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CONGRESS AND DEFENSE POLICY: A CONVERSATION WITH  
REP. MAC THORNBERRY (R-TEXAS)

Washington, D.C.

Monday, March 2, 2020

**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Welcome and Introduction:**

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**Keynote Address:**

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Well, good morning everyone and welcome to Brookings. I'm Michael O'Hanlon with the Foreign Policy program and I have the distinct honor and pleasure of welcoming back Congressman Mac Thornberry, a long-standing friend of Brookings, one of the great public servants of his time. I started in Washington, as he did, as a staffer on Capitol Hill and over the years have watched the Sam Nunn's and Les Aspin's and John Warner's and some of the modern leaders, like John McCain, in recent years, and I think he belongs in that top echelon of the eight or ten top national security leaders, really, of our generation.

It's been just a privilege to watch him in action on the Hill and have him over the years, talk about what he's doing at Brookings. Just a couple more words of introduction and then I'll ask you to join me in welcoming him for, what could be, a least as a member of Congress, his last visit publicly to Brookings, I suspect because as many of you know, he's announced his retirement. He was elected to Congress in 1994 after some of that previous work in the Reagan administration, on Capitol Hill, but also certainly on his ranch in Texas in the 13<sup>th</sup> District and a part of Texas where his family has been ranching since 1881 and a distinguished grad of Texas Tech and the University of Texas, student of history and law and in Capitol Hill, work over the years has been associated with three or four main themes and main areas of work that we'll discuss today.

One certainly is bureaucratic and government reform and reorganization as threats have evolved starting with the Department of Homeland Security, the National Nuclear Security Administration and now the Space Force, but even before that as well, the change in Pentagon thinking about how to do research engineering and procurement with the recent changes to the undersecretary positions for acquisition, technology and logistics now being broken in two. So, he's thought a lot about military innovation, bringing in more of America's great companies into the modernization and innovation effort, and of course, sustaining robust resources, and to the extent possible, timely resources for the Department of Defense and U.S. National Security. So, it's a real treat to have him here and if you wouldn't mind, please joining me in welcoming to Brookings, Congressman Mac Thornberry.

So, you were chairman of the HASC over four years up until just a year ago and I wondered Congressman, if you could begin maybe -- we'll go back further in a second, back to your earlier time and things like DHS, but if you could reflect for yourself, from your own vantage point, on those four years as the chairman, what do you feel like were the most important accomplishments? And things we have to sustain now going forward, we're obviously not done with any of this work?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah. Can I just say briefly, thank you for the overly generous introduction and secondly, I want to wish everybody a Happy Texas Independence Day. I'm not sure if you all knew, but right after the Fourth of July, March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the day we became our own country, so, let me start with that.

I think two things; one, is to begin to make up the funding deficit because if you look in real terms from 2010 to roughly 2018 the defense budget was cut about 20 percent and as you, and pretty much everybody here knows, we saw tangible evidence of planes that couldn't fly, ships that were lined up waiting on repairs, accident rates and acts of deaths, unfortunately, going up at an alarming rate. And so, we had to turn that around. Not, you know, doing what we need to prepare for great power competition, just to make the stuff we've got work. I mean, that was really -- and we began to also lay some of the groundwork for great power competition things but I'd say that's number one. Number two, as you noted, I just think it's essential that we continue to try to get more value for the taxpayers and the best technology our country can produce into the hands of the work fighter faster.

MR. O'HANLON: Mm-hmm.

MR. THORNBERRY: And you know, DOD like any other big bureaucracy is not inclined that way, and so, that's Congress's job. I keep going back to this and you may get tired of me saying it, but Article I, Section 8, says it's our job to raise and support, provide and maintain, make the rules and regulations for the military forces of the United States. We've got to do that first. And if it doesn't happen, it's our fault. So, both of those things, I think, were essential in those years.

MR. O'HANLON: By the way, I'm going to come back to Article I because I'd like to talk about war powers later.

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah, yeah.

MR. O'HANLON: We'll come back to that --

MR. THORNBERRY: I figured you would.

