imagined. There is clearly something different about antisemitism, something that makes it especially conducive to the practice of collective blame.

The root of this quality, I would argue, is the conspiratorial nature that characterizes much antisemitic belief. Other bigotries—racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, sexual, gender-based—tend to posit the inferiority of the out-group. They denigrate the way certain people look, the smell of their food, their hygienic practices, and their sexual practices. Members of these allegedly inferior groups are said to behave in ways that validate their inferiority. They are prone to violence, they are lazy, they reproduce at alarming rates, et cetera.

Antisemitism is unique in that while offering its own set of characterological prejudices, it purports the targets of its ire as occupying a superior place in society. Antisemitism proposes something more ambitious than the routine prejudices that emerge wherever two people are forced to live side by side.

It propounds the idea of an international cabal that secretly manipulates the world to the detriment of mankind. The Jews, according to the most common antisemitic conspiracy theories, are not lazy and downtrodden. They are conniving and powerful. They control international finance, the media, the entertainment industry, academia, governments—the latter not necessarily directly but through their hefty monetary contributions.

Yes, the Jews may have repulsive physical features like other undesirable races, but their craftiness elevates them to a higher level of iniquity, making them all the more dangerous.

Antisemitism, it could be said, is the original conspiracy theory. Whether the propagators of antisemitism know it or not, any system of thought or explanation of events that posits the nefarious role played by secretive global elites, which is the basis of most of our modern conspiracy theories, owes a significant debt to antisemitic conspiracy theories, the most influential of which is the early 20th century czarist Russian fabrication “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.”

Purporting to be the minutes of a meeting of Jewish leaders plotting to control the world, the document played a significant role in the development of European antisemitism that culminated in the Holocaust. It continues to be a bestseller in much of the Muslim world, and it informs the thinking, wittingly or not, of a growing number of people throughout the West.

As the French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut has said, conspiracy thinking is again taking over simple minds and conspiracy leads, sooner or later, to the “Elders of Zion.”

Antisemitism is the most protean, adaptable, and insidious conspiracy theory the world has ever known. One can hear of anti-Jewish conspiracies in nearly every part of the world, in places with large Jewish populations and in places where no Jew exists for hundreds of miles.

Theories that blame a small group of people for the world’s problems lend themselves to unscrupulous political actors on both sides of the political spectrum. Indeed, one of the enduring strengths of antisemitism is its ideological versatility, with autocrats exploiting it to consolidate power and erode democratic institutions.

On the right, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has turned the philanthropist George Soros into his own Emmanuel Goldstein, the lightly fictionalized version of Leon Trotsky and target of the daily Two Minutes Hate in George Orwell’s dystopian novel “1984.”

Denouncing Soros in 2018, Orbán declared that “We are fighting an enemy that is different from us. Not open but hiding. Not straightforward but crafty. Not honest but base. Not national but international. Does not believe in working but speculates with money. Does not have its own homeland but feels it owns the whole world.”

On the left, what Karl Marx referred to as the financial hucksterism of the Jews has been updated to reflect the supersession of identity over class politics with Zionism, the belief in a Jewish right to self-determination, becoming interchangeable with Nazism.

In a dichotomized moral universe in which all human relations can be reduced to oppressor versus oppressed, Jews have been categorized as white and their right to a nation as singularly intolerable. The main form that antisemitism takes in the West today is an obsession with the wrongs of the State of Israel and the attendant belief that its supporters in the Jewish diaspora exercise nefarious control over the levers of international politics, media, and finance in order to manipulate world opinion.

Tucker Carlson, the popular right-wing podcaster, claims Israel is systematically killing Christians, accuses American Jews of disloyalty, and has hosted guests on his podcast who question or deny the Holocaust.

Carlson, somehow even less subtle than Orbán, has called Ukraine’s Jewish President Volodymyr Zelensky, “sweaty and rat-like, a comedian turned oligarch, a persecutor of Christians, a friend of BlackRock.”

To take just one of countless examples on the other side of the ideological spectrum, Rutgers University Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies Jasbir Puar has popularized the term, pinkwashing to portray Israel’s acceptance of LGBT people as a conspiracy to obscure its oppression of Palestinians. Her latest book, “The Right to Maim,” academically peer-reviewed and published by Duke University Press, attacks Israel for sparing the lives of Palestinian civilians, impugning its military for shooting to maim rather than to kill” so that it may keep, “Palestinian populations as perpetually debilitated and, yet, alive in order to control them.”

A recent high-profile case upon which the unholy synergy of conspiratorial left and right antisemitism has converged is that of the late financier and sex criminal Jeffrey Epstein. In July, the FBI announced that Epstein neither possessed a client list of men for whom he allegedly procured underage women, nor did he blackmail said individuals.

This has not stopped a bevy of dishonest political entrepreneurs from insinuating that not only was Epstein guilty of these things, but that he did them on behalf of Israel. The Epstein morass is an antisemitic conspiracy theorist's dream, what with its black book of global elites, a Jewish financier, and sexual perversion.

Surveying the ideologically diverse crew of individuals who have glommed onto this aspect of the case, the only thing that seems to unite them politically is their belief that the Mossad tapped a Jewish-American sex criminal to operate an international pedophile ring for the purpose of blackmailing powerful individuals on behalf of a foreign country.

