

Closing Remarks

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Closing Remarks

00:06: Ladies and gentlemen, that brings us to the very end of the Aspen Security Forum. So I'm gonna turn it over now to Nick to sum up all of the great things that we've learned.

00:19: Well, let's try to do this in less than five hours. Now just for people, we're gonna take just a couple of minutes to... Some reflections and some thank you on you. Anya, when I think of these last three days, 28 panels, speakers from all over the world taking on the biggest issues, I just have three reflections very briefly; number one, we are living in uniquely challenging times. Especially here in the United States. We have an epidemic of crisis proportions, a pandemic, David Leonhardt's article in the New York Times this morning says, "Of all major nations, the United States has fared worse." And so we Americans really have to reflect, and what it's gonna take to stop the pandemic in a way that protects our society and protects our people.

01:08: We are experiencing a terrible recession, and as Larry Summer said this morning, "It's not gonna be a V shape recovery, it may be a K shape recovery. The racial crisis, which is testing us to the core as to who we are as a people, and a leadership crisis in Washington, which is a profound in and it's gonna be settled on November 3rd, in I think what is undoubtedly the most important election of our lifetime.

01:36: The second point is, expect profound change. That's what I took away from Laurie Garrett just an hour and a half ago. She said that in every major pandemic in modern history, societies have been completely altered. And why wouldn't that be the case? As Laurie and David Leonhardt reminded us, in catechisms like global wars and like pandemics, we see profound societal, technological, political change. That was the case of the first World War, four empires collapsed. That was the case of the second World War, when the United States emerged from the ruins of that war as a global power, and on August 6, 1945, 75 years ago today, the United States introduced atomic weapons, atomic bomb. Eventually a nuclear arsenal to the rest of the world.

02:30: Third, it's gonna require leadership. Good leadership, far-sighted leadership, caring leadership, and it's gonna require an innovative spirit in our citizens to get through these four crises, for countries around the world, it's gonna require leadership at all levels, at a time when the authoritarian powers are... They have the bit in their teeth, china and Russia especially, when they feel self-confident about their prospects, we who live in democratic countries have to respond, and we have to respond with a greater deal of self-confidence than we're doing right now. And that comes down to leadership. So, you can't sum up a conference like this, 28 panels, three days, hundreds of experts, thousands of people who have been online with us from all around the world, and we appreciate that. I guess I'd say, Anya, this re-confirms for me, and I'm sure it does for you, and I know it does for Condi Rice and Joe Nye, our co-chairs.

03:29: The Aspen Security Forum, the Aspen Strategy Group, our mission is suited for these times. We need to engage each other, we need to address these problems head-on, we need to trust in democracy, and we must have that optimistic spirit that has characterized Americans throughout our history, that we can overcome these problems. And certainly, as Condi said in the very first interview with Peter Baker, three days ago, Tuesday morning... It seemed like three years ago...

Closing Remarks

03:57: She reminded us, there is an argument to be made that the Great Depression and the second World War were a greater test for America. And the Civil War was certainly a more profound, and existential and meaningful test for America. And in some ways, 1968, with the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy and race riots and Vietnam war riots, and a profound generation gap. And greater violence on the streets was a more difficult test for America, but with that in mind, we're facing big obstacles we can succeed with leadership and with vision.

04:38: Now I wanna thank you, you've been such a great partner in this process, and I've enjoyed listening to all your interviews and I wanna thank you... And why don't you say a few words, then we're gonna bring final act bring out, and ask our great team to sign on, show themselves, we'll thank them all as a group and individually. But over to you, Anya.

04:57: You're ready to sign on to take a bow? First, I wanna say, Nick, I agree with all that wholeheartedly. It has been an amazing three days. A lot of conversation, a lot of different perspectives from around the globe, from Greece to Australia, to Singapore to India, we really had a lot of conversations with our international partners. Some of them have reached out to us behind-the-scenes to say they learned a lot from hearing the American thinking on all of these critical issues. And of course, as Aspen always is we've tried to be very strictly bi-partisan, and I think there were a lot of opportunities both to air differences, between members of the Trump administration and people who are working on the Biden campaign and may be going into a Biden administration, if there is one.

05:50: And also some surprising agreements, I have to say I was very pleasantly surprised to hear Secretary of Defense Mark Esper talking about the return on investment on our defense dollars aren't high enough, and we need to do better, we need to innovate in defense. Michelle Florina than echoed those comments, as did this last panel. You had a lot of people talking about the importance of diversity and inclusion.

06:14: Yeah.

06:14: Those are all important areas of agreement and we need to start acting on them. And I just wanna close by coming back to, why do we do this? Why did we spend three days talking about all parts of the world? And I think I was just touched by the fact that by complete chance, today, the last day of the Aspen Security Forum, is the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

06:38: Yeah.

06:38: And the reminder of that tragedy, 'cause it was a tragedy, even though it ended the second World war for us, and all of those deaths and all of the refugees you see now, all of the deaths from COVID. Why are we in this business? We're in this business to allow people to have safe, prosperous lives, not lose their lives to war, and we're in this to make more peace. So I hope you'll all join us in that mission, I know our team has. And now, without further ado, we wanna introduce them. So please, if you could all turn on your cameras, we would love to introduce you all because this is the team that made it all happened behind the scenes, working 18-hour days with their

Closing Remarks

COVID masks.

[laughter]

07:26: There's John.

07:31: Thank you to Kathleen. Thank you to Tobias. I don't see Emily, but I'm sure she's there. Thank you to Jon Hogan, who's been such a big part of this. Thank you to Lea Potunis. Thank you a Deb Cunningham. The great Neve King, making her Aspen debut this week. Have we missed anybody? I hope not. I think...

07:52: Well There's all the wonderful Aspen AV team Ben, and all of your colleagues, you guys have been indefatigable. [chuckle] Yeah, you're doing something entirely new, you made it happen. Congratulations, John Pervious and the entire Aspen Comms team, that has helped us out even late at night, you guys have just all been spectacular. So thank you. Thank you to the Aspen Institute. And congratulations all on a fantastic conference.

[applause]

08:21: This is a team effort, so we thank everybody at Aspen. We thank Dan Porterfield, the president and CEO. We thank Elliot Gerson. We thank everybody who's believed in the Aspen Institute. You all know the old saying, next year in Jerusalem... Let us say, let us have a vaccine next year in Aspen. Thanks so much, everybody.

08:44: Here's to that. Next year in Aspen.

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