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Fireside Chat with **Jake Sullivan**

Jake Sullivan, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, National Security Council

Moderator: Edward Luce, U.S. National Editor and Columnist, *Financial Times*

Edward Luce 00:06

Thank you, Anja, and thank you all, for what is I think the most spectacular national security conference I've been to. Just the array of names that we've had one after the other sort of like hammer blows, ending with you, Jake. The cherry on the cake. I like to think. So thank you for being here. Let me get straight into it. Bill Burns, one of the big names we've had was yesterday here and he said very memorably, when he was asked about the Prigozhin failed coup attempt, that he and Putin's response to this, saying he's a traitor, but then not acting on the implied meaning of that word traitor, having him to tea and then sending him off to Belarus. He said, Look, the emperor has no clothes, or if the Emperor does have clothes, then you Putin, that he's taking a long time to get dressed, which I think is a very memorable way of putting it. And of course, it was about the exposed fragility of Putin. So my question to you is, how can we assist this fragility along? Is that a goal?

Jake Sullivan 01:16

Look, what happens inside Russia is for the elements of Russian society and Russian politics to work out. It's not for us to work out it's not for us to sit around and, you know, plot how to change the regime in Moscow. We've made clear that that's not where our efforts lie. Our efforts lie in supporting Ukraine, so that it can be as successful on the battlefield as possible. Success for Ukraine on the battlefield obviously reverberates inside Russia. Why did Prigozhin do what he did? He did what he did, because he was so unhappy with the course of the war effort in Ukraine. If Putin had been succeeding in Ukraine, you would not have seen promotion running pell mell down the track towards Moscow. So from our perspective, our job is to provide Ukraine with the tools capacity support alongside allies and partners that it needs to be able to continue to be successful and to show to every element of Russian society that Putin's adventure in Ukraine was a misadventure. And that, for us, has to be the prime directive and that's what we're focused on.

Edward Luce 02:32

We're talking about Prigozhin's adventure in Ukraine. One of the nastiest aspects of that adventure has been the Wagner group precautions Wagner group. Is it now out of play, is it now out of commission? Do you have any intelligence on that?

Jake Sullivan 02:47

I mean, to be clear, I don't think anybody knows whether Prigozhin whether Wagner whether the Russian Ministry of Defense whether any particular general, any particular

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commander, this is all so unsettled and uncertain and the full implications of what happened with provisions mooting mutiny have yet to play out. We will see it play out over days, weeks, months, and clearly. This is what is preoccupying Putin and the people around him is what's the next shoe to drop, where does this all go? Who else was involved? And they are actively trying to work through all of that. So I cannot give you a clear answer about whether the future of Wagner lies here or there. I will say this at present Wagner is not fighting in Ukraine. Elements of Wagner have in fact moved to Bella ruse. Other elements are looking probably to go further afield. And the loss of Wagner as a fighting force, if that continues, if that persists, does mean that one of the most effective cadre is that was responsible for some of the modest progress that Russia made during its last counter offensive is off the board. So that's going to come at some cost to Russia overall, but it's hard to predict next month, let alone a few months down the road down the road as to whether in fact, what we see today, which is Wagner out of commission, from the point of view of Ukraine remains the case you heard Prigogine publicly say they're not engaged in Ukraine right now but also mused about whether they may get engaged in Ukraine in the future. I don't think he knows I don't think Putin knows I don't think Shoigu or grass and wild knows and so we need to plan for any contingency.

Edward Luce 04:31

Now, there's been a lot of talk at this conference, but also more generally about the slow progress of this counter offensive. And the President of Ukraine was on the screen here this morning with Fareed Zakaria about his chief of staff Yermak yesterday. Both reiterating very strongly that we need attack comms and we need f 16. And I know there is some controversy about whether they actually need it, but they're the ones on the ground. And they're the ones asking for these important pieces of military equipment that they say we'll help them finish the job. What do you say to them when they reiterate this demand?