MR. O'HANLON: -- if we could. Well, it's such an important topic, but you know a lot of times people talk about war powers and they say, let's just give the Commander and Chief, whether it's Obama or Trump or anybody else, two more years to finish up the wars in the Middle East and then we'll be done with it and they had two years fair warning. I've always found that argument completely unpersuasive. So, I want to -- you know, you're more aware of the, I think, longevity of some of these operations so, I want to come back and think of what could be a realistic reform. But let me first ask, and now go back to your earlier years in Congress, and especially, you already saw coming, as did a few others, the potential threats to the homeland around the turn of century, even before the 9/11 attacks. You were pushing for bureaucratic reform and helped lay the ground work for the Department of Homeland Security, but I want to ask this question, not just in a softball way, but with a little bit of Texas hardball too, because a lot of people feel like DHS struggled as a bureaucracy for a long time and maybe it's doing better now, but maybe this is a chance for you also to give a little bit of a verdict on how you see it, you know, 16 years in, I guess, and almost 20 years after the 9/11 attacks and more than 20 years after you started thinking about this kind of reform. So, how do you feel about that legacy and how well is DHS doing today?

MR. THORNBERRY: I think you're right, they're doing better, but there were a lot of struggles along the way. I never have original ideas. I borrow from smart people who write reports and -- like Brookings. I try to mine the thinking that is out there in the national security ecosystem and there was a report, as you recall, that talked about terrorism has to come to our shores and we are fragmented in all sorts of ways and bringing those things together was -- and that's the reason I introduced the bill I did. I think looking back, as interesting as it is to create organization reform, and this is something Congress is pretty good at, rearranging the boxes, it is just, if not more important, to follow through on the implementation of what we pass and Congress is not very good at that. Whether it's the Department of

Homeland Security or the Intelligence Reform that passed in 2004, we kind of pass it and then kind of go on to the next challenge and so, I think that's part of the reason that DHS floundered in the early years. I thought Secretary Ridge should have knocked heads together sooner and it's hard, I got it. You got people coming from all different sort of different agencies, you don't want to make them too mad. You want to try to coax them into working together. But in some ways, that just lengthens the transition time and I think, that that's kind of what happened. Look, it's still not perfect, but I do think there's been some strong secretaries in both administrations in recent years -- well, three administrations, in recent years, that have helped and so, I think they're doing much better. But they have enormous challenges and we're all reading about it every day with Coronavirus and other things that they've got to think about from a Homeland Security standpoint.

MR. O'HANLON: By the way, since we're really touching on a number of topics that cover your career, you mentioned the 2004 legislation and the creation of ODNI, how do you think intelligence reform has worked over the -- you know, again 15, 16 years since that bill passed. The creation of the position, the reorganization, the way -- I realize it's not per se the jurisdiction of House Armed Services, you share that with the intelligence committees, but still, it's obviously crucial to national security. I know you think about it a lot, so, how do you see that whole set of reforms working these days?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah, and I was on or affiliated with Intelligence Committee for 14 years. I think it's a somewhat of a similar story. At the beginning when the ODNI was created, then it was all about bureaucracy and it was kind of like, going like this and so, there was a struggle between the Congress and the executive branch about how big it would be. Would this bureaucracy impose additional layers of requirements, on top of what the people in the field were already getting from their headquarters and so forth. So, again, I think that's example where it is better now than it was. What is absolutely true, especially in that position, is that personality matter and it matters a lot. I mean, I think, you know Dan Coats (phonetic) did a good job and he had some heft to bring into the job to try and get help, coordinate our intelligence efforts, but that matters a lot because you still have a little -- you do have struggles

inevitably with the various heads of the agencies and the DNI over who does what.

MR. O'HANLON: It does seem, you know, I've heard a couple CIA directors say, they welcome the changes. They weren't so sure at first and I'm not sure they all like it, but it allows them to focus on CIA a little bit more.

MR. THORNBERRY: It got some of that off their plate. That kind of broader coordination that they had before that.

MR. O'HANLON: So, now moving to the National Nuclear Security Administration, another important subject, and again, a subject where Texas has an important role in our nation's security and where for a while, and some people think even up until recently, attention was floundering a bit as we moved beyond the Cold War and weren't paying as much attention to our nuclear enterprise. How do you look on the legacy there that you had in helping shape the creation of the National Nuclear Security Administration within the Department of Energy? How well do you think it's doing? How do you feel about nuclear stockpile stewardship, and frankly, I'll throw in also the question of the long-term longevity of the arsenal now and this period of indefinite moratory on testing?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah. This one to me is a closer call because as you may remember, I think it was a Hart-Rudman Commission that said, the predecessor to NNSA was a dysfunctional bureaucracy incapable of reforming itself. And they said you've got two options, you can make it a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy or you can use the old atomic energy commission model, take it out and make it its own thing.

MR. O'HANLON: Mm-hmm.

