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WHAT WILL KEEP A U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY UP AT NIGHT THROUGH THE NEXT DECADE?

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. MURADIAN: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome, good afternoon. Thanks very much for joining us. My name is Vago Muradian, I'm the editor of *Defense News* and the host of *This Week in Defense News.* And our guest today needs no introduction. Dr. Harold Brown. I want to thank Dr. Brown and his co-author, Joyce Winslow, and the Brookings Institution for facilitating today's discussion.

I'm honored for a couple of reasons. I mean, the first is I've long admired Dr. Brown for his record of achievement. I mean, I think it's --- I think few would argue that few people were better-equipped to be Secretary of Defense at the time that they took over the job. Nor, frankly, more effectively and more actively shaped the military that we have today in terms of all the technological revolutions, from the advent of the thermonuclear weapons all the way to GPS to precision strikes to stealth, and so many other capabilities developed under his watch, whether he was at Livermore Lab or whether he was DDR and E, whether he was Air Force Secretary, or whether he was Secretary of Defense.

I'm also honored because he was --- his secretaryship coincided with me as a fellow Upper West Side-er, although I have to say as an 11-year old Upper West Side-er at the time who came to full consciousness of the defense and foreign policy world. So, I will not draw on any of my lessons from that tenure, sir, and merely start --- we're going to start with me asking some questions and then opening it up to the floor, and then give all of you an opportunity to go to the back and buy a copy of a very good book that I certainly enjoyed, and maybe even get it signed, free of charge, actually. So, it's a deal really at twice the price. And I get no cut of it, frankly, as an agent. So, we'll just move right into the questioning.

Sir, I'd like to start with the budget. In your book you make clear that DoD has already cut $500 billion from defense spending under the Budget Control Act ---

MR. BROWN: Over 10 years.

MR. MURADIAN: --- over 10 years. And that another cut of equal magnitude through sequestration, you argued at the time that before sequestration became a reality would become a very bad thing. And yet, despite the military leadership saying it was a bad thing, it's happened nonetheless. Why shouldn't defense spending be cut by another $500 billion? And if it does have to be cut, what's the best way to cut it?

MR. BROWN: Clearly, we're on the road to cutting another $500 billion over 10 years, although only the first year is really set in stone, and my book failed to prevent that from happening. (Laughter)

MR. MURADIAN: Maybe it's because you were too thoughtful and measured in the way ---

MR. BROWN: No.

MR. MURADIAN: --- you made your case?

MR. BROWN: No. I think that --- I still believe that this next $500 billion, $50 billion a year over 10 years, is going to be damaging. It could be less damaging if steps are taken to mitigate the damage, but we will have less military capability at a time when the threats remain real. They're not existential in the way that the competition with the Soviet Union was or could have been, but they could be very damaging to U.S. security and to the well-being of individual citizens.

How should we deal with it? Well, the first $50 billion on top of the previous $500 million is going to go into effect, and it will be met, I think, largely by

personnel cuts and by postponing equipment modernization. Part of the problem is that canceling programs, even programs that ought to be canceled, doesn't produce an immediate savings because procurement spreads out its expenditure over a long period and you don't get the full benefit in the first year. So, I think what will happen is that there will be personnel cuts. I think land forces in particular will be cut, and I think that some programs will be postponed. That's not the best way to go at it.

There are ways to deal with this that I think would be considerably less damaging. For example, I give some examples in the book. There are clearly too many levels of management in the Defense Department. I propose, for example, eliminating the secretaries of the military departments. Now, that's not a large number of people. That's not where the money would get saved. The money would get saved by reducing the delays and the complications of having additional levels of management, which in each service duplicates a civilian layer, the secretariat, over the senior military layer, that of the chief of staff. There's an example.

Another example is something that is a good change but has perhaps blossomed into some waste, and that is the emphasis on the unified and specified commands, which really do the fighting and do the operations, unlike the services which essentially are the support functions. These are the Pacific Command, for example, the Southern Command, the geographical commands and functional commands.

What's happened is that they have taken on a big job and what they've done is, they've in many cases established Washington staffs, essentially to be their lobbies. That's duplicative. Those can be cut.

I think some programs can be cancelled, or at least reduced. I would reduce the F-35 program, for example, substantially. I think --- well, those are just some

examples. How much can we save by doing that? I think we probably can save most of that --- much of that $50 billion the first year. Whether we can actually manage the rest of the $500 billion over 10 years by doing these things, I'm not sure. And in that --- in fact, I doubt it. In that case, we will probably have to cut some activities. I think our forces in Europe can probably be reduced further, and I think that will certainly have to be done if there is really to be a pivot to Asia, for example.

MR. MURADIAN: Let me take you to the reform question first, though, because one of the things you did in becoming Secretary of Defense was try to reduce staff functions, to shorten lines of control, to be able to operate the place more effectively, and that kind of thing always raises a hue and cry. What are some of the incentives, and politically how do you engineer in order to be able to get that reduction in overhead that everybody said is squandering resources?

MRH Well, indeed that's the $500 billion question because the very same members of Congress who were willing to see the $500 billion cut are going to complain and, in fact, prevent some of the things that are necessary to meet that cut. For example, over 10 years we can probably save quite a lot of money by closing some bases. Unfortunately, you don't save it in the first year, it actually costs you more, but over 10 years you do save by closing bases.

But every congressman who said, “Cut defense,” means, “Cut defense outside of my district,” right? (Laughter) Now, what's the solution? I'm not sure there is one, but I think that the President, I think, should make a stronger case whenever something like that happens. And I'm not sure that that will take place. We'll see.

