

RICHARD NIXON
FOUNDATION

GRAND STRATEGY SUMMIT

WASHINGTON, DC

2024 STRATEGY SUMMARY

A Recap of the Richard Nixon Foundation's
Grand Strategy Summit

Convened on September 25, 2024 in Washington, D.C.

2024 Schedule

WEDNESDAY
Sept 25



9:00 AM

**Dinner and
Opening Remarks**

Ambassador (Ret.) Robert C. O'Brien
in-conversation with Jim Byron

9:45 AM

**Building a More
Just Society at Home**

Robert Wilkie
Alex Wong
Matthew Continetti, moderator

11:00 AM

**Theaters of War
and Great Power
Competition**

Carrie Filipetti
Matthew Pottinger
Nadia Schadlow
Eli Lake, moderator



12:15 PM

**Luncheon
Keynote Speaker**

General (Ret.) Keith Kellogg
in-conversation with Katie Pavlich

1:00 PM

**Strengthening
America's Alliances
in the Free World**

Amb. (Ret.) Kelley E. Currie
Christopher Nixon Cox
Aaron MacLean, moderator



2:15 PM

**Artificial Intelligence
and Energy Policy as
Grand Strategy**

Mark Mills
Brian J. Cavanaugh
Arthur Herman, moderator

Above Top: Ambassador Robert C. O'Brien, Chairman of the Nixon Foundation Board of Directors, greets Director Emeritus Everett Alvarez and his wife, Tammy Alvarez. **Middle:** Christopher Nixon Cox, grandson of President and Mrs. Nixon and Richard Nixon Foundation Board Member, participating in the panel on America's alliances. **Bottom:** Nixon Foundation Board Member Callista Gingrich with her husband Newt Gingrich, 50th Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and Nixon Foundation Board Member Marlene Malek (center).

RICHARD NIXON FOUNDATION
GRAND STRATEGY SUMMIT

A Plan for Tomorrow's Peace



The Richard Nixon Foundation launched the Grand Strategy Summit in 2022 to try and live up to RN's calls for the United States to develop a "peace not just for our generation, but for future generations," by convening discussions in our nation's capital on long-term considerations of national interest, bolstering America's defenses, honoring commitments to allies, and reducing erratic vacillations in policy.

Such themes are quintessentially Nixonian. And the Summit is now an annual platform for senior officials in and out of government, business leaders, and media influencers to contribute to this aspirational – but daunting– challenge for the West.

Equally important is that the Summit engages those across our country and around the world, offering a way for Americans to think about their country's unique global role and for those living elsewhere to stay informed.

I wrote shortly after the Summit that "President Nixon was a student of history and a practiced Cold Warrior, the combination of which gave him a unique ability to look at the global chessboard decades into the future —what he called the 'long view'— and predict how peace would eventually be disrupted. Then plan to get ahead of it."

That's what the Grand Strategy Summit aims to do: plan for tomorrow's peace.

Finally, and notably, several participants in past Grand Strategy Summits are joining the Trump administration, including **Elbridge Colby** as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, **General (Ret.) Keith Kellogg** as Special Envoy for Ukraine and Russia, **Morgan Ortagus** as Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for Middle East Peace, **Rep. Mike Waltz** as United States National Security Advisor, and **Alex Wong** as Principal Deputy National Security Advisor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Byron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JIM BYRON, PRESIDENT AND CEO



2024 Participants



Brian J. Cavanaugh,
Senior Vice President,
American Global
Strategies LLC



Matthew Continetti,
Director of Domestic
Policy at the American
Enterprise Institute



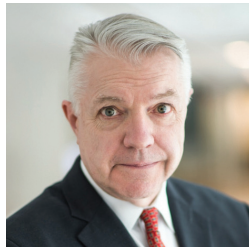
Christopher Nixon Cox,
CEO of Lightswitch
Capital



Kelley E. Currie,
Former U.S. Ambassador
to the UN Economic and
Social Council



Carrie Filipetti,
Executive Director,
Vandenberg Coalition



Arthur Herman,
Senior Fellow, Hudson
Institute



Keith Kellogg,
Retired three-star
General, Co-chair, Center
for American Security
at AFPI



Eli Lake,
Host of Re-Education
Podcast and Free Press
contributor



Aaron MacLean,
Host of the School of
War podcast



Mark Mills,
Director of the
National Center for
Energy Analytics



Robert C. O'Brien,
27th National Security
Advisor



Katie Pavlich,
Fox News Contributor



Matthew Pottinger,
Former Deputy National
Security Advisor



Nadia Schadlow,
Senior Fellow, Hudson
Institute



Robert Wilkie,
10th Secretary of
Veterans Affairs, Under
Secretary of Defense,
2017-2018



Alex Wong,
Former Deputy
Assistant Secretary of
State for North Korea

Richard Nixon Foundation Grand Strategy Summit

Washington, D.C. • September 25, 2024

The Richard Nixon Foundation’s annual Grand Strategy Summit convened on September 25, 2024 in Washington, D.C. More than 200 foreign diplomats, policy makers and advisors from the Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden Administrations along with members of Congress, scholars, journalists, and students met in the ballroom of the Ritz Carlton.