Antisemitism is an intellectual and societal disease that thrives upon economic distress, xenophobia, political uncertainty, ethnic chauvinism, weakening democratic norms, and the rise of conspiratorial modes of thinking. The prevalence and potency of antisemitism a reliable barometer of societal health, and several external factors do not bode well.

At the macro level, the declining global position of the United States in terms of both its hard military and economic power relative to rising autocratic challengers, its status as a credible beacon of liberal democratic values, and its overall influence on world affairs will create the conditions for antisemitic attitudes to grow.

American leadership of the free world has, in addition to ensuring Israel's security, underwritten the liberal world order that has served as a guarantor of democracy, economic freedom, and of Jewish life and safety since the end of the Second World War.

As America's global leadership role diminishes, authoritarian states like Iran and Russia, Islamist movements committed to the destruction of Israel, and the murder of Jews will fill the void. A worldwide rollback of liberal democracy would be terrible for humanity, but it would be especially terrible for Jews.

Domestically in the United States, political polarization and the collapse of public trust in institutions play an overlooked role in the rise of antisemitic sentiment. It is the American values of pluralism, religious tolerance, and respect for the individual that have made this country the safest and most supportive place for Jews in their over 5,000-year history.

The golden age of American Jewry, an era that began in the 1950's and ended shortly after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks—which was when blaming Israel for the attacks on American Jews or the subsequent war in Iraq became acceptable in polite company—was also the era during which Americans held their institutions of authority in high esteem.

Today, with the vast majority of Americans distrusting the mainstream media, academia, and politicians of both parties, many are turning to alternative sources of information, which often offer conspiratorial answers to America's problems. Declining trust in our sense-making institutions has created fertile ground for the rise of a new discourse increasingly popular among young people that sees no problem in peddling hoary tropes about malign Jewish power.

In preparing for this testimony, I read many of the documents that the OSCE has produced on the subject of antisemitism over the years. Much of it is written in a careful tone, and it speaks of eradicating antisemitism, that is the term.

While this is a noble goal, it is a utopian one. Loathing of the Jew, which is the world's oldest hatred, is an intrinsic feature of mankind. It will never go away because it serves a basic human need—to explain a fearful and complicated world, to locate a

scapegoat for whatever ails us. The best we can hope for in combating antisemitism is mitigation.

If there is one message I would like to leave you with today, it is that antisemitism starts but never ends with the Jews. Without exception, societies where antisemitism is prevalent are either failing or on their way to failure.

Such societies do not threaten Jews. It was a fanatical, conspiratorial antisemitism that transformed Europe's most advanced society into an industrial strength killing machine that provoked the most destructive conflict in the history of mankind.

Today, the main source of instability in the Middle East is Iran, a ruthless theocracy for which antisemitism is a foundational principle. Ultimately, the degree to which antisemitism becomes a problem in the OSCE region hinges on the strength of the antibodies within our societal DNA to protect pluralistic and liberal values and in our confidence in standing up for those values around the world.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Ms. SIMRELL: Thank you so much.

Ms. Tabarovsky, to an outsider, Putin's efforts to slander Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky not only as a Jew but also as a Nazi seem incoherent and contradictory.

Can you tell us a little bit more about Russia's historical use of antisemitism, and also, is it fair to consider Putin just another in a long line of Russian leaders who have deployed antisemitic tropes to prop up their authoritarian and anti-democratic foreign policy objectives?

Ms. TABAROVSKY: Thank you so much, Shannon. Thank you so much to the Commission and its staff for convening this important discussion.

I will gladly answer your question. I will talk about how Russia has contributed to antisemitic discourse worldwide and how its propaganda with regard to Jews has been weaponized against democracies.

I would like to begin with the words of Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, the renowned Holocaust scholar. She has repeatedly warned that antisemitism is a threat to democracy and national stability. For one thing, once you believe that the Jews control the banks, she said, you have given up on democracy.

Antisemitism is fundamentally a conspiracy theory about Jewish evil and power. It operates through libel and demonization. By injecting conspiracy theories into public discourse, it undermines citizens' trust in democratic institutions, and it undermines citizens' sense of their own agency.

It stokes rage, it invites extremist ideologies into the political mainstream, and by legitimizing the language of demonization against Jews, it opens the door to demonization of other groups. It facilitates the process of pitting different groups in society against each other, and it also makes a society open to foreign propaganda and influence operations.

Ambassador Lipstadt has explained that authoritarian regimes love antisemitism because it serves as a spoon with which to stir up the pot. She also cautions us, however, against shifting responsibility onto external actors. Hostile actors cannot create problems where none exist, so if a society is healthy and vices such as antisemitism are kept in check, there is little to exploit.

When the flames of antisemitism are already burning, it makes it easy for hostile regimes to add fuel to the fire and to turn those flames against democracy itself.

Before I continue, I want to explain what I mean by antisemitism. In my discussion of antisemitism and in my analysis of antisemitism, I am guided by the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the definition adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. It is the most broadly adopted definition.

It speaks about—broadly speaking, as I already mentioned, about antisemitism as a conspiracy theory about Jewish power and evil, which operates through demonizing and spreading libel about Jews.

Antisemitism claims that Jews control global finances, media, and politics. It depicts Jews as wily, greedy, deceitful, perfidious, or murderous, and when these tropes are applied to Jewish collectives such as the Jewish national movement, Zionism, or the Jewish State, they contain—or they carry the same antisemitic effect.