MR. MURADIAN: Secretary Hagel launched his strategic choices in management review that's due at the end of this month that's going to be shaping the

quadrennial defense review, that's the comp. And there are some folks who are looking at this as justification in order to cut another $52 billion next year. There are other people that are saying that, no, this is going to be a genuine attempt to try to find where to make some of these strategic choices at the end of the day.

There are those who say if we do this right --- and you even suggested it --- that if we get rid of the bloat, then we would be able to perhaps do as much on less money. Can we spend less money? Or does spending less money mean, ultimately, given the politics of this that we're just going to get less, and what are some of the big thinking things we may have to do, obligation and commitment-wise around the world?

MR. BROWN: It's not inevitable that the cut will result in less capability, but it's very likely for the reasons that I said. And I think we have to look at two different pieces of this.

One is the strategic piece. For example, having less of a footprint in Europe, for example. And perhaps even encouraging some of our allies to be more efficient. I mean, bad as we are at waste and mistakes, most of them are worse.

MR. MURADIAN: Just multiplied over 28 different countries.

MR. BROWN: Yes. So, difference in strategy, difference in allocation of forces. I mean, for example, not only pulling back --- not only reducing U.S. bases but reducing permanent bases overseas and replacing that activity with occasional deployments into host country bases, essentially. And that's going to be, I think, especially important in the Pacific. So, that's one level.

I don't think that we can reduce our commitments to allies in the Pacific, but I do think that we can probably reduce some of our commitments or some of our deployments, certainly avoiding future wars in the Middle East, Persian Gulf area, for

example. So, that's the strategic level.

But then separately, there is the matter of how efficiently we run our own military, and that's what I've been talking about just a while ago. And I go into considerable detail in the book.

MR. MURADIAN: Do we need --- we didn't talk about this earlier, but you're a believer in the strategic triad. And there are some folks who say we should go to a dyad of maintain the submarine-launched missiles that are more survivable, some would argue, than land-based systems, and go with a bomber force --- a nuclear-capable bomber force and get rid of the land-based ICBMs. Is that a good idea, or not?

MR. BROWN: Well, the land-based ICBMs perhaps are the most excess in terms of providing additional capability, but they're also the cheapest. So that you probably can get by at a lower overall cost with a triad than with a dyad because the one that you'd eliminate is the one that costs the least amount of money, and in general what you find when you analyze these systems is that the minimum overall cost is a mix of the three.

We are due to have a new generation of submarine --- of ballistic missile submarines. Those are going to be enormously expensive, and they're being pushed perhaps a year ahead of the time that they really need to be --- the current generation really needs to be replaced. Apparently, 30 years is as long as a submarine is considered viable, although interestingly enough we have bomber aircraft that are now 50-odd years old and are still flying. It must be the salt that does it. (Laughter)

So, if you think about it, just delaying the submarine replacements by a year or two probably would save more money than phasing out the land-based ballistic missiles.

MR. MURADIAN: Well, in --- so far there's been a remarkable amount of comedy among the service chiefs that folks expect will not last, particularly deeper cuts. If you were going to prioritize, say, the submarine, the JSF, the long-range bomber, which one of the programs or the re-fueling aircraft or what have you --- which are the ones that would be priority ones that you would protect and what are the ones you would be willing to take more risks on?

MR. BROWN: Well, I would protect the long-range bomber simply because overseas bases are going to be come more and more vulnerable, and that means that the tactical aircraft are going to be less universally useable. Well, they'll still be very important but there're going to be more and more circumstances under which we are going to want to operate from domestic bases when it comes to aircraft --- to strike aircraft.

MR. MURADIAN: So you would have that be a big aircraft with transcontinental range and large payload?

MR. BROWN: Yes, and I think it can be a manned aircraft rather modest --- well, minor, incremental cost. So, I would push that one.

I would --- as I say, I would ease off somewhat on the tactical aircraft.

MR. MURADIAN: Among the threats that folks are looking at and saying, for example, the bomber is so important, the issue comes to China. And you have a long history with China. The nation is an absolutely critical trading partner for the United States, but that doesn't mean the conflict hasn't erupted between rising powers, even when they're good and close trading partners. As you note, given a lot of historic examples in the book. It also goes back to the book. I'm going to try to mention the book as many times as I can while I'm up here.

Beijing has --- is using this wealth and developing a military capability that it's increasingly using to try to bully its neighbors. Even when General Dempsey was in Beijing, there was the issue over the Senkakus. The latest American official to sort of be upstaged by his hosts. For good measure, the Chinese sent a unit into India into disputed territory there. They've managed to irritate both Indonesia and Malaysia, that have been generally warmer toward Beijing than not.

How --- to continue to bully the Philippines for example. And so a large part of the pivot is obviously reassuring folks, but at the same time both Dempsey and Hagel have told Beijing, look, if shooting starts between you and Japan we've got to back Japan. And then the Japanese have come out of their shell and basically said, you know, we're willing to fight over the Senkakus, which is a pretty dramatic thing for Japanese guys to say.

What's the outlook here? And how --- what's the right way to be balancing China's ambitions and its interests with our interests and our obligations so that we mutually manage to avoid a conflict?

MR. BROWN: China is a rising power, and rising powers push their neighbors around. The U.S. did it when it was a rising power, and we can expect China to do the same thing.

The neighbors then turn to someone else for help, and we're the someone they've turned to, and I think it is important for us to support them. But at the same time, keep them from provoking China. There's been some of that, actually, as well. I think that the U.S.-China relationship is going to define the next 50 years, and I think that rising powers have, in the past, come into conflict with the status quo power, which is what the U.S. is, the existing dominant world power.