MR. THORNBERRY: So, we went conservatively working with Domenici especially, at that point, left it within the DOE and I'm still not sure that was the right answer because you have an entity within DOE that is the lion share of DOE's budget. So, it's just an inevitable. You've got all of these people; not just secretary and the deputy secretary, but all these other people who are wanting to reach in and tell them what to do and how to do it. And that does slow things down. I think this is an enormous challenge, because as you rightly point out, these are aging machines that were never intended to last

this long, much less into the future. And so much of we're doing is based on computer simulation and smart people, the expertise of people who built these is fading rapidly away. So, we're going to -- this will be, I predict, the probably most contentious issue in this year's defense authorization bill. About modernizing the stockpile because there is a temptation to say, oh, it's worked pretty well so far. Why do we need to mess with it and spend all this money, etc.? And I believe, that nuclear deterrents is the bedrock upon which all the rest of our defense efforts are set. And it's kind of like the foundation of your house, when there starts to be some cracks and crumbling of that foundation, then it has all sorts of implications and yet, while it's never more than 7 percent of the defense budget, in any year, to modernize, not only the weapons, but all three legs of the triad and nuclear command and control, it's never more than 7 percent, but still, it's a fair amount of money. And you're seeing it this year. People saying, I could use that money for this or that or the other thing. So, I think some of our thinking and expertise on nuclear deterrents has atrophied understandably over the years since the fall of Soviet Union and we've got to rebuild it.

MR. O'HANLON: So, if I could push a little bit on that point too, I want to talk about what kinds of future nuclear modernization we might consider and do we need testing to carry it out? And there are a couple of dimensions to this; one of course, is what Secretary Mattis put in place with, basically, taking some existing warheads and just, you know, taking some the secondary out of the weapon or eliminating the second so you have a smaller detonation that you can then respond to Russia when it has tactical nukes and tries to give this impression it would use them quickly. Mattis wanted to have a response, I assume -- and I know you've been supportive of that, but I wanted to see if you want to comment on that. But also, the question, which we last really faced intensively in this country about ten years ago with the debate over a reliable replacement warhead. Should we build a warhead that's simple, that doesn't necessarily require testing but that would be built largely from scratch and therefore, would not already be 40, 50 years old? Is that the kind of thing that you're supportive of yourself or do you want to go even further and start conceptualizing warhead designs that would require testing as a way to modernize the arsenal?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah. The hard answer to the last thing you ask is, I don't have the expertise to know whether testing is required or not. And so, it's kind of like some of the other things we're debating these days. Can we be honest with ourselves or if you're a lab director, is the political pressure on you so high every year to certify the stockpile without testing, that there's just no way you can say, I can't do it this year. I don't know. I mean, we're talking about human emotion, pressure, you know, careers and so forth, and so, I don't know. I think, at a minimum we have got to think about simpler, more reliable warheads. And as you recall, the driving force during the Cold War when all of these things were built was smaller, more miniaturized warheads that could -- multiple warheads that could fit in one reentry vehicle. That's not where we are right now. And so, you have more flexibility in design parameters and you have a fair amount of test data over the years that you could base it on. I think we need to think about it and the question is, are we so policing ourselves that we can't even think about it; explore those things. I don't know. On the low yield, I just think the more we do that complicates Russia's calculations, the better. And so, we already had some low yield. This puts some low yield on the most survivable leg of the triad; the submarines. As you know, they've got thousands of tactical nuclear weapons, so it's not like we're trying to match them one for one, but a little bit of increase complexity to what they have to look at, I think, is a good thing.

MR. O'HANLON: Do you think that as we go forward with this kind of concern, the level of resources for NNSA is roughly in the correct ballpark or is this also an area where the defense buildup, which is now sort of coming to a plateau maybe is being short-circuited too quickly? In other words, is money going to be the problem with NNSA --

MR. THORNBERRY: Well, it could well be, yeah. I think they have a decent plan to extend the stockpile and then we also have a decent plan to replace all three legs of the triad. But as you know, there is no slack in that plan.

MR. O'HANLON: Right.

MR. THORNBERRY: Those trident (phonetic) submarines have to come out of the water on a specific date and if Columbia's not ready, then we don't have the most survivable leg of the triad --



so you can just take that down the line. NNSA's no different. There's been a lot of neglect over the years. Both -- and it affects facilities, workforce, a whole variety of things. These are difficult complicated problems. And how do you -- I used to tell the story because at Pantex, which is in my district, you would literally have people -- engineers bring their lunch to work and have to set it up on a shelf because there were so many rats in the workplace that it wouldn't last past lunch if they didn't put it on a higher shelf. Now, these same engineers could go do a lot of things and so, that's part of the atrophy that's a little hard to see on a spreadsheet. Now, by the way, we've improved their working conditions tremendously over the past few years, but still, it's the tools to attract and keep the top-quality people in this area, that will help us get through it. Because the people who built these weapons are about gone.