Jake Sullivan 05:12

So first, F 16s, I said on CNN a few days ago, John Kirby said yesterday we are moving rapidly to try to help Ukraine get the capability it needs to be able to actually operate those F six teams effectively and put them to use and that means working with our allies to train Ukrainian pilots. And then also how to sustain and actually service a an F 16 Squadron or multiple squadrons in a fight. So that work is underway and we are going to push as fast as possible to be able to deliver that capability to Ukraine. But I would point out the following. Russia has somewhere in the neighborhood of 800 or 900 4th and fifth generation fighters, 800 or 900, and they have not played a significant role in Russia's counter offensive or in Russia's defensive efforts in the south or the east. Why is that? It's because air defense is such a significant element to both sides capabilities that Ukraine can hold Russian fourth and fifth generation fighters at risk, and Russia could hold Ukrainian fourth and fifth generation fighters at risk. So the view of our military commanders is that the notion that f6 teams would play a decisive role in this counter offensive given that fundamental reality which is played out in the battlefield over the course of the past year. They have a different view than what you have heard from some

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Ukrainian voices. I would also say that those fighter jets are important for the long term defense and deterrent capability of Ukraine so we are not just building for the counter offensive today we are building a force of the future for Ukraine tomorrow. And that's really what significant amount of this work is about. With respect to a TAC comes obviously, the British and the French have provided long range strike capability that's integrated into the Ukrainian fight. It's good to see that they have an additional capability that they are using in the context of this counter offensive and have over the course of many weeks and months to go with all of the things the United States has provided, which is by the way more than the rest of the world combined. Whether or not we ultimately give a tax will be a decision for the president. He has spoken with President Solinsky about it, they continue to have that conversation and I hate to disappoint you, but I don't have any announcements to make today.

Edward Luce 07:32

Okay, but let me just press you a little bit more on that. When it is fair to say if you go with the Ukrainian narrative that we were more cautious earlier in the war about what we gave them tanks, high marks etc. And then we whoever was drawing that red line for Putin is clearly running out of reading because the red line keeps retreating. And attack comes it's perfectly reasonable for them to push for something seeing as how you've pushed the red line or your perception of where Putin's red line is back. Gradually. Isn't that a fair perception of and isn't the precaution attempted mutiny and Putin's failure to be what Bill Burns memorably calls so far as the apostle of payback, doesn't that cause us to further reappraise where Putin's red lines up?

Jake Sullivan 08:22

Look, we have to be a learning organism. We have to watch. We do something. Russia responds or doesn't respond. We do something more Russia responds or doesn't respond. That is sensible statecraft. And so yes, of course over the course of the past 16 months, we have not just remained static we have been dynamic as this war has been dynamic. And actually, if you think about the course of this conflict so far, what we have tried to do is provide Ukraine with the capabilities it needs for the given face of the war. In the early phase of the war, the defensive key that was really about anti tank and anti air the stingers and javelins because that's what stopped the advance in its tracks. In the second phase of the war. It was really about artillery capacity to be able to help the Russian advance in the Donbass in this phase of the war. It's a counter offensive you need mobility you need infantry fighting vehicles, you need tanks, you need combined arms operations. Mind clearing equipment, breaching equipment, and so we have given that to the Ukrainians in droves. So from our perspective, we have not just looked at the question of what capability to provide Ukraine through the lens of what will Russia do? We've looked at what is necessary for a given part of the conflict. How do you train and equip the Ukrainians to be able to execute that given phase of the conflict as effectively as possible? And then finally, I would just make the point that there is kind of two caricatures that I think are just wrong. One caricature is that the Biden administration is sitting around, you know, unwilling to provide things because we're worried about the