The existence of nuclear weapons on both sides has the effect both of causing them to think carefully about getting into military conflict and making military conflict less likely, but catastrophic if it happens. And that's the trade that we're essentially stuck with, and so long as we and the Chinese both realize it I think we may be able to come through this all right, without a massive conflict.

How do we deal with it in the meantime? I think we have to be very careful, but at the same time we have to make it clear to the Chinese that we have interests that we're going to defend in the Western Pacific, and that we will stand by our allies at the same time that we tell our allies that the Chinese are going to become more and more important in the region.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the Chinese depend on us for markets and we depend on the Chinese for financing. As I say in the book, the parallel situation --- not identical --- was that before World War I France and Germany, their biggest trading partners. That didn't prevent a war. I think it will not prevent, in this case, between the U.S. and China lots of conflict, but I think that doesn't necessarily need to lead to war.

Part of our problem, I think, at the moment is that the Chinese are not only pushing their neighbors around, they're feeling their oats and they see the United States as a declining power. I think they're mistaken in that, at least I --- well, I hope they're mistaken and I think there's no need for them to be right. That depends on us, and I think that they may be surprised as the U.S. recovers, which it will do.

They're in --- they have their own problems, and I think we sometimes underestimate those problems.

MR. MURADIAN: From your standpoint, what are they? I mean, for

example, almost everything is about making sure that growth continues and they maintain control, which is --- it's a fear of dropping the marbles, I guess, and losing them all.

MR. BROWN: Look. They're 1.2 billion people. That makes it awfully hard to exercise central control and yet, you know, they're an authoritarian state run by the party, except that they don't --- they're not able to run everything. And I'm sure that the Chinese leadership is equally directed at continuing growth and preventing unrest. That's not an easy thing for them to do.

I think mostly they're concentrating --- the leadership is concentrating on internal matters, but as part of that they depend upon the military and the paramilitary, the people's armed police, for control. And correspondingly, they give them a fair amount of latitude and the military is even more rambunctious than the political leadership and could get them in bad trouble. I mean, there have been several situations in which they appear to have acted independently without checking with the political leadership.

MR. MURADIAN: Right.

MR. BROWN: That's pretty dangerous, and one reason to try to get military-to-military and political military-to-political military dialogue going is to expose the Chinese political leadership to the way we have managed in our country to have the political leadership control the military.

They're, so far, reluctant to do that.

MR. MURADIAN: We answer the phone, though, and they have a tendency of not answering the phone when stuff goes on.

MR. BROWN: Well, look. I mean, what's happened is the military --- their military has precipitated a number of incidents of which the political leadership was

not aware before or at the time that could have been very dangerous. They need a structure to manage that. It doesn't have to be identical to our structure with the National Security Council and so forth, but they need one, and a dialogue between the two sides could help produce that.

MR. MURADIAN: Right.

MR. BROWN: I hope that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Dempsey, when he was talking to his Chinese counterpart, managed to get that across.

MR. MURADIAN: What is the 3 a.m. phone call from the Pacific that could trigger U.S. military action in the region? And what are the scenarios that keep you awake or wake you from a sound sleep? You know, Bob Work, the Deputy Navy Secretary, used to love saying that he sleeps like a baby, he wakes up every two hours screaming. (Laughter)

MR. BROWN: Well, I don't expect a phone call anymore, so it's easy for me to sleep.

Look, one possibility of course is a North Korean action. They seem to have finished their temper tantrum for the moment, but you never know. They could do something more extreme than they've done in the past, and that could precipitate a ---

MR. MURADIAN: And they've done some very extreme things in the past.

MR. BROWN: Indeed they have. I don't --- if, for example, they were suddenly to launch a few artillery strikes at Seoul to show that they mean business, which would get our attention pretty quickly. That's one possibility.

Another of course is something happening in Pakistan with the Pakistani nuclear capabilities going astray. That would be pretty tough to handle because ---

MR. MURADIAN: Or Japanese shooting at Chinese over the Senkakus.

MR. BROWN: Yes, that also. I mean, the Japanese are showing that their concerns about China's military rise and Chinese military or quasi-military behavior makes things more dicey there. We've said to the Chinese that we support Japanese authority in the Senkakus, but at the same time I think we've tried to cool off the Japanese who under the new Prime Minister Abe certainly is showing more willingness to improve their military capability and to say that they're prepared to use it.

MR. MURADIAN: We just celebrated the 10th anniversary of the start of the Iraq war, and there are folks who make --- at least suggest connections in the way the administration, perhaps, thinks about Syria in an Iraq light. That that war was about WMDs and so let's not get involved in another Middle East war that may or may not involve WMDs and how they may be used, and obviously there's the Red Line line used by the President that has some people saying, look, at this point we have to act.

You spend a lot of time in the book --- and I commend you for this --- on saying, like, how to use force, what are the challenges, what are the issues, why would you use force, why would you not use force with particularly good lines from guys like John Quincy Adams and Lord Palmerston thrown in there for good measure. But should America get involved in Syria? And if not, why not? And what's kind of a broader way of thinking about the deployment of American force in this era of fiscal austerity but great strategic challenge?

MR. BROWN: We need to be pretty sure that we understand the situation before we get into it. I think Iraq is an example --- and Vietnam is an example --- of U.S. involvement on the ground in situations where the past was not fully understood by the people who made the decisions, and the forces involved were not properly

assessed by our decision-makers.

Syria is another such case. Does that mean that we should never get involved? No, it doesn't mean that, but it means that we need to be very, very careful. The use of chemical warfare is, you know, reprehensible, but although we categorize it as a weapon of mass destruction it's not the same as nuclear weapons. It's not the same as biological weapons. And we should not commit to doing something without knowing just how we're going to do it when we do it.

MR. MURADIAN: Even if we've called it a Red Line?