MR. O'HANLON: I want to come back to conventional deterrents and innovations and so forth in a minute. But a couple of more questions on the nuclear enterprise, if I could, just because it's so important and central, I think, to the budget situation. So, we know that -- you've already mentioned most of the areas where nuclear modernization is planned. Of course, there -- you say the triad, there's the B21 bomber, there's the ICBM replacement and you mentioned command and control, there's the long-range cruise missile and of course, DOE and then Columbia class. I think Columbia class is probably the top priority for many people, but could you give us any pecking order on how you would prioritize those areas of modernization? Are they all equally essential or if you had to let something slip because of budget realities, would you consider, let's say, delaying the ICBM replacement? Would you consider cancelling the stealthy cruise missile? Is there anything in that panoply of plan modernization and investment items that is, you know, less crucial?

MR. THORNBERRY: As you may remember, when Secretary Mattis took office, he asked the fundamental question, do we still need a triad or can we get by with two legs focusing on the land-based system? And as he is want to do, he studied it and dug down into it and came to the conclusion that we have to have a triad. And as I mentioned, the unfortunate thing is through our neglect, every leg of the triad, plus nuclear command and control, plus the weapons have basically got to the end of their life.

MR. O'HANLON: Mm-hmm.

MR. THORNBERRY: So, I don't think we have choices. We have to pursue each of these. I've asked at least the last two or three chairmen of the joint chief, you know, your number one priority? I think pretty much every one of them says, nuclear command and control.

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah.

MR. THORNBERRY: It's a big deal. We can't talk about it much in public. It's has all sorts of implications, but it's a big deal. So, in each of these areas, we are out of flex time.

MR. O'HANLON: So, while we're on the nuclear question, last thing before I go other things you've worked on and the conventional agenda, but I wanted to bring up the War Powers Act in this context because there have been some people who have argued, long before Donald Trump was in the White House, that it doesn't make sense to let one person have their finger on the nuclear button. Especially when the Constitution gives Congress the exclusive power to declare war and certainly, any kind of nuclear war would reach a threshold where presumably the founders would have thought that Congress should have a hand in that. But the way our system is setup right now, even if you accept the constitutionality of the War Powers Act, it doesn't really kick in until 60 days into a conflict when most nuclear wars could well be over. And the course now we're 18, 19 years into a post 9/11 set of operations throughout the broader Middle East where the enemies have, you know, changed names and morphed and -- so, how do you write a War Powers Act or excuse me, an AUMF and maybe a War Powers Act, if -- but whatever you think is the right way for Congress to reassert its prerogatives and its responsibilities in decisions on the use of military force. Should it encompass nuclear forces? In other words, should there be sort of people on the Hill that need to be consulted, legally, as an obligation of the president before he or she could push the button, so to speak? Should there be a time limit on future operations in the broader Middle East of the type we've been doing since 9/11? Is there any kind of reform in this broad range of topics that you would support?

MR. THORNBERRY: Whew.

MR. O'HANLON: You can choose one or the other. You don't have to do the whole

thing.

MR. THORNBERRY: I think there will be inevitable conflict between Congress's responsibility and authority to declare war and a President's Article II powers to defend the country in an emergency and you're seeing that payout now. Can I just take it a slightly different direction but it's the same point and that's cyber. How can you -- what is declaring war in cyber and how do you consult with Congress and get us to pass something with when the weapons literally move at the speed of light. So, there are a number of real challenges to make the constitutional framework applicable to the way that technology has changed. And I don't pretend to have all the answers. What we have done in Congress, and this isn't exactly AUMF, but we have setup an oversight structure for cyber operations that basically gives the guidelines of what they've got to come tell us and when. And then we have regularly scheduled -- okay, what's happening in the cyber world now? If there's something that meets a certain threshold, they've got tell us within a certain number of hours. So, to try to adapt in that way. And we did the same thing, by the way, with counterterrorism operations as far as an oversight method because they were happening all over the world, literally. I don't know -- I could say you write in the formal requirements to consult with Congress, but I strongly believe that any president, who is even in the ballpark of such issues, needs to consult with a handful of folk on the Hill, to have the country together.