The IHRA definition makes it clear that this is distinct from criticizing the State of Israel. It says criticism of Israel, similar to that leveled against any other country, cannot be regarded as antisemitic. However, criticism and demonization are not the same, and it is really important to understand the difference.

I will now go through some of the history of Russia's contribution to antisemitic discourse. Bear with me because it is really relevant for the current moment.

Russia has played an outsized role in the last 125 years in manufacturing and spreading antisemitic conspiracy theories worldwide. Some of that history Jamie has already touched upon, and it is the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which were born in Russia in 1903. Manufactured by the czarist regime, it spread to Europe, became fundamental to Nazi antisemitic propaganda, becoming what the British historian Norman Cohn called a warrant for genocide, and it remains profoundly influential in the Middle East today. Its tropes are embedded in the Hamas charter and in the Iranian antisemitic propaganda, among others.

The Soviet regime was antisemitic from the beginning to the end. It systematically discriminated against Jews, stripping them of their religious, cultural, and national identity. In the late 1940's, Stalin's antisemitic purges were filled with toxic conspiratorial narratives about Jews and Jewish institutions.

Importantly, they also incorporated conspiratorial tropes portraying Zionism as seeking to undermine the Soviet State as being hostile to socialism. The most critical point in Soviet manufacture of antisemitic tropes and antisemitic policies happened in 1967. That is when Soviet antisemitism went completely conspiratorial, and that is when it went global.

Israel's defeat of Soviet-backed Arab allies in the Six-Day War led the Kremlin to declare Zionism as its primary ideological enemy. It unleashed a massive multilingual propaganda and active measures campaign that drew on the tropes of the protocols, but instead of Jews, it talked about Zionists and Israel, and its target was the democratic West led by the United States.

Moscow worked to insert these messages into global media; it worked them in through—or to inculcate them through diplomatic channels. It sought to inculcate these ideas among the global left and the post-colonial Third World, as it was called then, in particular. It worked to do the same at the United Nations, where 50 years ago, almost

exactly in 1975, Moscow successfully pushed through the infamous resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Robert Wistrich, a renowned scholar of antisemitism, wrote in 1985, “Since 1967 the Soviet Union has been flooding the world with a never-ending flow of antisemitic propaganda whose intensity far exceeds all its past propaganda campaigns against other ideological enemies. Only the Nazis in their 12 years of power,” he wrote, “succeeded in producing a similarly sustained campaign of antisemitism and using it in a comparable way as a major ideological tool of domestic and foreign policy.”

By weaponizing antisemitism in this way, the Soviet foreign policy establishment sought to cement its alliances with the Arab states and to discredit the United States, Israel’s ally, in the international arena as part of its cold war against the West.

Here is why it is important and why it remains relevant today. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia’s foreign minister Sergey Lavrov are products of that system. Their respective alma maters, the KGB and the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, played a leading role in that Soviet—in that cold war era propaganda and influence operations.

They have inherited this tradition and the practice of exploiting antisemitism for foreign policy gain. Their propaganda messages in recent years reflect that background, and it became particularly apparent in the wake of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and Hamas’s attack against Israel on October 7, 2023.

One example of this weaponization, going back to your question, is the targeting of President Zelensky’s Jewish identity and the abuse of Holocaust history and language, Holocaust distortion, and Holocaust inversion.

Putin justified the invasion of Ukraine with the claim that Russia sought to de-Nazify Ukraine. Russian propaganda media depicted Zelensky as leading a country run by neo-Nazis and, therefore, being a neo-Nazi himself. Putin has also called Zelensky a disgrace to the Jewish people, someone who betrayed his own people.

Lavrov told an Italian broadcaster that Zelensky being a Jew does not mean he cannot be a Nazi and claimed that Hitler also had Jewish blood. Some of the worst antisemites are Jews, he added.

Criticizing Zelensky’s policies is, of course, legitimate political speech, but targeting his Jewishness, twisting it into proof of his supposed Nazism, treachery, or disgrace, is antisemitism. It singles him out because he is a Jew and weaponizes antisemitic conspiracy myths to discredit him.

These words and these ideas, these tropes, serve as dog whistles that tap into the tropes of Jewish evil and treachery. They tap into conspiracy myths about Jews having perpetrated the Holocaust on themselves, which seek to get the actual perpetrators off the hook. They also tap into conspiracy myths blaming Jews for instigating wars against non-Jews for profit. They, of course, also legitimize Holocaust distortion and inversion.

Putin knows the destructive, corrosive impact of these tropes. He comes from a system that devised them and deployed them successfully and test ran them against millions—sort of focus groups of millions. There is no doubt in my mind that he deploys these tropes knowingly.

As Russian State media and nationalist blogs picked up and amplified these slanders, they appealed to Russia’s own neo-Nazis fighting to de-Nazify Ukraine. The constant disparagement of Zelensky’s Jewishness is also a dog whistle to global audiences the Kremlin values.

Among others, it appeals to far-right audiences that it has long cultivated in Europe and the United States. It appeals to the global extremist movement, which has long admired Russia as the sole white power in the world and the key to white survival. This messaging is also meant to denigrate and destroy Zelensky's image among domestic Western audiences, which can influence political support for Ukraine.