MR. BROWN: Well, I think --- look, there's a problem. Once you say there's a red line, if you don't act after that red line is crossed, then you've hurt your credibility. On the other hand, if at the time that the red line is crossed you're not sure that you should get in, it may be a bigger mistake to get in because you get drawn in further and further. And you have to balance the loss of credibility against the loss of ability to control a situation.

I think that in the case of Syria, there are a lot of elements involved in the opposition to Assad that are not our friends. Assad should go but putting U.S. ground forces in there no one is for, at least not now. But if we start in, who knows what we're going to have to do next to meet what happens after that? And for example, the idea of somehow corralling all of the Syrian chemical weapons. That would involve big forces on the ground. So, saying that red lines crossed, we have to do something can get us into what we say we certainly don't want to do.

Now, so far I've said nothing about what I would do. I think probably we are going to have to find some group that we do support and support from the outside. I think that supplying weapons at some point is probably a step that we're going to have to

take, and I hope that we can find Syrian groups to whom we can give weapons or supply weapons and groups --- and hope that those groups are not extremists.

I think that beyond that, I'd be very cautious about establishing no-fly zones or using a few missiles to take out some of their military forces, because it's not clear that you can do that without very substantial damage to civilians, and turning the whole public Syrian population against us.

So, I would be careful. I would move very slowly and I would commit very carefully.

MR. MURADIAN: Almost --- many regimes, whether you're North Korea, whether you're Syria, whether you're Iran look to some manner of weapon of mass destruction as being porcupine-ing yourself. Making yourself such a big challenge that the United States and the world community is going to let you alone. But, we've seen that despite how --- no matter how hard we work to try to maintain those weapons --- I mean, you make a good point on Atoms for Peace, which was a great idea by Eisenhower to do something nice, actually contributed to the proliferation problem.

So, what are --- and that was in the book, by the way. (Laughter)

So, what's the right way to deal with regimes like this that are looking at this technology as being more available? There are folks now who worry about nanotechnologies and customized genetic viruses and, you know, biological weapons as being a great danger. What's the right way to deal with this threat?

MR. BROWN: It's a dangerous world. You know, and in North Korea we have an example of how we deal with it. We --- I mean, deterrence does work. I mean, the North Koreans certainly know that if they use nuclear weapons that's the end of the regime and probably of the population as well.

It does allow them to posture, it does allow them to behave violently sometimes, but some things you just live with. If Iran gets nuclear weapons, I'm sure they will behave --- they will feel it enables them to do various things that they can't do now, but they must know that if they get into a war, nuclear weapons or not, the regime would not survive.

I think we're stuck, essentially, and I think that we can slow the process. I think that we can limit it. I think that nuclear weapons aren't going away, and I think that perhaps we can continue in many cases to make the case and make it successfully that if two countries --- I'm now talking about two countries in contested areas --- both eschew nuclear weapons, they're better off than if both of them have them. That certainly worked with Argentina and Brazil back in the '50s and '60s.

MR. MURADIAN: When both of them were considering nuclear programs.

MR. BROWN: Right. It's harder to do in the Middle East, Persian Gulf area, where the rivalries are much stronger.

MR. MURADIAN: And the religious disagreements more bitter.

MR. BROWN: Indeed.

MR. MURADIAN: Do ---

MR. BROWN: Let me come back to Syria, because I'm not sure I've really dealt with --- handled that fully, or will anybody else, I'm afraid.

MR. MURADIAN: You urged going slow, and I don't think anybody's really racing toward it at this point.

MR. BROWN: No, and I think we really need to understand that no-fly zones and limited missile strikes are good to talk about but they go much further down

the path of involvement than you might think.

MR. MURADIAN: Right. And they're not as clean as people think that they might be.

MR. BROWN: That's right. Well, they're going to kill a lot of civilians, and I think that certainly taking down the Syrian anti-aircraft capability, which is very substantial, in order to establish a no-fly zone would produce a lot of damage.

Now, more damage than is being done by the two sides now? Maybe not, but we would have done it and that makes a difference.

MR. MURADIAN: Right. Speaking of civilian damage, the remotely-piloted aircraft are increasingly --- or drones, now. You know, even the most ardent opponents of the phrase “drones” are now using “drones”, which I think is kind of funny in a way, or perhaps funnier to me than it might be to some of the people in this room. But anyway --- are becoming increasingly controversial. And the criticism is, well, it's creepy to watch people like this, you know, and then kill them. That there should be greater transparency in their use. That they're somehow underhanded, although I might say that knights thought crossbows were underhanded and, you know, that submarines were really bad and, you know, bombs dropped from airplanes were really bad. And we've kind of gotten over our squeamishness about any of those technologies.

But you have a new perspective on drones. What is it? What's the right way for us to think about this technology? How it's used, the good, the bad, and the ugly of it, if you will?

MR. BROWN: Look, drones are an alternative to manned aircraft. They're an alternative to artillery. And if you compare them to those two other ways of delivering ordinance, they're actually more precise and less risky. A drone can hover

over a scene for quite a while trying to distinguish targets from innocent bystanders in a way that a manned aircraft would not, because we would not want to expose the pilot.

Artillery certainly is going to kill more unintended targets. So, as a choice it's a better choice. The fact that it's an easier choice does suggest that you should think a little bit harder about the damage it might do to your policies. Not necessarily don't use it, but think again because its ease of use is tempting and may lead to overuse.

Drones have done --- drone-launched attacks have essentially decapitated Al-Qaeda. They've taken out many of the leaders and now we're going after the foot soldiers, and I think maybe we should draw back and use them less. Not stop using them, but use them less.