And one last point, one of the things that concerns me the most about failure to pass or update that AUMF since 2001 or 2002, is that you've got people out there on the frontlines defending the country and it's all because a president says so, and maybe the courts have supported it. You don't have that feeling of support from across country that comes through the Constitutional processes and I believe, we owe them. We owe our troops. The Constitutional process to know that the country is behind them through the executive and legislative branches working together and we have neglected that over the last 20 years.

MR. O'HANLON: So, I want to ask about the Space Force in a second, but first let me ask about a reform that I really closely associate with you and your time as chairman, which is the DOD change in how we acquire technology. And so, the change of the undersecretary of defense used to be

for acquisition technology and logistics now broken up into more the research and engineering side and then the procurement and sustainment side. How's that going? What's the legacy there and has this begun to really make a substantial different in how you see DOD acquiring technology?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah. I think it's been positive and a lot of credit goes to Senator McCain because when we became chairmen together in 2015, we both identified this as key priority that, not just the organizational change, but the authorities changes, and so forth. What we have discovered, and knew, but even discovered more since then, is that we can give them all the authorities and organizational change that we want, but it's the culture that really determines how people behave.

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah.

MR. THORNBERRY: And I think what you are seeing in the -- especially, the past couple of years, are people in the Department of Defense who are more willing to exercise the authorities we have given them with OTA's and various other sort of mechanisms and cut through some of the bureaucracy. Now, it's still a struggle. I'm not going to -- as long as anybody has a job like these, we will need to be working to speed up the process of getting technology into the hands of the war fighter, and there's lot of parts of that. But it's better now and I think they needed to know that they could -- people in DOD needed to know that they could try something and if it failed; we learned. They weren't going to be necessarily hauled up in front of Congress and berated because they tried something that failed. That's part of the culture, which is on our shoulders. So, I think it's changing but it's going to take even more time.

MR. O'HANLON: A related question has to do with the health of the defense industrial base and of course, one of the things you were trying to do, as I understand it with some of these reforms because we've talked about it in previous years, you were trying to bring more companies and more technology concepts into the DOD world. Try to encourage more Silicon Valley and other firms to be interested in bidding on contracts and providing technology to the nation's armed forces. The of course, there's the health of the primes, the big five, the other subcontractor base, obviously, having more dollars for procurement and R, D, T and E helps, but I wonder if you had an overall assessment of trends with

the defense industrial base in the United States?

MR. THORNBERRY: We need to keep trying. So, I do think, Google aside, most technology companies want to do business with the Department of Defense. Not just for the business, but they want to contribute because I think, a number of them understand they exist only because of the freedoms that the Department of Defense and our military have provided over the years. And that, when we get something as controversial as artificial intelligence, if they are on the sidelines, then their viewpoints, their values may not be represented and we need that, to sort through how we're going to deal with this competition, especially when China has no value. Different values, we'll say. So, I think -- but I can't tell -- and we're still struggling with this, I can't tell you how many startup smaller companies don't have the resources of Microsoft and Amazon. They'll win an award and have something cool, but then there is the proverbial valley of death, where funding dries up until it is taken up with a program of record and they don't have the resources to keep the people production lines going. And so, this is something we've talked about a fair amount this year, trying to figure out a way to -- especially, for small and mid-size companies, to fill in some of those gaps. What is requires is a little more flexibility of funding and I'm hopeful that the appropriators will see the wisdom of that.

MR. O'HANLON: I wanted to -- you mentioned culture in the context of innovation and part of it, I think, what you were alluding to, if I understood correctly, was the way people within DOD do their jobs. The kind, you know, care they take in trying to do procurement. The number of boxes they have to check. The sort of red tape and regulations. Some of it for good purpose, but much of it also sort of arteriosclerotic. But another question of culture, is the services themselves and which types of systems they prioritize? And some people over the years have said, well, you know, the Air Force is dominated in the modern era by fighter pilots and so, they tend to buy a lot of F35s and F22s. The Navy is maybe not dominated so much by one of its subcultures, but it still has a proclivity for big ships and the Army is still fundamentally about huge logistics spaces. They talk lightness, but it's really hard to do. We've tried various things over the years that haven't often work and so, do you worry that there are still elements of bias or culture within each of the services that we need to continue to challenge them to confront

themselves, since civilians, whether in Congress or Brookings or anywhere, can only do so much when the services themselves control so much of their own destiny, and certainly their promotion paths, a lot of their decisions on technology? So, do we prioritize fighter jets and aircraft carriers and tank too much and not sufficiently prioritize long-range strike, robotics, etc.