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Russians. I think that is belied by the sheer magnitude, breath and sophistication of the capabilities that we have provided Russia we have been prepared to take risks, and we will continue to be prepared to take risks to provide support to Ukraine. On the other hand, there's a caricature that says, Don't worry at all, don't even ask the question about what Russia might do. Because you know, that's just betokens weakness, and why would you even consider that? Well, it is responsible for every member of NATO and for the United States to think about the Russian reaction when we choose to do something, because that matters for our security matters for global stability. So don't be paralyzed by it, consider it and then make decisions accordingly. That is the clear and systematic way that we have approached the question of a security assistance to Ukraine at every point in this conflict that will continue to be what guides the President of the United States. And we are proud of the the type, quantity and capacity of the material the intelligence and the other forms of support we have provided to Ukraine, and we will continue to give them what they need, because the ultimate asset in this war above all others, is the courage and bravery of the Ukrainian fighters on the front lines and the people who are standing up every day there. And we want to make sure that they have what they need to succeed in this conflict.

Edward Luce 11:18

And that's having what they need recently. is included plus the bumps. Could you explain in your understanding what the military value to them will be of plastic bombs, what what are they going to use them for?

Jake Sullivan 11:32

Well, I would divide the question of military value of cluster bombs into two categories. One is what do cluster bombs do that unitary rounds of 155 ammunition don't. And the second is what do cluster bombs do? As opposed to having nothing. And the reason I raised the second point is because we have to date provided an overwhelming amount of 155 ammunition to Ukraine collectively from around the world from US stocks, Allied stocks, partner stocks, more than a million and a half rounds and 155 ammunition. The total amount in our stockpiles has come down the monthly production of 155 is not today sufficient to meet Ukraine's needs for offense and defense in Ukraine. We recognize that several months ago, and began the process of ramping up 155 Production quite dramatically so that we could reach a point where monthly production would meet all the needs necessary for Ukraine, for us and for everybody, for all of our allies and partners. But that takes time. You'd be surprised by how much time I think a lot of us think about the world war two concept of Rosie the Riveter and rolling tanks and planes off to production lines that were converted from being car factories and we did that in a matter of months. The sheer sophistication of these rounds, the supply chains, the workforce, the contracts, the time it takes to get from x 1000 rounds today to triple X 1000 rounds is not a matter of weeks. It's a matter of months. So we have a gap. And we need to fill that gap so that Ukraine is not defenseless because we are not going to leave them defenseless. So that is why the President decided that to bridge that gap. We would provide cluster munitions because the alternative to providing cluster munitions was

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them not having enough bullets. So the single biggest military value is that it sustains their artillery capacity in a war that is fundamentally an artillery fight. But in addition to that, of course, cluster munitions do provide a better capacity to defend and all onslaught from the Russians. And by the way, we are not just focused on a counter offensive. We are focused on ensuring the Russians cannot attack and overrun Ukrainian positions along the front line of trace. And of course it creates more opportunities. In a counter offensive to spread the fire more broadly. And so for that set of reasons the President ultimately determined and it was not an easy decision for him, but made the decision that this was something we were going to provide Ukraine and we have delivered them they are now using them.

Edward Luce 14:21

Okay, I mean that the one of the explanations for why the Ukrainian counter-offensive Hasn't, and I'm going to get onto China and other issues in a moment. I just want to press one. One more question on this. One of the explanations is that they haven't put a majority of their combat brigades into action yet, and they might lack ammunition. So I presume this is part of that calculation. It gives them more ammunition to blast through those very thick minefields and fortifications that Russia has laid out over the last winter. Is it your understanding that the real counter offensive is yet to come?

Jake Sullivan 15:00

Boy, I cannot say yes to that question. Because the real counter offensive began the day the first Ukrainian hit the line and put their life on the line and there have already been significant amounts of casualties and deaths of Ukrainian fighters in this counter offensive so it is well underway. And it is hard going and we said it would be hard going because there are these layer defenses and minefields and other obstacles for the Ukrainians to work through. But it is also the case that Ukraine has a substantial amount of combat power, that it has not yet committed to the fight, and it is trying to choose its moment to commit that combat power to the fight when it will have the maximum impact on the battlefield. And we are in close consultation with the Ukrainians on the conditions for that, but ultimately, that's a decision they will make and it is at that moment when they make that commitment that we will really see what the likely results of this counter offensive will be.