As I said, they're the instrument of choice except in a situation where you know where your target is and it's one person and you can send in a special forces team, as happened with bin Laden. In that case, there were not outside casualties, but in most cases where we've used special forces there are some casualties.

MR. MURADIAN: But there was more protests on the street to that than there was to drones.

MR. BROWN: You've made my point. The objection to those was --- to that particular case was much louder in Pakistan than the objection to drones in Pakistan. But of course, in some cases the targets that we're hitting in Pakistan are ones that the Pakistani government wants hit but can't hit itself.

MR. MURADIAN: Exactly. And then they point to us and say, oh, my God, what are you doing, while saying, well, thanks very much for doing that.

MR. BROWN: Well, that's life as a superpower. You're stuck with it.

MR. MURADIAN: That's right, you have interests. We have interests --- lasting interests, to badly paraphrase (inaudible).

But to go to the point of --- to sort of bring this around before I open the floor to questions. We've now been engaged in this war for a dozen years, almost, and you know, after World War II we had about a, you know, 10-year or 6 to 10-year span where we sort of got our stride about what this Cold War was going to be like, what are the rules of the road for it. What's the right way for us over time to prosecute this war on terror, extremism, however you want to define it?

MR. BROWN: Yeah, I don't like to use the word “war” because when you say “war on terrorism” you implicitly justify measures that you should think about more carefully.

When I chaired a commission on intelligence --- organization intelligence community all the way back in the mid-'90s ---

MR. MURADIAN: This was the '96 one?

MR. BROWN: Yes. We used global crime, essentially. That perhaps was too soft a description, but “war on terror” has, I think, justified or been used to justify going too far. Maybe someone else can think of an intermediate term that will lead to more nuanced behavior.

I think we're going to have to learn to live with terror, and not all of it will be terror launched in the Middle East. I mean, the most recent example was certainly nurtured there, or found some of its origin there, but there have been domestic terror --- purely domestic terror activities. And I think we will learn to live with it the way the West learned to live with anarchist terror during the late 19th and early 20th Century. And we won't solve it, but one way or another it'll go away.

MR. MURADIAN: Right. One last thing which I'm kind of curious about. I mean, you mentioned both in the case of China the nuclear deterrence being an important feature of avoiding perhaps a wider conflict.

MR. BROWN: And making it much worse if it happens.

MR. MURADIAN: And making it much worse than it happened, therefore urging more caution on the part of everybody before they sort of stumble into something.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. MURADIAN: And there are those who --- and I think Barry Pavel at the Atlantic Council is one of the people who figured deterrence against terrorists and how that works, and holding them at risk and managing to have some sort of deterrent capacity there in the war on terror, as it's been called.

Going back to the nuclear part of it, in your generation and throughout the Cold War the whole military establishment was geared, practiced for those worst-case scenarios, which we stopped doing for 20 years. Do we need to reinvigorate some of our strategic thinking? How we prepare, how we drill, how we're equipped, god forbid for the worst being rekindled as a more likely than not possibility?

MR. BROWN: I would put more --- I would indeed put more effort into reminding the political military structure about how that works. In other words, make sure that there are very senior people who look at strategic scenarios, who look at stockpile, and so forth. And I would work hard on that, and I would perhaps do less and spend less on the proposals to re-do the nuclear stockpile at an enormous cost. We're talking about tens of billions of dollars, which in the era of sequestration is a lot of money.

But ---

MR. MURADIAN: Well, I think it's a lot of money all the time, it's just

perhaps somewhat more ---

MR. BROWN: Now, yes.

MR. MURADIAN: --- now.

MR. BROWN: But, yes. Thinking about nuclear situations because as we've been saying the existence of nuclear weapons in China and the U.S. makes a war less likely, but makes it much more terrible if it happens. And if we get into a situation where that begins to become real, having thought carefully about how to deal with nuclear weapons, how the command control systems work, how you communicate with the other side, and how you signal it is very important.

I mean, the last time it happened was in 1962, and if we can get to 2062 without it happening again we'll be lucky.

MR. MURADIAN: And with that, I open it to the floor for questions. Yes, ma'am.

MS. SILBER: I'd like your comments on the Israeli ---

MR. MURADIAN: Oh, I'm sorry. And if you guys could identify yourselves and what your affiliation is?

MS. SILBER: Diane Silber, clinical psychologist. I'd just like your thoughts on what's happening now in Syria with Israel and whether or not the United States has tacitly approved of this, and so forth.

MR. BROWN: Well, I don't know whether the United States has tacitly approved. I think that the Israelis, as I see it, are acting --- what they say is, and I guess I believe it, they're acting to keep more advanced missiles from being transferred from Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

I think that, you know --- I think they're justified in doing that. I think

they're taking a chance because Syria itself --- the Assad regime --- may now have an excuse for acting against Israel as a way, perhaps, of distracting attention from its own behavior and its own country.

But I think they have their hands full, and maybe they probably --- and so they may not retaliate against Israel, despite threatening to do so. That's all I really can say about it, because it's more than I know.

MR. MURADIAN: Bill and then we'll go back to you, sir.

MR. SWEETMAN: Bill Sweetman, *Aviation Week and Space Technology.* You talked about cutting back on 35, going more toward long-range aircraft. In your tenure as Secretary of Defense you went through a tremendous change in policy from canceling the B-1, which at the time was extremely controversial, through to accelerating the stealth development programs that were underway at the time. What lessons do you think that has for people today looking at, you know, some of these huge defense programs and more or less throwing up their hands and saying, you know, either we continue this on this scale or if we cut it back the unit costs go through the roof, we have death spiral. You know, what lessons do you think --- would you draw from your experience?