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah. Yes, it's still a problem. It is not a new problem.

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah.

MR. THORNBERRY: Separating the Army Air Corps from the Army, you know, and we can go back with other examples. But this is with warning, where Article I, Section 8, comes in. Now, the president, as you recall, the House passed a Space Force before the president ever uttered the words and so, this is a prime example where it is up to Congress to break through some of that culturally resistance, and it's understandable, you know, these are human beings. If fighter jets had been the dominant culture in the Air Force, it's kind of hard to think about separating off something else with unmanned systems, much less, to lose a key part of the force, in effect, with space, but that's our job. And we have to be willing to rattle some cages; if it's clearer that it's in the national interest, and it's only going to get more complicated. Again, I keep going back to cyber. Whose responsibility is that? And other examples where the traditional domains we have thought of over the years are becoming more intertwined and are going to require different sorts of decision making, organizational structures, command and control and we're just beginning to grapple with some of that.

MR. O'HANLON: So, Space Force, if I could. Of course, some of the skeptics, including myself, on that topic wondered how you could make sort of such a small service and give it independent standing. But the advocates, including yourself, have won the debate. I don't see us going back. But I wonder if you're happy with the way you see Space Force beginning to emerge because, of course, now it's just sort of a slice of the Air Force taken off to the side and still within the department of the Air Force, not a separate department? But on the other hand, that means other services may not feel they have enough real skin in the game to care much or to do much to support it. Does it have to become much more ecumenical to be effective as the years go by?

MR. THORNBERRY: Well, I think it will evolve. But the -- one of the key things for starting it now, was to have a cadre of people who were thinking about space and war fighting in space and training people to be war fighters in space rather than have them rotate over to logistics or bombers, you know, you needed that sort of intellectual heft --

MR. O'HANLON: Mm-hmm.

MR. THORNBERRY: -- in order to prepare the country. The other key question that I think we're going to watch a lot; is the whole space acquisition. Because this also gets to that point, do we see a predominance for usual sort of contractors with usual sort of contracts and what not, or are they willing to kind of venture out a little bit. And there's still some tussles going on within the department about who's going to control what and, you know, that's a natural. But I really do believe because, space is, and will be even more so, a central war fighting domain, we had to get that started.

MR. O'HANLON: I want to now ask one last question about innovation and the whole third offset great power competition strand of thinking that we see pushing technologies like hypersonic weapons, directed energy, missile defense, see where you're most excited about possibilities. Any progress you see beginning. Most concerned about vulnerabilities. So, just sort of a big broad question on innovation and then I'll begin to wrap up. I got one more question for you on the state of play with China and Russia and then I'll finally share some of the pleasure here and let the audience have at you as well. But, could you tell us, across this whole spectrum of technologies that we now see being emphasized in the third offset in the latter Obama years and now, in the Trump administration, and again, hypersonics, artificial intelligence, you know, we talked about robotics, you've talked about space, are there any other areas that you just have a particular passion for? Either because you see emerging possibilities or because you're really nervous about existing vulnerabilities?

MR. THORNBERRY: We are clearly behind in certain areas: hypersonics, space control, you know, and probably some others. I think what I'm most excited about though is the -- I don't want to say merger, but bringing these different technologies together in a way that American innovation can do that nobody else can do. I think that's going to be our advantage. It's not to spend 10 billion more

dollars on AI or hypersonics or something and have the latest and greatest, it's bringing all of these technologies together for warfighting capability consistent with our values. Now, again, I'm not saying we're moving at the appropriate pace; we're not. But to me, that's the greatest promise, is how we can use AI and the other things all together.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic. You spent a lot of time and your chairmanship really overlapped with, like General Dunford's, as chairman with this renewed focus on great power competition. I mean, the four years that you were chairman were really, sort of, the big four years for that in terms of getting it going and making a lot of the changes over two presidential administrations. So, in that sense, I think of you and Chairman Dunford maybe, General Selva's, in the category of people who straddled those administrations and really pushed this stuff. So, I wanted to ask, how well you think your efforts have begun to pan out? We're obviously in early days in dealing with a rising China and I don't know how far along we are in dealing with Putin and revanchist Russia, but do you feel like there's success in the implementation of the national defense strategy that we have, sort of either reestablished some conventional and nuclear strengths or maybe we've gotten a little bit more in Russia and China's head and they're not feeling they could push us around as much. Maybe we've stabilized some sectors like Eastern Europe or the South China Sea or maybe you feel that the problems are still continuing to intensify and snowball. I'd love to hear your take on that?

