

RICHARD NIXON
FOUNDATION

GRAND STRATEGY SUMMIT

WASHINGTON, DC

STRATEGY SUMMARY

A Recap of the Richard Nixon Foundation's
Grand Strategy Summit:
American Leadership in the 21st Century

Convened November 10 & 11 in Washington, D.C.



Opening remarks were delivered by former National Security Adviser and Secretary of State, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger.



Former National Security Adviser and Nixon Foundation Chairman Robert C. O'Brien appeared in-conversation with Board Member and former Foundation President Hugh Hewitt.

In *Beyond Peace*, his tenth – and final – book, Richard Nixon laid out a blueprint for how the United States should approach the world in the post-Cold War era. His book offered what could be called a “grand strategy” for making the 21st century the second American century.

Consistent with President Nixon’s vision, the Richard Nixon Foundation convened its inaugural Grand Strategy Summit during what can only be described as a challenging time in world history. The Summit brought together some of the nation’s finest minds to explore whether the United States was following a grand strategy in its pursuit of its international goals – and if not, what should be done instead.

Dr. Henry Kissinger, President Nixon’s National Security Adviser and Secretary of State who played a key role in developing and executing the President’s grand strategy to achieve a generation of peace, delivered opening remarks to begin the Summit.

Addressing 200 attendees gathered at the Ritz Carlton in Washington—and many more watching online—from his home in New York, Dr. Kissinger described President Nixon as “the American president most similar to Theodore Roosevelt in his approach to international politics.”

“Richard Nixon introduced a concept of strategic thinking to American foreign policy” that would “avoid treating each problem on its so-called merits,” Dr. Kissinger said. Instead, the United States would link various issues together in pursuit of greater goals.

Dr. Kissinger’s remarks, reminding the attendees of the Nixonian strategic approach to international affairs, set the tone for the entire Summit.

A wide-ranging conversation between the most recent U.S. National Security Adviser Ambassador **Robert O’Brien**—now Chairman of the Richard Nixon Foundation—and nationally-syndicated radio host and *Washington Post* columnist **Hugh Hewitt**—who served as President of the Richard Nixon Foundation from 2019 to 2021—followed Dr. Kissinger’s opening remarks. O’Brien and Hewitt took the Summit attendees on a tour of the most difficult challenges facing the United States today.

From China’s growing authoritarianism and its far-reaching espionage and intelligence gathering capabilities, to the danger of a nuclear Iran and Russia’s war in Ukraine, O’Brien asserted the need for a strong American military, and particularly an enhanced Navy, to deter America’s adversaries and the importance of putting America’s national interest first in the conduct of foreign policy.



Scan QR code to watch Kissinger opening (left) and O’Brien and Hewitt remarks (right)



The Summit included four panel discussions and a keynote address by former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

The first panel, *The China Challenge*, included:

- Former Attorney General **William Barr**
- **Jude Blanchette**, Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
- **Matt Pottinger**, Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution and Chairman of the China Program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies
- **Margaret Hoover**, host of *PBS Firing Line*, served as moderator

The panelists discussed how the United States should approach issues of great strategic importance regarding its bilateral relationship with China, focusing on two areas: the impact of intellectual property theft, industrial

espionage and other intelligence gathering activities on the bilateral, interdependent economic relationship; and, the imminent threat to Taiwan from China, considering U.S. interests in the semiconductor industry.

Members of the panel urged the United States to work more closely with American allies to develop a strategic approach to neutralizing China's technological advantages in areas such as 5G, to pursue incentives that shift critical supply chain elements back home, to strengthen the Foreign Agents Registration Act to combat espionage inside the United States, and to increase efforts to deter China from moving against Taiwan militarily.



Scan the QR code to watch the panel discussion

Matt Pottinger, William Barr, Jude Blanchette and Margaret Hoover discussing the relationship between the United States and China.



Arthur Herman, Michael Pillsbury and Patrick Cronin discussed the current relationship between the United States and China.

After the Fall: The U.S. and China after the Soviet Union, was the topic of the second panel. A trio of experts from the Hudson Institute explored how the United States' relationship with China has evolved since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The panel's insights gave context to the current relationship between China and the United States, and was made up of:

- **Patrick Cronin**, Asia-Pacific Security Chair at The Hudson Institute
- **Michael Pillsbury**, Director for Chinese Strategy at The Hudson Institute and Author of *The Hundred-Year Marathon*
- **Arthur Herman**, Senior Fellow and Director of the Quantum Alliance Initiative at The Hudson Institute, served as moderator

Recognizing China's rapid economic, technological, and military expansion over the past 30 years, panelists advocated the development of a broad American strategy to meet the challenges China's growth presents. Such a strategy would include urging other nations both in the region and beyond to conduct naval patrols and maritime activity in the South China Sea, taking steps to avoid inadvertent escalations of military tensions, and reducing China's ability, through social media and other technologies, to gather information on American citizens.