This is an example—the use of this rhetoric—is an example of how antisemitic propaganda is weaponized for geopolitical purposes, right, for foreign agenda—for the purposes of one's foreign agenda and foreign policy interests.

Hamas's October 7 massacre provided Moscow with another opportunity. It diverted the world's attention from Russia's disastrous war in Ukraine. It also allowed Putin to reposition himself from a global pariah to a leader of the anti-Western bloc opposing American policy in the Middle East.

Equations of Israel and Nazi Germany proliferated in Russian media, and that is a longstanding trope of cold war propaganda—of Soviet cold war propaganda. Russian propagandists gloated over Israel's tragedy. Russia failed to condemn Hamas at the U.N. while Hamas publicly thanked Putin for his support. In this, the Kremlin's anti-Israel positions echoed those advocated by segments of the anti-Israel left in the West as well. This posture also helped strengthen Russia's strategic relationship with Iran.

In the wake of a terrorist attack against a concert hall outside of Moscow—the Crocus City Hall by ISIS in March 2024—Aleksandr Dugin blamed the attack on the Zionists. It could have been a Zionist revenge for Russia's position on Gaza, he said.

Dugin, the Russian ultranationalist ideologue, is influential far beyond the Russian borders, including in this country. This too can be viewed as part of the Russian influence operations and as part of deploying antisemitic tropes for foreign policy reasons.

Putin even applied classic antisemitic conspiratorial imagery to the United States, tapping into the conspiracy theory that America is subverted and controlled by Jews. The U.S., he said, was a spider that is trying to envelop the entire planet, the whole world, in its web and wants to achieve our strategic defeat on the battlefield.

This imagery of a spider taking over, holding the whole world in its tentacles, is classic antisemitic imagery. Russia disseminates similar messages in Latin America, in particular in Venezuela.

Meanwhile, both networks and pro-Kremlin media sought to exploit campus protests in this country and incite anger at law enforcement. They accused the American government of hypocrisy on civil liberties. In France, a Holocaust memorial was desecrated by a couple tied to Russian secret services.

This is an example of how antisemitism—or these are examples of how antisemitism is used to sow discord and tie a society up in endless recriminations. The point is to keep helping to polarize public opinion further and further to create internal divisions, to deepen them, rather, I would say, to undermine stability, to stoke an atmosphere of tension and fear, to break up allies.

In conclusion, more than anyone else today, Russia, and in particular Vladimir Putin, understands the destructive power of antisemitism on a free society. It is why Russia continues to invest in it, and like during the cold war, the Kremlin today is not guided by a left-wing or right-wing ideology. It will speak to anyone who will listen.

Now, to be clear, I do not believe that Russia today is the biggest player in this space, again, unlike the cold war. There are other players. There is China. There is Iran. There

is Qatar, but Russia does not need to be. It has made its contribution already, and today it is enjoying the investments it made for decades during the cold war.

Today, it can simply play in the social media space, which has made everything so much easier. Addressing this threat is not only about protecting Jewish communities, as Jamie said, though that is most certainly a worthy goal in itself. What starts with the Jews does not end with the Jews. It is about defending democracy itself.

Thank you so much for your attention.

Ms. SIMRELL: Thank you so much.

Dr. Hughes, there is an old adage that says a lie travels around the world before the truth can put its shoes on. Can you talk a little bit about how the current media environment accelerates the spread of antisemitism and what we can do about it?

Mr. HUGHES: Thank you, Shannon. Thank you, everyone, for being here today.

Antisemitism is, as has been mentioned, the oldest hatred and the oldest conspiracy theory in the world. Despite or, perhaps, because of that, antisemitic tropes must constantly be rebranded, so to speak. New narratives, new styles of rhetoric, are constantly necessary to update antisemitism for the present day, and in our digital age, this evolution is very rapid, indeed.

New tropes emerge on a nearly weekly basis, making it very difficult for those who work to counter antisemitism to intervene effectively. We can compare this process to the way that a virus evolves.

While the essential character of the infection remains the same, it must adapt the ways in which it exploits vulnerabilities in the broader population. In other words, antisemitism has to match the social and cultural moment. By the same token, every cultural moment is an opportunity to intervene, to interrupt, and counter antisemitism.

We no longer drink from wells like they did in the Middle Ages, so Jews really cannot be libeled for poisoning them. Instead, conspiracy theories now accuse Jews of producing something that sometimes gets called goyslop—that is, they blame Jews for orchestrating our very real public health crisis of unhealthy processed foods, which they claim are promoted to poison non-Jews.

Similarly, we no longer live in a world enchanted by the mysticism of the medieval church, so Jews do not kill babies in remote villages for matzah. Instead, they orchestrate mass-casualty events as part of elaborate occult rituals to control the global order.

These adaptations and, again, our opportunities to intervene move at the speed of communication. In the classical period of papyrus and clay, they moved very slowly. In the age of mass print, when the “Protocols” first emerged, they evolved more quickly, and in the age of digital media, they evolve on a nearly weekly basis.

Tens of thousands of amateur Julius Streichers can experiment with new ways to make antisemitism relevant to the news and entertainment of the day. They must, actually, in order to hold on to the attention of their audiences.