MR. BROWN: It's a good question, and I'm not sure I have the right answer. But my own tendency is to say let's do things at a slow rate. Indeed, it increases the unit cost but it avoids the situation in which you get into a disaster, essentially. I mean, I think the B-1 was such a disaster.

The B-2 ---

MR. MURADIAN: If only you'd destroyed that, too.

MR. BROWN: The B-2? The B-2 was done the other way, essentially,

and unfortunately we didn't keep building them. We should have kept building many more. But even though the unit cost is higher if you build slowly, it helps you avoid big mistakes. And so, I tend to come down on that side.

I know that others would do it the other way. They'd say, buy a big buy. Well, you can do that but if you do that --- and here's a lesson from the F-35 --- don't change it and don't try to build too much into it at the beginning. I think a big problem with the F-35 --- and this happened long after my tenure, so I didn't --- I haven't paid a lot of attention to it --- was to try to do too much. I mean, if the TFX trying to get the Navy and the Air Force to do the same plane was a problem --- and it was --- then having the Navy and the Air Force, and the Marines who want to take off and land vertically --- that's a real mess. And it kept changing, too. It's a lot easier to land vertically than to take off vertically, because you're lighter when you land.

Well, I hope I've answered your question.

MR. MURADIAN: Yes, sir.

MR. VANBORSCHT: I'm Bruce VanBorscht. You mentioned the inevitability of a reduction --- diminution of --- you mentioned the inevitability of diminution of capabilities. After many years of covering the Department of Defense, I have never been able to figure out how you decide what capabilities are necessary. Who says 1.2 million troops is necessary? You say the F-25 can be slowed down. What about that aircraft carrier? What about the excessive nuclear deployments?

I sometimes think that the chiefs get together, have a drink, come up with the highest figure they can, and give that to you.

MR. BROWN: Look, there is no right answer, because you can always make up a scenario that calls for more capability. And in fact, sometimes your scenario

wasn't stressful enough as things turn out. There's no magic solution to this.

What you can do, however, is do as efficiently as possible whatever capability that you decide, A, that you can --- that you need, and B, that you can afford. I mean, both of those are uncertain. I mean, it's uncertain what you need, but it's also uncertain what you can afford because there is no obvious number, despite the Congress and the administration having decided in the sequester that there is an obvious number. There is no obvious number, which is all that we can afford.

MR. VANBORSCHT: So you settle for the highest one.

MR. BROWN: Not necessarily. They're settling for a much lower one.

MR. MURADIAN: Larry.

MR. CORB: Mr. Secretary, Larry Corb. One area you guys didn't touch on, you have a great deal of familiarity with is Iran, given what happened during your time in office. Could you give us some feeling about what we should do? How we should be handling that? Or maybe it's covered in the book, I don't know.

MR. BROWN: Well, you should buy the book, Larry. (Laughter)

MR. CORB: Can Iran be deterred? (Laughter)

MR. BROWN: Can Iran be deterred? Yes, Iran can be deterred from some things. If they get nuclear weapons they'll probably be able to do some things that we wouldn't let them do or that we would act against if they didn't have nuclear weapons.

But there are other ways to go at this. I mean, the Stuxnet virus is one way to go at it. Sanctions are another way to go at it. They're really hurting, obviously. Some people argue that that's bad. We are essentially, by our ever-increasing sanctions, making them enemies. Well, I thought they were enemies before, myself.

But I don't think that the Iranian public is ready to overthrow the regime. I

think that it's --- a lot of the Iranians don't like it, and I think the regime itself has internal divisions which perhaps we can exploit. But I believe that a war with Iran is not what we should try to pursue.

MR. MURADIAN: Would any strike of any manner deter, stop, or derail their programs?

MR. BROWN: I think it can --- I think a strike, as I say in the book --- I think a strike by us would delay their program, their nuclear program, but probably --- well, but increase the likelihood that they would resume it and carry it through to have a nuclear weapon. I think the Israelis, if they were to strike, would do much less damage, but equally would encourage the Iranians to proceed to actually get a nuclear weapon.

I think that it's possible that if we continue on the present course of sanctions and discouraging them from proceeding to a nuclear weapon, that they would stop short of actually having a nuclear weapon but perhaps have enough material to be able to build one in a relatively short time. And I think that may be the best achievable option, short of having a war, which I think would not be a good option at all.

MR. MURADIAN: Yes, and the gentleman in the grey sweater.

MR. WARBIN: Two weeks ago, up on the Hill –

MR. MURADIAN: Can you just identify yourself?

MR. WARBIN: Oh, sorry. John Warbin with the Association of American Geographers. Two weeks ago up on the Hill, General Odierno was up there speaking to the House Armed Affairs Committee --- Armed Services, and he had an interesting exchange with Congressman Duncan Hunter about, you know, what is typically a routine thing that these, you know, chiefs discuss with members of Congress, a budgetary issue for an Army program. But it turned into a really interesting sort of, you know, standoff

between the two gentlemen and obviously General Odierno has a great force of presence.

Did you have any reaction to sort of what that standoff means to current relations, maybe between the military and, you know, what's going on up on the Hill? And you know, if you had been in the Defense chair now, would you have anything to say to General Odierno?

MR. BROWN: I have no idea what the argument was about.

MR. MURADIAN: It was seen on *Defense News.* (Laughter) Funny enough ---

MR. BROWN: I apologize ---

MR. MURADIAN: No, no, no, not at all. But the issue was that, if I understand correctly, Mr. Hunter --- Palantir's in his district and he was making the case that DSGS --- there were alternatives to DSGS, and General Odierno, if I understand it correctly, was basically making the case that, you know, there are very good reasons why we're doing what we're doing and we're trying to answer your questions, and it was a little bit of a ---

MR. BROWN: I still don't understand what the argument was about.