Edward Luce 15:56

All wars come to an end and you have to it's responsible to think of them. track two is one way of doing it. Richard house has recently been doing that with a group of people and lever off. I don't know whether that that is significant from from your point of view. I guess my real question is is it possible to achieve a credible peace and one that we believe is lasting and would recommend the Ukrainians except was Putin is president of Russia?

Jake Sullivan 16:21

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Well, it's hard to say right now, what the conditions would be for a credible peace that would be acceptable to the Russians because from our perspective, a credible peace requires that the basic principles of the UN Charter be honored. What is the United Nations Charter which all of us signed up to including the Russians say, it says that sovereignty and territorial integrity are sacrosanct? It says you cannot take your neighbor's territory by force and conquest. And from our perspective, that has to be a fundamental principle of a peace between Russia and Ukraine. Can Putin never accept that at the bargaining table? I cannot answer that question. He's clearly not prepared to accept that proposition today. But from the US perspective, we are going to continue to stand behind that basic principle alongside our allies and partners and alongside Ukraine, and then ultimately Ukraine will make a decision about when and if it chooses to negotiate, in what conditions for what outcome and we will support them in that. In the meantime, it's about putting them in the best possible position at the on the battlefield, so that they are in the best possible position at the bargaining table when they choose to go there.

Edward Luce 17:36

They are, as you say, in an existential fight, which is not what we're all in we're on a larger battle principles, support of their fight, but they are basing the weights of Russian eyeballs so understandably they do things we might not want them to do. One of which everybody seems to know what the administration hasn't yet conceded is Nord Stream two. Isn't it time for very understandable reasons. It seems Ukrainians did sabotage that, isn't it time to concede that that's what happened, for very understandable reasons.

Jake Sullivan 18:08

Well, as you know, there is an ongoing investigation in multiple countries in Europe. And the last thing that I'm going to do to our allies in Europe is front run an investigation that they are conducting. We'll let that play out. We'll let them lay out the results of that investigation. And I'm not going to prejudge what that's

Edward Luce 18:26

okay. I have to ask. Let's move on to China. It's been a pretty rocky topsy turvy the Chinese spy balloon etc. I guess the sort of carryover from Pelosi his visit to Taiwan last year all wiping out whatever progress President Biden and President Xi made in Bali. That period of the most acute tension seemed to have come to an end when you met with Wang Yi, senior Chinese foreign official in Vienna in early May for I don't know how many hours of conversations 12 hours over a two or three day period, a lot of conversations. What is it about you talking to one year because this isn't the first time that tends to lower the tensions what passes between you that seems to elude other actors?

Jake Sullivan 19:18

Well, first, yeah, it was about 12 hours or 46 hours or a lot of hours. I mean, it was a lot of hours. So first, I do think that there is some value in a channel that is relatively low key where there was not press. You know, we didn't even do a camera spray, let alone have a

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larger press conference associated with it. So it allows for a frank and candid interchange of ideas where we don't then have to go out and inter mediate what we said to one another through the media or score points or do things like that. So I think that matters. That's point 1.2. I think there was a gap in that period between perception and reality on both sides about what our intentions were towards one another and towards the relationship. And so actually being able to sit down and say, This is what we're about. And this is not what we're about. In a way had a brush clearing kind of quality to it. That then paved the way for Secretary Blinken to be able to go and sit directly with President Xi and other senior Chinese leaders for Secretary Yellen to go to engage on the economic file and of course, most recently Secretary Kerry.

Edward Luce 20:40

Don't forget Henry Kissinger.