Maybe they piggyback off a popular ad for blue jeans, and they try to use that discourse to extol the superiority of Aryan womanhood. Or they can hijack Israel’s conflict with Hamas to revive the canard of Jews as a bloodthirsty and disloyal fifth column.

Simultaneously, digital media offers an effectively infinite reservoir in which every antisemitic trope in history can be stored, retrieved, retooled, and rereleased at any given time. Only this year have we seen libels against Leo Frank dusted off and recirculated.

Each week's most compelling tropes have a way of going viral and spreading the pathology of antisemitism.

The less successful are automatically archived away to be revisited at some point later down the line.

While this presents profound danger, demonstrated by rising statistics of antisemitic attitudes, harassment, and violence, it also offers us ongoing opportunities to intervene. That is very good news.

We have solutions that work if we implement them. The very cycle of rebranding that allows antisemitism to seep into all areas of our discourse also creates vulnerabilities where it can be attacked. One of the most promising ways to accomplish this is a technique called attitudinal inoculation or sometimes called pre-bunking. It is best described as a preventive communication strategy that builds resilience against misinformation and manipulative rhetoric.

Using short-form video, we can expose individuals to a weakened form of misleading arguments, explaining their manipulative techniques before people encounter them in real-world scenarios, such as, for example, an on-campus protest. The data is very clear. This effectively helps individuals recognize and resist such tactics more effectively.

Pre-bunking differs from debunking, which I am sure everyone here has heard of, in two key ways. First, debunking seeks to reach people after they have come to believe something false and potentially harmful. In many of those cases, damage has already been done.

People have already acted on their false beliefs, or they have spread them, and, by contrast, pre-bunking tries to reach people before they adopt false and harmful viewpoints. This allows pre-bunking to reach more people and to reach them before more harm is done.

Second, debunking addresses factual matters. Persuasion science shows us that people are highly persuadable by emotions and instincts, and this is especially true for false and harmful misinformation, which people believe despite its factual contradictions.

Pre-bunking is different in this regard. It addresses the emotional and instinctual reasons why people might adopt antisemitic outlooks. Pre-bunking has a decades-long history of success. It originated in the 1960's. Its principles have been applied to topics that range from dental hygiene to false advertising, teen dietary habits, public health, and everything in between, and these decades of research show that inoculation is very effective.

However, it has only recently been applied to this question of hate and identity-motivated violence. I, along with colleagues at American University and the nonprofit Boundless Israel, was in fact the first to apply inoculation techniques specifically and exclusively to preventing antisemitism, and the results were really striking.

In 2024, we produced a 90-second video addressing the antisemitic trope that Hamas is a force for liberation or decolonization. It was the largest pre-bunking experiment dealing with antisemitism ever. It attempted to educate college-aged Americans about key manipulative tactics that antisemitic propagandists use to promote sympathy for Hamas.

I do not have time to go into all the specifics of the experiment. I would be happy to discuss it with you later, but the outcomes were quite striking. Compared to people who did not watch this video, people who watched it were 17.7 percent more likely to

understand that the idea behind this propaganda, that Hamas is somehow a force for good in the world, is manipulative and harmful.

They were 7.3 percent more likely to disagree with the idea on a factual basis. They were 12.4 percent angrier when presented with this claim, 19.4 percent more disgusted by this idea, and, most striking of all, 23.9 percent more likely to say they would challenge this trope of decolonization if they encountered it online or offline.

For a messaging campaign aimed at sparking attitudinal or behavioral change, those results are remarkable. A subsequent rollout has bought advertising on social media, suggesting that we can effectively inoculate viewers for less than one dollar per successful inoculation.

Granted, as I conclude here, I do not want to present pre-bunking as some kind of panacea. It cannot deradicalize committed antisemites. It can, and it does, effectively reach the movable majority, and those are who ultimately determine the power or the impotence of these tropes as they evolve.

The literature also tells us that these people need regular boosters. One 90-second video does not cut it. The countless and rapid evolution of antisemitic libels actually offers us many opportunities, perhaps, countless opportunities, to do so. It is true that we need to use every tool at our disposal to counter antisemitism in both its acute and its chronic forms, but we have strategies that are shown to work.

Amid all the bad news, amid the crisis, and the awful surveys and polls, I want you to leave the room with that bit of hope. This is not a lost cause. We do have the ability to act, and while we perhaps cannot solve this permanently, we can stem the tide now.

Ms. SIMRELL: Thank you so much.

I would now like to open the floor to questions. We do have a full room, but I encourage you to move around freely. There is a microphone podium over here, and if you want to stand behind the microphone podium, we can kind of take you in the order that you would like to ask your questions. We have staff who can help manage that for you, so take your time and make every opportunity of having access to our experts.

QUESTION: As the—to open our discussion, and with my moderator's prerogative, maybe I would like to do something to ask you all as experts—is there anything that you have heard today that you would like to pick up on that one of your fellow experts has shared? I saw some notes happening, so I would invite you to—

Ms TABAROVSKY: Well, I was very interested in what Brian had to say about the results of this video.

As an educator, I very much believe in the importance of education about—you know, about antisemitism and the threats that it presents and educating people about the tropes because I think a lot of times there are actors who propagate those tropes knowingly and then there are many who fall for them unknowingly, and right now I think we do very little as a society to prepare people to confront these tropes.

I very much like the image of inoculation and boosters. I think it is—I think it is a really excellent, excellent piece of news to share, so thank you.