MR. THORNBERRY: When somebody asks me the old question, you know, what keeps you up at night? My answer is always, it's the decisions we make for ourselves. And so, I think, we have turned a corner in great power competition but it's largely within our own minds, that, okay, this is serious. And I don't -- you know, I don't want to dismiss this, but most of us thought that China would become integrated into the world economy and they would moderate and they would be so dependent on the world economy they wouldn't be bad actors and, you know, it would all -- they would come closer to us, basically. I think what's changed in the minds of members of Congress, and to some extent the public, and it's not just from a military but from an economic and other standpoint, values standpoint with all this surveillance system they've got and whatnot. I think there is a much greater awareness that they're not



going to be like us and this is a competition and we better cinch up and be ready. So, I think that's where we've turned the corner. Now, you know, you still have the old proverbial turning aircraft carrier takes a long time. We've got DOD programs that have been going for a long time. They may have more or less applicability and great power competition and making all those changes takes time, but the key thing is in your mind. So, okay, we've got to be serious about this and make some tough choices and I think the interesting thing for this year's defense budget is, will Congress go along with some of the tough choices; the cuts, that DOD sent over? We won't agree with them all. We shouldn't agree with them all, but you've got be willing to walk away from somethings in order to emphasize some of the newer things and this year will be an interesting test case on that.

MR. O'HANLON: One follow up, I promise, and then go to -- you should be thinking of your questions. You mentioned China, let me swing over to Russia and to maybe try to give a little more credit than you've accepted yourself or claimed yourself for some of the things that occurred on your watch. The European Reassurance Initiative, now the European Deterrents or Defense Initiative, has not put huge NATO forces into the front lines of the eastern member states, including the Baltics, but it has put a presence. The United States now has roughly 5,000 troops rotating through Poland but they're there all the time even if their "rotational" and NATO member states have another 5,000 or so in the three Baltic states in these enhanced forward presence battalions. They're not really all that impressive as combat formations, as you know better than I, they're sort of hodge-podges of a few companies from this country and a few from that, but nonetheless, it's a pretty clear forward defense line and makes it pretty clear to Russia that we would all be engaged, presumably pretty fast, in any kind of attack Russia might carry out in the Baltics. Don't you feel like that's helped stabilize Europe? That despite all the reasons we still have to be vigilant about Russia, here at home and abroad, that the defensibility of the Baltic states and the commitment of NATO to them, is in better shape today than it was five years ago, largely, if I might, thanks to your work?

MR. THORBERRY: Well, I don't think it's my work, but I agree with you completely that it's in much better shape. And I was just in Munich a couple of week ago, making the point over and over,

don't watch what we tweet, watch what we do. And what we do, is make that commitment, which is a -- reassurance wasn't a bad word, even though it's fine to change it, and I think that's made a tremendous difference. I am of the school that believes one of our most valuable assets are our system of partnerships and alliances. And just kind of like your marriage or your kids, you've got to nurture those things. You can't take them for granted. And it has been a success in Europe. Which is why, a couple of years ago, we put into the bill a similar sort of effort in Asia and we can't ever get the Pentagon or the appropriators to fund it. But I think it's the same thing; help build up the infrastructure that shows we can work together and ease of cooperation and so forth. So, I'm hoping that we can do that too.

MR. O'HANLON: Great. Well, thank you so much for all those great answers and let me see if we could begin the conversation -- we'll begin here with the woman in the 5<sup>th</sup> row -- or 4<sup>th</sup> row, please wait for a microphone and identify yourself before asking your question. Thank you.

QUESTIONER: Hi, I'm Zaneb from the Atlantic Council. Yeah, following the great competition, I would like to know more about Iran because after the killing of Soleimani there is a kind of divide in the Congress. Secretary Pompeo testified on that. I would like to know your point of view? Is there a lack of coherent defense strategy after the killing of Soleimani?