Jake Sullivan 20:41

And of course, former Secretary Kissinger though he was representing himself and not the US government. Part of it also is about just being straightforward. You know, Wang Yi raised a set of concerns about what the US is doing has done will do. And I had the opportunity to say, here's why we've taken actions we've taken. Here's why there are further actions we will take and how you should perceive them. And here are ways in which we can manage the relationship effectively and here are ways in which the US and the PRC could effectively work together on issues of common interest, and actually think being clear, straightforward, and setting the emotions the rhetoric and some of these larger philosophical framings aside and just getting down to the core practicalities, there is I think, a genuine possibility for a stable relationship, even though that relationship is inherently competitive, and will involve us doing things that Beijing doesn't like, and will involve Beijing doing things that we don't like, but diplomacy is all about being able to manage that set of structural factors and that is what we are engaged in right now. Competition paired with diplomacy to produce an outcome where that competition does not veer into conflict.

Edward Luce 22:02

It's one of the ways of stabilizing and I know you've worked on this a lot and spoken about it a lot. But one of the ways of stabilizing what is an inherently terrifying prospect of US China relations going wrong is having the Cold War style guardrails that, that were put in place after the Cuban Missile Crisis. We got Secretary Rice here, who when she was in your job in 2001, early into the bush 43 administration had that moment of tension where US pilots were forced down and essentially held hostage by the Chinese for several days. Even then, in a pre 911 era. That was a moment of great tension. Today seems to be a far higher likelihood given the traffic across the strait and the South China Sea, and the freedom of navigation patrols, etc. A fairly high likelihood of that happening and yet we still don't have any guardrails. What would it take to persuade the Chinese when you talk to Wang Yi? What does he say when you say we need guardrails? And does he just say no?

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Jake Sullivan 23:04

Well, I think one thing that the PRC likes to point out is to say, you know, the equivalent of this, this is not literally what he said, because I don't want to read out his conversation. So just to be careful that I'm not, you know, violating what we do inside the room. This is just kind of my characterization of the overall Chinese attitude on this which seems to be something along the lines of the following. If you wear a seatbelt in a car, you're going to be incented to drive faster and more crazy and then you'll have a crash. So in a way better not to have the seatbelt and we regard that as so that the concern about guardrails is guardrails means that you can act. The United States can act more, take on more risk, because there's some safety net under the high wire you're walking along or whatever other analogies I can mix while I'm up here. But But you understand the basic that's the basic logic of it. And what we have tried to explain is actually the seatbelt is a great analogy, because wearing seatbelts has dramatically lowered the costs and consequences of you know, car accidents, and is an inherently good thing in international relations as it is on the highway down the street. Fundamentally, the United States stands prepared to engage at every level of military to military communication to avoid mistake miscalculation escalation, and, frankly, the PRC does not and you've heard from Admiral Aquilino, at this conference yesterday, a real world example of where he's tried to engage his PRC counterparts, PLA counterparts and has been really unable to do so. And so from our perspective, this is about kind of basic responsibility. We're prepared to step up to our responsibility we believe the PRC should do the same. The fact that they haven't, I think is something that they need to answer for

Edward Luce 24:58

me to just put the Chinese case for a second. They're saying you've sanctioned their defense minister, Li Shangfu. And that's, that's their pretext. That's their reason for him not meeting Secretary Austin wouldn't it be pragmatic given the larger interests and risks involved just to say, okay, under our law, or under the Treasury Department's discretion, we sanctioned you, we're going to lift those sanctions because we don't want there to be any reason for you not to have military to military guardrails, hotlines, whatever it is that will reduce tension and increased transparency. Shouldn't you do Shouldn't you consider that?

Jake Sullivan 25:35

Couple of responses to that? First, at many other levels of the PLA military Ministry of Defense, you have officials on their side who are not sanctioned who are also not talking to their counterparts, so raises some questions about the extent to which this is the actual reason Secondly, many of us in the US government are sanctioned by the Russian government. I'm sanctioned by the Russian government, my colleagues across the national security. The Cabinet officials who sit on the National Security Council are all sanctioned by the Russian government. That would not stop us. From talking to the Russians if we had to do so for global stability and security. And we think a similar proposition should apply with respect to the PLA or the Ministry of Defense, but you

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know, they've chosen to take a different course, we regard the basic proposition of high level communication between our military officials to be as close as there is to a no brainer in geopolitics. And obviously, Beijing does not agree with that. But I think again, that's something that Beijing needs to speak to because we stand ready to do our part.