Ms. SIMRELL: Thank you so much. As you take the microphone to ask your question, if you would kindly introduce yourself?

QUESTION: I am Leander Förster from the University of Bayreuth in Bavaria in Germany.

It appears to me, obviously, that there is antisemitism on both sides of the political spectrum. It also appears to me that this differentiates antisemitism from different forms of discrimination, at least some. I was wondering what you believe are reasons that there is antisemitism on both sides of the political spectrum, and do you see any parallels or differences between those two kinds of antisemitism?

Mr. KIRCHICK: That is a very interesting observation. I had not actually thought about that before. When you think of other types of discrimination, you do not—you think of it as usually being partisan, right. Like, homophobia today is pretty much a right-wing or far-right-wing preoccupation, and you could say that about many other different forms of bigotry. This is certainly one that is unique in that sense in that it exists across the political spectrum.

Again, I would just go back to what I said in my remarks, that, you know, the Jew, singularly and collectively and nationally, in the form of the State of Israel, serves as the eternal scapegoat of humanity, and it does not matter if you are a left winger or a right winger, if you are a Muslim or a Christian. There is always the Jew that you can blame something on, and, you know, there are maybe theological reasons that go to that.

I mean, the Jews are the first monotheistic religion, the first monotheistic people, and I think you cannot underestimate the role. I think Christian antisemitism in the West, in particular, even among the left, which, you know, has its birth—the modern left has its birth, of course, in the opposition to the church in Europe.

You see the residues of that, you know, almost 2,000 years of official Christian indoctrination through the centuries seeps into a lot of left-wing discourse that is antisemitic. You know, the Jew has rejected society. They stand out from the rest of society. They reject our mores, our values. They are either these capitalists, or they are these communists, these Bolsheviks, and I think you can really trace that back to, you know, the Jewish rejection of Christ.

Even though the Catholic Church repudiated that about 60 years ago, I think it is still even sort of—I think a lot of people on the left do not even recognize that they have imbibed this belief system because it is so much a part of the West as we think about it.

That is my sort of, you know, instant explanation for this, but I am sure my colleagues have better answers.

Mr. HUGHES: Well, you ask an educator a question, and I give you a book recommendation.

There is a wonderful book called “Antisemitism: A Western Tradition” by a scholar named David Nirenberg and in it he traces an intellectual genealogy of the West that points out that at really every major watershed in our intellectual, philosophical, moral, or religious development as a society Jews have served as the foil against which whatever the new emerging paradigm wants to define itself against, and this, of course, you know, by virtue of having to do that expresses itself in these wildly contradictory ways. You will have people writing venomous letters back and forth, arguing completely opposing perspectives, and saying that the other person actually represents the viewpoint of the Jews.

This goes back, as James said, 2,000 or even 3,000 years to Hellenic Egypt. There is something in the fact that antisemitism predates by 2,000-plus years, 2,500-plus years, our conceptions of left and right in the modern era.

I think even expecting antisemitism to break along left-right lines—it is a reflection of our modern point of view, and if we can zoom back to look at that much wider historical aperture, I think we will see just how foundational it is.

Ms. SIMRELL: Please. While you take the microphone, I am going to followup.

In your seminal research about pre-bunking and inoculation, did the scope of your work look at the preexisting political orientations of some of the folks who were effectively influenced or kind of inoculated by your work?

Mr. HUGHES: Yes. Yes, it did, and as the questioner might not be surprised, this was an issue that crossed the political spectrum very easily. There is an interesting point there to be made, though, which is that one of the—the common factors that was the most prevalent regardless of reported political ideology had to do with enjoyment of what we call subversive online behaviors.

People who enjoy cruelty online—who enjoy participating in cruelty online, who enjoy witnessing cruelty online, things like trolling and so forth, watching gore content and so on—regardless of their stated political preference, they were much more likely to break in that direction.

Ms. SIMRELL: Please give us your name before you ask a question.

QUESTION: Sure. Hi. I am Stephen Murga. I am the defense fellow for Congressman August Pfluger.

My question is in reference to, and I am just going to give a case example, a friend that I met in the Army many years ago, and kind of lost contact with him. I never thought of him a—I always thought of a good person, a good soldier, right?

Then, throughout the years, I have noticed his Facebook posts keep popping up, although we do not talk or anything like that, getting more and more radical, antisemitic, kind of descending down a path that now it gets to the point it is almost comical the things that he is claiming and everything, right? The level of extremism that is otherwise—the person that I met maybe 10, 15 years ago was normal, now has descended down this path. Is there a way back for somebody like that? Somebody who has taken this path and radicalized themselves through the internet so hard? Is there an a-ha moment, something that you can tell a person that will, like, bring him back to normalcy?

Mr. HUGHES: It happens. It does happen. People come back.

The problem is that de-radicalization is not very well understood. We do not have a kind of treatment protocol to bring someone back from antisemitism the way we do to, say, bring someone back from alcoholism.

The stories—the case studies that we have shown tend to be idiosyncratic, but things like disillusionment with the overall movement and milieu that they are in. If they see the people who share their views as hypocrites or self-interested, that can help to spark a de-radicalization process. Making personal connections, friendships with people in the group that they are expressing prejudice against can also be one, and then also significant changes in their lives, such as the birth of a child.