MR. MURADIAN: The argument was basically --- Mr. Huter was saying there is a commercial way to do this and you don't need an elaborate, multi-billion dollar system, and General Odierno was trying to tell him why there is a very good reason why the Army was doing what it was doing for a robust battlefield network and not a --- but maybe we can take this question later. I'm not necessarily there was a necessarily big civil military relations thing there.

MR. BROWN: No. Well, it's a ---

MR. MURADIAN: It was a member pressing his interest in his constituency.

MR. BROWN: Well, that's what I was going to ask. I mean, is this another case of saying, cut the budget but not for my constituents? And so, what's new? (Laughter)

MR. MURADIAN: Yes, in the back there.

MR. TENNANT: Sir, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Tennant. I'm a British Army Officer working in the Pentagon, currently.

If I may, I could start just very quickly on the Palantir, DSGS issue by just elaborating slightly. I think the key issue there was the fact that Hunter was alleging that one of the divisions deploying to Afghanistan had asked for and been refused delivery of Palantir, which I think General Odierno would emphatically assert was originally the case but was no longer the case because he had withdrawn the request, for his own reasons. So, just to ---

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. TENNANT: --- draw your attention to that.

The observation I'd like to make. You said rather boldly, sir, if I may make so bold --- as bad as we are at waste and defense, most of them are worse about European nations. (Laughter) And I've worked in the Pentagon for about a year now, and at least in the case of Britain, I would definitely take issue with that statement.

The question, sir, I'd like to ask, though --- very interesting listening to you articulate your views about Syria, your concerns about some sort of standoff limited intervention that might involve limited strikes on air defense and potentially a no-fly zone. And then, linking that to your point in which you are not alone in saying that at least the

first obvious target for cuts that we all probably suspect are inevitable as being personnel and, in particular, land forces.

Now, I've not read or seen anything since I've been in this country that suggests that the fundamental nature of warfare has changed, and yet an awful lot of people are saying that land power is the first target. Given that the U.S. Army and the active component are already in the process of subsuming a cut of about 90,000, which is about 16 percent of their end-strength and that takes them back to, more or less, a pre-9/11 level, why would you target them first when I would argue that military balance is probably the most fundamental principle that you should be going into these next round of cuts with?

MR. BROWN: It's a reasonable question. Let me deal with your other comments first.

MR. MURADIAN: Would you like some water, sir?

MR. BROWN: Our European allies --- and this includes Britain and France, who are the two allies who really have substantial ability to project force --- have military industries that go well beyond supplying their own forces. And to a substantial extent, they make their own decisions on equipping their own forces, on the basis of their export potential. The U.S. doesn't do that. So in that, at least, we are more efficient as military organizations, not necessarily as exporters.

I think that our European allies generally are not really able to project force. I mean, Britain and France can do a bit, but only a bit. And that, to me, makes them less efficient than we are because if a military can't project force outside of its own borders, what's it for? It's certainly not for domestic security.

Well, let's set that controversy aside and let's ask about land forces

versus naval and air. Indeed, you can't occupy a country from the air or from the sea. You can only use land forces, and you can't --- although you can pulverize armies you can't completely eliminate --- you can't get them to surrender from the air or from the sea.

But if we look at the U.S. future military operations, where are we going to operate major land forces on the Eurasian continent? I think we've learned over the past 60 years that we don't want to do that. That doing it in Korea was a draw, and that's the best we've been able to do ever since. That's better than we've been able to do since. Better than in Vietnam, better than in Iraq, better than in Afghanistan.

So, if there's a war in Korea, our Korean --- our South Korean allies are going to have to do the land part of the war themselves. We're not going to do what we did in 1950, '51, '52, '53. And even those who are urging intervention in Syria aren't urging that we send land forces into Syria.

I'm not talking about eliminating our land capabilities. I think our army and marines will still be able to do far more than all of our European allies together would, in terms of land forces. I'm just saying that we should not build --- we should not keep land forces big enough to fight another Korean war, another Iraq war, or another Afghanistan war.

MR. MURADIAN: One of the things that you did and the Carter administration was try to set defense spending at 3 percent of GDP and to try to get our European allies to go along with that.

MR. BROWN: No, no. It was an increment of 3 percent a year, in real terms.

MR. MURADIAN: Increment of 3 percent a year, I'm sorry.

MR. BROWN: In fact, defense was then more like 7 percent of GDP.

MR. MURADIAN: Okay, all right.

MR. BROWN: But that's because non-defense programs were so much smaller than that.

MR. MURADIAN: A problem, I apologize for that. But one of the things you wanted was closer integration between Europe and the United States on defense, and wanted to try to do that and there were all sorts of impediments that got in the way.

Do we need to build a closer Transatlantic relationship that also can be very advantageous to us no matter where in the world we go, including Asia?

MR. BROWN: I would like to do that, but it's a very different situation from that of the late 1970s. Then, the key military balance was between us and the Soviet Union, and Europe --- Western Europe was rightly concerned about Soviet military predominance on the continent and the possibility that it would lead to political bullying, essentially. And that's why I pushed so hard during that period to be able to reinforce Europe quickly and, thus, perhaps provide another --- the leg to the stool of deterrence beyond the nuclear threat --- nuclear deterrence, instead of mutual annihilation by building up conventional forces so that the Soviets couldn't be quite so sure that they could roll over to the channel in three weeks.

That was then. That's not the situation now at all. The former Soviet satellites still worry about Soviet --- about Russian intimidation, but not all that much. The Russians don't have that much capability, but we do need to continue to provide them with reassurance. The Western part of Europe couldn't care less about Soviet --- about Russian military capability.