Over the course of the Summit, those in the audience – and thousands more watching the live stream – heard some of America’s most respected and experienced foreign policy figures discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the United States and how they might be addressed as part of a grand strategy for America’s foreign policy.

Bringing Civics Lessons to Life: Student Delegates Experience America’s Capital

Ten students from the business honors program at California State University, Fullerton, traveled across the country to participate in a special delegation to see America’s government in action. For many of the participants, this was their first time to the nation’s capital and this unique program, tailored for business students, offered tangible civics lessons with a concentration on understanding regulatory environments.

In addition to participating in the Grand Strategy Summit, the student delegation went on behind-the-scenes tours of the Supreme Court, U.S. Capitol, National Archives and the International Spy Museum. Highlights of the experience were getting to sit down with clerks of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and meeting Congresswoman Young Kim, who represents the 40th District in California. In dialogue with the students, Congresswoman Kim explained her congressional roles including serving on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and asked the students their thoughts about America’s role on the world stage.

This immersive experience is an annual component of the Grand Strategy Summit with plans to expand the program to make it available to more college students.





Opening Remarks

Ambassador Robert C. O'Brien—27th National Security Advisor to the President, 2019-2021. Former Special Envoy for Hostage Affairs, U.S. Representative to the UN General Assembly and Chairman of the Richard Nixon Foundation.

Jim Byron—President and CEO of the Richard Nixon Foundation.

The Summit opened with a discussion between Ambassador O'Brien and Mr. Byron. O'Brien began by introducing a brief video clip of President Nixon discussing his approach to foreign policy and over the course of their wide-ranging discussion, O'Brien reflected on the Nixon foreign policy record. He compared President Nixon's success in bringing the war in Vietnam to an honorable conclusion with the chaotic American withdrawal from Afghanistan. He also reminded the attendees of the prescient observation President Nixon made in 1992, that Russia was in danger of falling into a new despotism.

O'Brien observed that leaders around the world are deeply concerned about the rise of a new axis of authoritarianism consisting of China, Russia, and Iran, seeking to displace the United States and the West as the dominant power in the world. Although some see the United States in decline, the Ambassador stated that America was still strong but was suffering under a period of weak leadership.

That perceived weakness invites adversaries to challenge and disheartens allies and partners.

Byron asked about the prospects of the Iranian people choosing their own leaders. O'Brien responded that the United States should not attempt nation building, but should always stand as a beacon of hope to the people of Iran and other peoples living under authoritarian regimes.

Byron asked if the alliances among the United States and our allies in Asia created, in effect, an Asian version of NATO. O'Brien praised the Biden Administration for finishing an effort begun in the Trump Administration to establish a trilateral alliance among the United States, Japan, and South Korea. He also observed that the AUKUS partnership among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States has put an important military infrastructure in place.

The discussion concluded with an analysis of the current state of the United States military. O'Brien called for strengthening the Navy; bolstering recruitment efforts; fixing procurement, which he called "a disaster;" and calling on the Pentagon to embrace the entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector to modernize its war fighting capacity.

Over the course of their half-hour discussion, O'Brien and Byron set the stage for the balance of the Summit's program.



Scan the QR code
to watch the opening
remarks



Building a More Just Society at Home

Panelists:

- **Robert Wilkie**, 10th U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Under Secretary of Defense (2017-18)
- **Alex Wong**, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for North Korea
- **Matthew Continetti**, moderator, Director of Domestic Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute

The panel opened with a brief video clip of President Nixon saying that any nation cannot assert itself abroad unless it is strong at home.

Discussion began by recalling President Nixon's efforts to build a strong America at home through such far-reaching efforts at reforming welfare, pursuing energy independence, and advancing civil rights. The former president's 1992 book, *Seize the Moment*, was cited as providing a still relevant vision for welfare reform, school choice, and the development of non-college career pathways for high school students.

The panelists agreed that a strong and effective foreign policy requires a strong domestic society. They talked about the need to resist the growing Balkanization of American society, the importance of law and order, and the necessity of a strategic refocus of immigration policy to attract immigrants who can strengthen America.

They also discussed the need for policies that uplift the American family, policies that are viewed through the strategic lens of making the United States stronger.



Scan the QR code to watch the panel discussion



Theaters of War and Great Power Competition

Panelists:

- **Nadia Schadlow**, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institution
- **Matt Pottinger**, Deputy National Security Advisor (2019-21)
- **Carrie Filipetti**, Executive Director, Vandenberg Coalition
- **Eli Lake**, moderator, Host, Re-Education Podcast

The panel began with a video clip of former President Nixon asserting that primary responsibility for the security of the country rests with the president of the United States.