Scan the QR code to watch the panel discussion



Following a video that highlighted President Nixon’s approach to foreign affairs—marrying strategic purpose with power to strengthen America’s strategic position internationally—former Speaker of the House **Newt Gingrich** offered a compelling overview of Richard Nixon’s development and implementation of grand strategy.

In his remarks, Gingrich said that “probably more than any president maybe since Lincoln, Nixon was essentially an intellectual...a thinker...who wanted to do big things that would genuinely make the world better and he wanted to have **big strategies**” to achieve those goals. He went on to describe Nixon as a rare presidential grand strategist who had “a bold vision and then a lot of specific incremental steps” to achieve that vision.

“Grand strategies require a bold vision and a lot of specific incremental steps... It happens very rarely. It involves people who are remarkable and Nixon was one of those people.”

—Newt Gingrich

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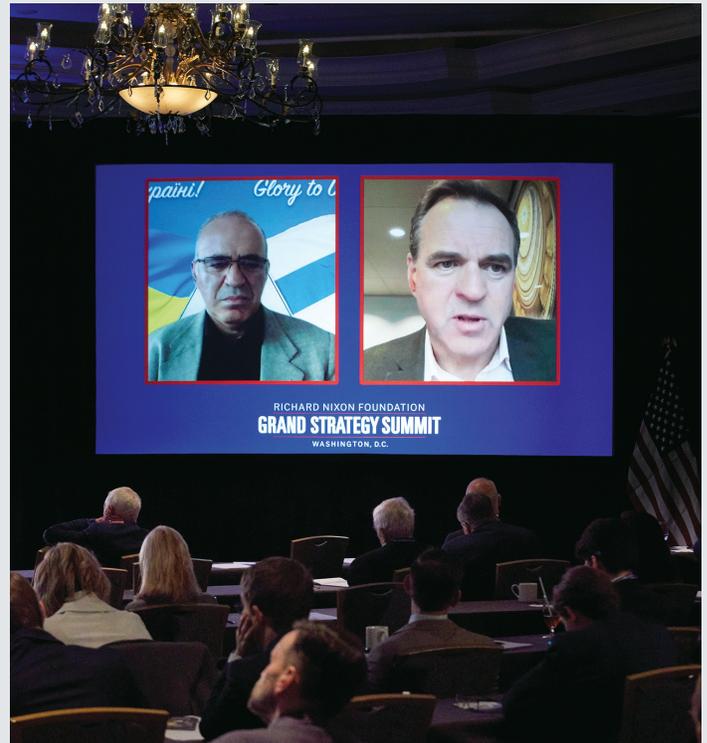


Mary Kissel and James Hohmann discussed Western responses to Russian aggression.

Cold War 2.0? Russia, Ukraine and the Western World, was the topic of the third panel. Panelists engaged in a lively discussion about how the United States should best use its military power to pursue its foreign policy goals, especially in Ukraine. The panel was composed of:

- Niall Ferguson, Milbank Family Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution
- Gary Kasparov, 13th World Chess Champion, Chairman of the Human Rights Foundation
- Mary Kissel, Executive Vice President and Senior Policy Advisor at Stephens Inc.
- James Hohmann, Columnist for *The Washington Post*, served as moderator

There was discussion among the panel as to the best approach to meet these threats and maintain a balance of power after the Ukraine War that is in America's national interest. Although the panel agreed that the United States must increase its efforts to support Ukraine in defeating Russian expansionism, opinions varied as to what was truly realistic. The panel did agree, however, that the U.S. should look to Nixon's approach to meet today's challenges.



Niall Ferguson and Gary Kasparov debated foreign policy approaches.



Scan the QR code to watch the panel discussion



Jon Alterman discussing the Middle East with Elbridge Colby.

The final panel, **A Nuclear Middle East: Preventing Proliferation**, discussed a variety of threats to stability in the Middle East, including nuclear proliferation, the impact of the global transition away from fossil fuels, and the competition between China and the United States for influence in the region. The panel consisted of:

- **Jon Alterman**, Director of the Middle East Program at CSIS
- **Morgan Ortogus**, Former Spokesperson for the U.S. State Department
- **Elbridge Colby**, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Force Development, served as moderator

There was discussion on exactly how the United States should prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. There was, however, agreement that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which was negotiated by the Obama Administration, withdrawn by the Trump Administration, and which the current administration is seeking to reinstate, was not sufficient to prevent a nuclear Iran. The panel agreed that the challenges with Iran should be married to a more strategic approach involving other countries in the Middle East, especially as the United States competes with China for influence in the region and the Abraham Accords continue to expand Western influence.



As the Summit concluded, it was clear that one common thread tied all of the speeches and panel discussions together: Richard Nixon's strategic approach to foreign policy, his realist approach to understanding the world, and his emphasis on putting the interest of the United States first in all its foreign policy efforts, should be our country's guide today.



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panel discussion



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“Only the United States has the combination of military, economic, and political power a nation must have to take the lead in defending and extending freedom and in deterring and resisting aggression.”

—Richard Nixon, *Beyond Peace*, 1994