Edward Luce 26:41

So and I know early in the Biden administration, he had a call one of his calls with President Xi, and you gave the readout I think that they had agreed to present G had agreed that in future talks, we would cover strategic stability, which of course is code for nuclear weapons, the most key thing for information exchange between the US and China. That hasn't happened, right. How important is it that it does happen?

Jake Sullivan 27:07

A vital if you look right now at what China is doing with respect to the buildup of its nuclear capabilities, as well as a series of quite exotic forms of weaponry that have themselves nuclear capabilities, the need for basic risk reduction for an understanding of one another's doctrines, intentions, modes of operation is a cue. And one thing that I pointed out to my Chinese counterparts over the last two years, is at various points in the Ukraine crisis when we've seen nuclear saber rattling from the Russian side is we have known how to deal with that because we have decades of muscle memory with the Russians in working on Nuclear Risk Reduction, Strategic Arms Control, basic signaling, we do not have that with China and that is inherently destabilizing. That is something that we need to generate, through intensive dialogue between the US and China. I gave a speech at the Arms Control Association not long ago and basically said the United States here to remains fundamentally available for this dialogue. We hope at some point that that the Chinese side will choose to join us in that because again, this comes down to the basic responsibilities of nuclear powers. And it is a responsibility that we see Beijing not stepping up to right now.

Edward Luce 28:28

I mean, one of the reasons I emphasize in terms of dialogue Wang Yi is because Secretary Clinton's counterpart Qin Gang, who in fact when he was China's ambassador to the US Senate here would be on the stage this time last year, has not been seen in public for 26 days. And some of the rumors whether they're credible or not, I don't know but some of the rumors are fairly sinister. About what what fate other than sickness motive befallen him. Do you expect to meet him again?

Jake Sullivan 29:01

We don't know. We genuinely don't know

Edward Luce 29:02

Literally, there's no intelligence on this?

Jake Sullivan 29:05

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We don't know. All we know is that Secretary Blinken was meant to meet the foreign minister at the recent ASEAN conference in Indonesia. He ended up meeting with Wang Yi instead because Wang Yi he traveled in in the foreign minister stead and we have no other information.

Edward Luce 29:20

Okay, so I'm gonna leave a little bit of time for audience questions, but I want to get into the economic dimension of this relationship. You've given a very landmark speech at Brookings a few weeks ago about the new Washington consensus. So I guess, I mean, this is an important speech, I guess. And it built on the speech you gave last year away you characterize the restrictions on Chinese on our technology exports and so we got to quit making equipment manufacturing equipment, as a having a small yard, meaning it's not going to affect the broader trade spectrum and a high fence. Now, I believe you have understandably been visited by lots of very senior tech leaders, including Pascal Singer of Intel, who spoke to us here at this forum a couple of days ago. And his argument was, look, China's a third of our bottom line. We use that bottom line to fund research and development here in the United States so that we can remain cutting edge. You've been hearing a lot of these arguments. I imagine. That could be summarized as keep that yard small of those arguments that have hit home. How do you respond to them?

Jake Sullivan 30:35

I respond to them by saying yeah, we said small hearts small yard high fence, we meant small yard I agree. We have to keep it small. And if you look at the October 7 export controls, we are talking about a very small number of very high end chips that were covered by that along with the semiconductor manufacturing equipment you refer to the vast majority of sales of chips designed by the United States to China has continued unabated. It continues to this day it continues such that pack I singer could sit on the stage and say I'm getting a lot of my revenue from China because we have not controlled that the bilateral trade between the United States and China hit an all time high last year, last year. So from our perspective, continuing to focus on foundational technologies with national security applications inside a small yard. That will be our focus. And we will continue to prove out I believe over time that the vast majority of trade and interchange between the US and China will not be affected by those national security applications. But we also are not going to shy away from the basic proposition that US and allied technology should not be exploited to undermine us and allied security. And so we are going to continue to look at very targeted very specific restrictions on technology with national security and military applications and make judgments rigorously, carefully, methodically and yes, in deep consultation with our private sector and I had the opportunity to sit with some of the chip CEOs last week. We're not going to do this willy nilly or pell mell. We're going to do it very carefully. And that is what I believe we have proven out over the last two and a half years that will be how we approach things going forward as well.