The panel began by considering whether the concept of “balance of power” is applicable today, or rather if the better way to ensure a more stable world is for the United States to develop advantages over other powers.

The panelists observed that the United States was no longer pursuing the goal of maintaining a preponderance of power. They questioned whether a rules-based system is even possible with nations such as Russia and China adopting rules of behavior that are sowing chaos on the global stage. They agreed that deterrence of foreign adversaries requires both robust American military power and the willingness to act as a great power. Absent both of those imperatives, Russia, China, and Iran will continue to challenge Western interests across the world.



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RICHARD NIXON FOUNDATION GRAND STRATEGY SUMMIT

WASHINGTON, DC



Luncheon Keynote – General Keith Kellogg in-Conversation with Katie Pavlich

General Keith Kellogg (US Army, Retired) –
Co-chair, Center for American Security at AFPI
Katie Pavlich – Fox News Contributor

In a wide-ranging conversation, General Kellogg and Ms. Pavlich discussed the importance of the strategic use of American power in support of America's national interests around the world.

The General observed that, in recent years, the United States has lacked a strategy to use its power and influence to promote peace and stability in the Middle East. He said a lack of consistent American resolve in its support of Israel has encouraged both Hamas and Hezbollah – terrorist proxies of Iran – to attack Israel, evidence that American power is not acting as a deterrent against its adversaries.

The General noted the power of personal relationships in international negotiations, namely between the president

of the United States and other world leaders (both allies and adversaries) to deter aggression against American interests.

The General observed that sometimes economic sanctions and diplomacy take too long to address an emerging or immediate threat to American interests. In such cases, the use of military force – or perception of use of force – might be required.

Pavlich asked why the United States has to be a leader in the world. The General replied that while our leaders must put America's interests first, that does not mean that the United States should be an isolationist power. America must be engaged with

the world to protect its interests and those of its allies, and must have a clear strategy for engagement in different spheres of influence.



Scan the QR code to watch
the keynote remarks



Strengthening America’s Alliances in the Free World

Panelists:

- **Christopher Nixon Cox**, CEO, Lightswitch Capital
- **Amb. Kelley Currie**, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Economic and Social Council
- **Aaron MacLean**, moderator, Host, School of War Podcast

The panel discussed Richard Nixon’s views on alliances. Mr. Cox observed that President Nixon devoted much of his presidency to strengthening America’s alliances, but that such alliances need to be re-evaluated from time to time based on the best interests of the United States.

Just as importantly, he noted, President Nixon also believed that the United States should consider how to break apart her adversaries’ alliances.

Panelists also considered how the United States should continue to work with NATO, what Europe’s role should be in inhibiting China’s efforts to challenge the United States

as a global superpower, how to blunt Iran’s support for terrorist proxies across much of the Middle East, and what America’s approach should be toward the Global South.

The panel concluded by discussing how to weaken what some call “The Axis of Chaos” – the alliances among China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. The panel all agreed that the United States is not doing enough to make the Axis of Chaos pay a serious price for its efforts to destabilize nations that pursue democratic values.



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Artificial Intelligence and Energy Policy as Grand Strategy

Panelists:

- **Mark Mills**, Director, National Center for Energy Analytics
- **Brian J. Cavanaugh**, Senior Vice President, American Global Strategies LLC
- **Arthur Herman**, *moderator*, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

The Summit's final panel explored how developing strategic uses of Artificial Intelligence and energy are necessary elements of American foreign and domestic policy.

The panel opened with a video clip of President Nixon's November 7, 1973 announcement of "Project Independence," a strategy to achieve United States energy independence. The panel agreed that Nixon's proposal was farsighted, but it did not take full effect and is part of the reason why the United States currently lacks a coherent, long-term energy strategy to make the United States stronger.

Panelists discussed the growth in the demand for increased production of electricity due to the rapid growth of computing power needed for cloud services. They expressed concern that if the United States does not continue to increase its supply of energy, the data banks needed to power artificial intelligence will be built elsewhere. For the United States to lead the world in artificial intelligence will require more energy than the United States currently generates.

The panelists all agreed that over-regulation of the energy sector is hampering the development of artificial intelligence in the United States. American policymakers must acknowledge that fossil fuels will not soon be replaced by cleaner sources. Greater innovation, driven by the private sector, will drive the next advances in energy and artificial intelligence. The government needs a grand strategy for both energy and artificial intelligence that acknowledges these realities.



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RICHARD NIXON FOUNDATION
GRAND STRATEGY SUMMIT
WASHINGTON, DC

October 21 & 22, 2025
at the Ritz Carlton

“We should commit ourselves to a world role not just to keep the world from becoming worse but to make it better. We need to restore our faith in our ideas, in our destiny, and in ourselves. We exist for more than hedonistic self-satisfaction. We are here to make history, neither to ignore the past nor to turn back to the past, but to move forward in a way that opens up new vistas for the future.”

—Richard Nixon, *Seize the Moment*, 1992

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