When those opportunities present themselves, I think that is really the time for friends and family to step in and do their best, and there are de-radicalization groups out there. We can speak offline if you would like.

Thank you.

Ms. SIMRELL: That is interesting, coming back to what you were saying before, about enduring subversive behaviors and then being confronted with manipulation, and then combining it with the questioner's recent question about coming back from radicalization, with having a community challenging cruel behaviors, and then having meaningful life events like the birth of a child.

One questions the role of being invited to or a part of a community of empathy to be able to extend as a common humanity as a possible platform or a space from which to begin to address some of these ideologies of hate.

Please.

Mr. KIRCHICK: Brian mentioned earlier how antisemites will hijack an event or something in the news and use it to forward their agenda—and we are seeing one playing out right now, live. It is happening.

Minutes after Charlie Kirk was assassinated, very influential figures on the far right—Candace Owens, Tucker Carlson—and someone on the far left, Max Blumenthal, immediately started constructing this conspiracy theory that Charlie Kirk was assassinated by the State of Israel, supposedly because he was becoming more anti-Israel in his rhetoric.

Put aside the fact that there is no evidence for this whatsoever; it just does not make logical sense. I mean, Charlie Kirk, whatever you think about him, was a pretty outspoken Christian Zionist, and if Israel wanted to, you know, take out an influencer who was, you know, anti-Israel, would not they go after, like, the real antisemites like Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens? Like, why are they still walking the Earth if Israel is, like, dispatching assassins to take out American influencers?

I am seeing, you know, because I—for my sins I spend too much time on Twitter—but I am seeing people in that space, you know, looking at this. People who might—you know, people who might be fans of Tucker Carlson or Candace Owens, they are looking at just the—again, put the politics aside of it, this is such a crass and disgusting exploitation of someone's death and someone's murder. He has not even been buried yet, and they are exploiting it for—you know, to, like, wage some cockamamie conspiracy theory.

You know, I hope that this would lead to, perhaps, more people on the right in the conservative movement, you know, speaking out against these, you know, individuals with very large followings. It is sad how large the followings are of people like Carlson and Owens, and others.

I think this is playing out. You can see it now. You know, Candace is saying that she is going to reveal everything at, like, 8 tonight or something. It is so perverse and disgusting, and they have made their claims so crystal clear, you would hope that when the evidence or the lack of evidence becomes apparent that people who listen to these individuals would just say, you are wasting my time. Why am I listening to you? You are just making stuff up to get attention and clicks.

For me, this is sort of the most blatant example of antisemitism that is going on right now as we speak.

Ms. TABAROVSKY: You know, and I will just emphasize the point that both of my colleagues are making, and I think it is that we are in a particularly dangerous moment where sometimes it is not even possible to tell whether the person advancing this antisemitic trope is on the left or on the right or maybe a radical Islamist.

You know, before October 7 or a few years ago, it was still possible to say, well, this kind of antisemitic rhetoric is left-wing or typically belongs on the left—this kind is classic kind of antisemitism from the right.

Today, we are—you know, people sometimes talk about the red-green alliance. I think we have the red-green-brown alliance, where really everybody's operating a mix of tropes, and, really, we are in a situation where it is not left versus right, but it is the center. If you imagine two concentric circles, it is the center where most people are, and then all around that center, there are extremists of all kinds of cooking in their own soup and fortifying each other and strengthening each other's messages.

It has happened before. We know historically it has happened that, for example, in the 1970's and the 1980's, some of the radical people on the British left were shown to not know who they were speaking to, a radical anti-Zionist from the left or a neo-Nazi from the right.

We are in that moment now, but I think it is made much worse by the presence of social media, and so it is a very concerning moment.

Ms. SIMRELL: Thank you so much. Please introduce yourself.

QUESTION: Hi. My name is Fayaz Alam. I study at the University of Kansas. I am currently working under Senator Marshall.

My question was after listening to Dr. Hughes and you talk about your video, so it kind of just seems like the dissemination of information is kind of your biggest aid, but also your biggest enemy. I was curious what your guys' takes would be on that, if there is any, I guess, solution to that, as it is a two-edged sword.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, I think you put it really well. I think that one of the reasons why inoculation offers such a promising approach to this is because it does not try to curtail people's ability to access information. It is not about censoring content. It is not about telling people what to think. It cannot convert someone from one way of thinking to another way of thinking.

All it can do is it can educate people about the ways that propagandists—antisemitic propagandists in this case—typically make their case, and when people are armed with that, really, what it does is it turns down the volume on the worst actors in a situation so that our information environment can do what it is meant to do better, which is allow us to communicate in a free and open way where—you know, where ideally the truth can come out.

I would be very curious to know more about the Russian information environment. The social media environment in Russia, I know, is very different from the one in the United States. I do not know, Izabella—if you could give me any insight into that, I would appreciate it.

Ms. TABAROVSKY: You know, I just want to ask the questioner to repeat your question also, and then I will comment. Can you repeat your question?

QUESTION: My question was, I guess, information—or not information, but the dissemination of all this, I guess, different ideas online is kind of your biggest aid but also your biggest enemy, because as he talked about in his study, it was actually shown to have all these positive benefits, but as the previous speaker came up here and said some people get radicalized by misinformation online. I was kind of curious what your take on that would be, if there is any solution to that.