Edward Luce 32:31

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It is fair to characterize the Chinese as thinking you're playing a zero sum game here that Ching Gong successors ambassador was here on the stage a couple of days ago and he had a very memorable analogy to well, this is a swimming competition where we're required to wear outdated swimwear and you're in speedos, which is a vivid analogy. And I'm doubt sorry about that. Yeah, no, but you're not you're not accountable for that analogy. Doubt is the speedos are made in China. But this is what they believe. Right? This is, this is what they believe. And so I guess I'm going to conclude before going to the audience with this sort of larger philosophical question about the end game with China. A lot of Cold War analogies are made but the difference is amongst a number of differences is that we could envisage the collapse of the Soviet Union because it was ideological. We weren't seeking to beat Russia. In the perspective of that time, we were seeking to defeat the ideological competitor, China. Is it is it about China's regime, this competition or is it just a permanent feature about China's size that we are going to face an indefinite geopolitical competition with China that has no sort of natural conclusion in the way the Cold War did or we could imagine it did at the time?

Jake Sullivan 33:52

I said before I came into government, and I believe that this is actually reflected in President Biden's thinking his approach on the question the PRC, we're not aiming towards an end state where at the end of it, it's all just over. We're going to have to live with the People's Republic of China as a feature of the international landscape indefinitely and we will have to learn to live together as major powers that is a basic strategic premise of our approach. And so instead of an end state, what we are looking for is to establish a steady state a steady state that is fundamentally favorable. To the interests and values of the United States and our allies and partners because we think that is a more stable, prosperous and secure world. That goes for everything from dealing with the largest peacetime military buildup in human history, which we're contending with from the PRC. To the domination of critical supply chains that create strategic dependencies that we are looking to move away from, to a series of other forms of aggression, coercion and intimidation that we will not shy away from working with allies to stand up against we will do all of those things and at the same time, as we have demonstrated over the course of the past few months, engage in diplomacy to manage the competitive aspects of the relationship, while we also look for areas where the United States and China can work together in service of the interests of our people, the people of the PRC, and the people of the world as a whole. So yes, I think this is going to be a feature of the international landscape out into the future. We recognize that we are prepared to manage that. And I believe my job as National Security Adviser with the direction of President Biden is to try to put the United States in the strongest possible position to manage that relationship effectively meaning strength at home, strength with allies, and a clarity of purpose on everything from the kinds of rules and norms that are being set from freedom of navigation to technology systems. ecosystems of trust, to the deployment of capital globally in a way that is transparent and in service of practical problem solving rather than coercion or intimidation. That's what we're working at every day. That's the core of our approach to China. And I will also just say with respect to the

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ambassador, it's interesting to hear him cry foul. When you look at a series of PRC policies, outbound investment restrictions, China has them export controls, China has them cyber enabled economic espionage, force technology transfer, the notion of him sitting here to say, all of a sudden America came out of the blue with some notion of unfair competition. That is a challenging thing for me to look at and say is a reasonable assessment net assessment of the circumstances in the relationship but I'm not here to recrimination. I'm here to say we've looked at certain behaviors on the part of the PRC, we want to do something about them. They look at certain things we do. We will explain why we are taking the steps we're taking to try to minimize the friction associated with them. And we will continue to work towards a stable effective relationship with China over the course of time

Edward Luce 37:14

to be fair to the ambassador, Steve Clemens was interviewing him and so you know, he offered a false analogy. So I did I was going to ask him a question about the Indra Modi and but I'm an unselfish person and I realized I'm stealing audience time. So yeah, if you if you could put your hands up. The lady at the towards the back there.