MR. MURADIAN: But they behave so Soviet-ly sometimes that it's easy to ---

MR. BROWN: Well, but there's no military threat to Western Europe from Russia.

MR. MURADIAN: Right.

MR. BROWN: I think France and Britain and, in specialized ways, perhaps some of the other European countries --- the Dutch, the Norwegians, and so forth --- can and have participated in out-of-area capabilities, and I think building that up --- not building it up, because they're not going to spend more money --- but integrating those and working with them in out-of-area actions is very desirable, and we do some of it.

I mean, the French intervention in Mali, for example, could not have happened without U.S. support. And I think that especially France and Britain, but with contributions from some of the others could continue to have an important effect in North Africa and, perhaps, other areas.

MR. MURADIAN: Mitzi.

SPEAKER: I'll wait.

MR. BROWN: Mitzi.

MS. WERTHEIM: This has been an absolutely fabulous afternoon. I'm Mitzi Wertheim and I work for the Naval Post-Graduate School.

I want to ask about drones because I have this question asked of me in Washington a lot, and it's about the issue of the speed of learning of others to make them. And the concern is that it's a commodity or close to being a commodity and then they could sort of shoot them at us. And I just --- you being a technical person might have some sense about how quickly these will be multiplying.

MR. BROWN: It's always the case that a technological lead is followed

by imitation elsewhere, and that clearly is happening starting with Western European countries. But it'll spread elsewhere.

But it's not clear to me what kind of a threat they are to us. I mean, they don't do anything that a piloted plane can't do, although in some cases they do it better or you can use them in more dangerous situations or you can, as we said before, keep the drone operating so that it learns more before it shoots.

But I don't see that they pose a new threat to us. Think of it this way. A suicide pilot in an aircraft can do everything that a drone can do. So, it's actually a specialized instrument.

MR. MURADIAN: This gentleman right here in the grey suit who has had his hand up a few times. Yes, sir.

MR. GORDON-MENDLESON: Thank you. Okay, Ed Gordon-Mendleson, I am a political scientist.

After the election of 1948, Harry Truman appointed Louis Johnson who had been his finance chairman and (inaudible) became his Secretary of Defense --- the second, I believe. And Johnson had a program of large demobilization, which he claimed would result in substantial economies.

MR. BROWN: It did.

MR. GORDON-MENDLESON: And within a few months, Joseph (inaudible) and Truman replaced him with (inaudible) and it appeared ---

MR. BROWN: No, he replaced him with George Marshall.

MR. GORDON-MENDLESON: The reliance (inaudible) on sophisticated technology was considered counterproductive. I just want to know if you think the present situation is somewhat similar.

MR. BROWN: That situation was, as you said, the time of de-mobilization. And Louis Johnson was brought in to save money, and he did, and then the Korean War happened. And the reduction in military capability that was the result of that money savings led to early defeats in the Korean War, and Louis Johnson was fired and replaced not by Bob Lovett but by George Marshall.

If there were a war, the defense cuts would be replaced. Whether this Defense Secretary would be fired as a result, I have no idea.

MR. MURADIAN: And then there's this gentleman right here.

MR. KITONO: My name is Tomoyo Kitono, a visiting fellow of the Center for New American Security. I'd like to ask you a question about drones. I think since the 1970s, some or many analysts have argued that by the introduction of the precision-guided munitions a gigantic logistics operation will be unnecessary.

In this decade, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps have used huge amounts of traditional ammunition and continued their battle --- intensive battles. Then, considering that the Asia Pacific defense posture, what degree do drones --- can cover the short issue of personnel and traditional ammunition, do you think?

I mean to resist --- to check on resisting --- certain countries coercive posture, coercive diplomacy.

MR. BROWN: I don't ---

MR. MURADIAN: I think certain countries, coercive diplomacy may or may not be construed as China, for example.

MR. BROWN: I don't really see how drones play in this. I mean, precision-guided munitions certainly reduce the number of sorties that are required. If a target is known to be in a certain position, certain place, it can either be struck by a

guided missile from an aircraft or you can send a drone over to learn more about it. But that's what drones are for.

I think drones are there to establish more facts about a target, and then --- which has been generally located before, but whose nature may not be known. And then, when the drone establishes more certainty about the target, it can strike the target.

Without that certainty, you can fire a missile from an aircraft located further away but you're not sure that the target that it's going to hit --- and it will hit the target. It's precision-guided, so it'll hit the target. You're not sure what that --- you're not so sure what that target was. That's the difference, and that will determine whether you use a drone or not.

MR. MURADIAN: I'm going to take the moderator's prerogative and ask one last question, because we've got to go for the book session and time is not infinite.

As the title of the book says, applying lessons learned over six decades of safeguarding America. And the book is full of all sorts of insights, including, frankly, a lot of very interesting insights on very famous folks through national security that Dr. Brown has the opportunity to work with them, argue with them, or have known them at one point or another.

But, what is the biggest single most important lesson that you've drawn that in this time of political dysfunction and everything else, can potentially be applied to get to a better place?

MR. BROWN: I'm going to give an answer that may disappoint you. It is that our security nationally --- U.S. national security, including its military capability, rests on a thriving, advanced, highly-technical, educated domestic society and economy. It's the same lesson that I took away from my service as Secretary of Defense, and which I

refer to in the book, that post-defeat F Street club meeting of the outgoing Carter cabinet. And in the subsequent 30-odd years, I have become even more convinced of it.

MR. MURADIAN: And in the book, there are really great examples of --- right? Do you like how I brought that around to the book again? There are really great examples on how the United States can keep its technological lead.

Dr. Brown, thank you very, very much. (Applause)

Joyce, thank you. And great book, by Dr. Brown and Joyce, and it's available in the back. Thank you very much.

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