Ms. TABAROVSKY: Well, yes, I am not sure I have answers aside from education, really, because I think from a—you know, I love this, as I said, this vision of or this metaphor of inoculation, and in a way, you know, it is like educating people about anything to recognize patterns, right. To recognize certain information sources and to know the history of certain ideas.

For example, most people quite easily, or many people—let us put it this way—many people quite easily recognize antisemitic tropes that originate from Nazi propaganda. A lot of times, we know we can trace the history of those tropes, and that immediately raises red flags because we have done a better job of speaking about Nazi propaganda and teaching people about Nazi history, and that helps, right, because we know what happened under Nazi Germany. When we see those tropes, we think, okay—we immediately think, okay, red flag, right? This is dangerous. Well, it is important to present people with other models, with other ways in which antisemitism can express itself, because there are many different ways that that can happen.

In my view, the answer is really education, whatever form it takes. I would love to speak to you about the Russian information environment. We can maybe do it online—offline.

Ms. SIMRELL: Well, maybe we will take one more question, and then I have a question. Then we will allow for closing statements.

Thank you. Please introduce yourself.

QUESTION: Just wondering—this is a question specifically for Mr. Kirchick.

In your speech earlier, you were talking about how, like, antisemitism is a scapegoat for, like, especially what is going on right now with Israel. Do you think that you can be critical of Israel or Netanyahu without being antisemitic, or do you think that it has all kind of, like, intertwined—any criticism of Israel as antisemitic?

Mr. KIRCHICK: Most Israelis despise their current prime minister. I believe half of them or more oppose the current operation in Gaza City.

Of course, criticizing Israel is not antisemitic, and I hear this claim a lot. It is a total straw man. I do not know any serious individual or entity that accuses, you know, good-faith criticisms of Israel as being antisemitic. I am sure there are some, you know, very sensitive defenders of Israel who maybe do that occasionally.

It is pretty clear to me when something is an antisemitic attack on Israel or opposed to a good faith or even really harsh criticism. I mean, it is, you know, pretty simple. Like, do not demonize the country. Do not compare it to Nazi Germany. Do not refer to or use, you know, classical antisemitic tropes. Do not, you know, hold up posters that show the Star of David next to a swastika.

Like, these are not difficult things. Like, it is not hard to avoid if you want to criticize Israel. To me, it does not seem difficult to avoid being accused of antisemitism, and I think that this argument that, oh, you know, whenever I criticize Israel or, you know, people criticize Israel, it is antisemitism.

Thank you.

Ms. SIMRELL: Thank you.

All right. Well, we are coming to the end of our time together today, but because the internet is a magical place, earlier today, I did see that Nick Fuentes was on social media calling an end to conspiracy theories because, in the case of Charlie Kirk, it had gone too far.

Mr. KIRCHICK: Because he is being accused of something or—

Ms. SIMRELL: Just that it was so—the conundrum was so profound that—

Mr. KIRCHICK: When you have lost Nick Fuentes, then you know.

Ms. SIMRELL: Anyway, so there is at least a call for sanity from some corners of the internet.

QUESTION: To kind of—thank you so much for your time and your participation and your remarks today. As I turn the floor back over to you for final thoughts, I have this question.

We have talked about antisemitism as an indicator of decline, as an opportunity for polarization, and for just risk to democracy. What risk does growing antisemitism across Europe, for example, the OSCE region, pose to strategic U.S. interests, and why should it be—if it is something that we should combat—why should we be combative from a national—perspective?

Mr. KIRCHICK: Well, I do not think it is a coincidence that the antisemitic forces in Europe, whether in the forms of political parties or intellectuals or movements, are almost universally anti-American, and they are illiberal, they are often pro-Russian. They pretty much stand against us.

If you want to look at, you know, Viktor Orbán and what he is doing in Ukraine—I mean, in his policy toward Ukraine, but also, he is the friendliest European leader with Vladimir Putin. He is using antisemitism.

You look at France. The leading force of antisemitism in France is the far-left party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon. He is definitely anti-NATO, anti-American, and illiberal. The AfD [Alternative for Germany] in Germany they are not pro-American. They are very critical of NATO.

I can go down the list. You know, if you take the kind of broad view that the United States has a role to play in the world and in Europe in particular, and that alliances are important to our own security—you know, America has the biggest network of alliances and partners the world has ever known—it is a really precious asset that we have. Those alliances are important to maintain, and the forces that are working to undermine those alliances are almost without exception antisemitic.

Ms. TABAROVSKY: I truly do not have anything to add. I completely agree with what Jamie just said.

To the extent that the forces of antisemitism act against democracy in general, they certainly act against America, and we have seen American flags being burned together with Israeli flags, and that is something that represents exactly this trend.

Mr. HUGHES: Well, now there is even less for me to say.

I guess I will close by saying I told you all about one approach that has been shown to work. There are many approaches that we know work, and we know that they can cross national boundaries. In the same way that antisemiticpropaganda and antisemiticsentiment cross boundaries, solutions can, too.

If we are going to implement those solutions, we need to be working with our partners in Europe because every cultural context is unique, even if the methodologies do transpose.

Thank you.

Ms. SIMRELL: With that, I think we have officially run out of things to say. Thank you so much, everyone, and with that, this briefing has ended.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:19 p.m., the briefing ended.]





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