Audience question 1 37:33

My name is Oleksandra Matviichuk. I'm a Ukrainian human rights lawyer. I'm very grateful to hear your statement that United States of America will continue to provide support to Ukraine which we need to win. And that is why my question is about when the United States of America will start to teach Ukrainian pilots how to use F 16. The problem is that we lost them. Ukrainian pilot Ladislav severely of last year was in the United States of America. He explained that they they use the planes with a very short distance for identification of other planes in the sky. And that is why Russian planes hit them with rockets much more quicker than they even able to identify them. Ladislav was killed in June this year. He didn't wait. But we still have other pilots who are alive and who are waiting and who want to learn how to use F 16. So the question is when it's happened when United States of America will teach Ukrainian pilots

Jake Sullivan 39:02

so first, thank you, to you personally for your work on behalf of your country and on behalf of human rights and for your courage and bravery. And at the g7 in Hiroshima, President Biden announced that the United States was going to work with allies and partners in NATO who also have f6 teams to begin a process of training Ukrainian pilots. We have been working over the course of the past several weeks to put in place that training program and there are a number of elements to that. There is the the more straightforward pieces like translating the the necessary manuals into Ukrainian there are the more complicated pieces like creating the technical platforms to be able to conduct this training. as rapidly as possible because the typical training for f 16 pilots takes a very long time and we are trying to accelerate it but that requires technical adjustments. So we are currently in the process of working with our colleagues in the Netherlands, in Romania in Denmark. And Norway and other countries to establish the

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locations to identify the pilots and to begin the training. I cannot give you a precise date. But I can tell you this as a matter of weeks. It is not a matter of months, and that it's not because we're just waiting until August to start arbitrarily. It's because every day people are getting up at the Pentagon go into work reporting all the way up to the Secretary of Defense and to me on the progress of putting in place what is necessary to do a very complex task which is the rapid training of pilots on F six teams so they can be transferred and got and put into the fight that work is ongoing as we speak today Friday. And it will continue until we can actually have the first Ukrainian in a cockpit of an F 16 at a base in Europe, which is currently being prepared actively, rapidly. With our with our with our NATO allies.

Edward Luce 41:06

So talk shows two minutes left, right, Jake. That's right. Yeah, yeah. The gentleman there. Could you make it shorter than a tweet this question?

Audience question 2 41:20

Thank you, Stephen Shapiro from the Atlantic Council and Ben's, I want to address the production question that you raised and the Rosie the Riveter analogy. There is on the books a statute the defense production Act, which would cut contract time and enable the the administration to direct all kinds of activity by the private sector with respect to production. I know that there's there are other bottlenecks, but this is this is one that would cut through a great deal. It was used 99 times in the pandemic to produce gloves and masks. It's been used once in this war for the purpose of permitting the seizure of Russian vessels, never for the production of ammunition. This isn't I wonder if we could address that. Okay.

Jake Sullivan 42:00

So, the Secretary of Defense president united states have indicated we will use any tool and authority including the defense production act, if it will speed up the production of ammunition at present. The DPA is not the issue, issuing a DPA declaration would not from our perspective, speed up production, if we decided it would or could, we would use it tomorrow. We are actively working as rapidly as possible to build out the production lines for 155. We do not want to lose a day and there is not a tool authority or dollar that we're going to set on the sidelines to not being able to do that. I will tell you I personally sit in my office every morning and spend 30 minutes on 155 ammunition. So I get a little passionate about this because the suggestion that we're like leaving something on the shelf, to speed this along to get the Ukrainians the single capability they need more than any other capability. 155 Snap correct. We are trying to do everything we humanly can and we are looking at a series of tools and authorities to continue to use it. But the fact is that we the challenges that we have in terms of speeding that production, a lie and thinks that the defense production act simply can't solve. That being said, I go back and ask the question every day, is there another authority, another use of a tool that could do this? If there were we would do it?

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Edward Luce 43:26

Well, that seems like an appropriate note to end well. It's been a really wide ranging, very interesting conversation. Thank you very much.