MR. THORNBERRY: A lack of agreement in Congress about our approach to Iran? Is that -- okay. I think there is a lot of agreement that getting rid of Soleimani is a good thing. Not a whole lot of debate about that. There continues to be some differences of opinion about whether it was a good or bad thing to get out of the JCPOA, but you know, at this stage, I don't think we go backwards. The question is, is there a path forward where there can be a negotiation and I think the administration and most in Congress are willing to look at that, but the regime is obviously under tremendous pressure right now. I don't think it's a coincidence that it's one of the three or four countries with the most Coronavirus because they have a hard time facing up and telling the truth and if you look at the problem they had lying to their people about shoot down of the civilian airliner and that distrust that is there anyway, I don't know where Iran is going to go, but I think it's going to get more volatile, not less. And so, what we've got to be on our guard about is that the regime decides, okay, we've got all these problems here and home and

we're going to lash out against the great Satan in order to distract people from all the things they don't like about our government. And so, I really think we've got to stay on our toes with missiles and all the other capability that Iran and its proxies have. We tend to relax. We think, okay the crisis is over. I'm not sure that it's over at all.

MR. O'HANLON: Gentleman in the red shirt, 5th row.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Tony Retucka, Inside Defense. A question about the wall. Chairman Smith says he's working on bill right now that would force the administration to return 3.8 billion dollars from the Pentagon that was transferred for the wall. You're on record saying that you don't like the fact the administration transferred the funds. I'm wondering if you would support that bill or if it's something that you think has a chance?

MR. THORNBERRY: I realize I am whistling in the dark to some extent, but I support a wall. I support physical barriers on the boarder and I have ever since George W. Bush was president. What I do not support, is any administration that would take a bill that is signed into law and as they choose, move money around for whatever purpose. Whether it's transferred to DHS or not and whether they agree with us or not. You know, the answer we got last week, was, oh, it's excess to need. Well, that's not their choice and back to one of your questions, one of the ways that Congress has forced changed in the department was to say, no, you're not going to retire these 810s. Yes, you are going to buy these Predators even though you didn't ask for them and there's a whole list of things where we look pretty good, now, we make mistakes too. But the point is, the Constitution says, that's our choice and so, I am interested and concerned about leaving this unilateral rearrangement of funds and programs unanswered. It kind of scares me to death what president Bernie Sanders is going to do with some authority like that if we don't stand up and say, no, you can't do that.

QUESTIONER: You think you might sign the bill then?

MR. THORNBERRY: We're talking.

MR. O'HANLON: So, we'll come here, stay on this side for the moment. Second row, please.

QUESTIONER: My name is (inaudible), I'm a reporter from Radio Free Asia. Yesterday, North Korea, (inaudible) to on a project, so how do you see about North Korea launch of missile yesterday?

MR. THORNBERRY: I'm sorry, it was the North Korea launch -- I don't know the details of what it was that they launched. I think we will see North Korea continually reminding us that they are there and they're not happy. I mean, that has been their history for decades. They are not going to walk away from that. It is interesting to see if it's true that the North Korean-Chinese border has been closed down to a large extent. What effect that has on North Korea and their domestic situation. So, it's a -- man, this is a -- we haven't even talked about Syria, Turkey, all these things that are going on at once. We're in a very volatile time in Asia, in the Middle East, and to some extent in Europe. And that's why the more that we can stay together, Republicans and Democrats on issues of national security even if we're going to fight about healthcare, taxes and all this other stuff, then that's better for the country, and for a lot of our allies.

MR. O'HANLON: If I could stay out, I'm going to use the prerogative here and just ask a question about the U.S./ROK alliance and this debate about how much more South Korea should pay for our host nation support. Do you have a view on that? That's sort of close to home in the sense that's the kind of stuff Congress is good at thinking through, but this involves payments abroad by an ally to the United States. Do you think President Trump was being realistic in asking South Korea to essentially quintuple its payment? Maybe he was right in principle, but the amount was too much, or do you have a viewpoint on that because as you know, we're only one month away speaking of Texas new year, we're one month away from the end of the funding that General Abrams and Ambassador Harris have said they need to keep the South Koreans who work with us in South Korea doing important work for in support of our forces. That money's going to run out by April 1st, roughly. And at that point, we may start to see material effects on the working of the alliance. So, do you have a view as to how this divide between Seoul and Washington could be bridged?

MR. THORNBERRY: President Trump is a negotiator. I don't know if I buy this and

again, this is not an original idea for me, but somebody wrote that his negotiations are about one-time deals. Get the best you can and then you go to the next deal. His history of negotiation is not a negotiation in a relationship that will have to continue. And so, you come into the negotiation like that in a somewhat different mindset. I don't know if that's insightful. I just thought it was interesting. I think the Republic of Korea does a lot. I mentioned, I think our greatest asset in many ways are our alliances and partners. I would like for them to do more, but I don't want to get carried away and lose the most valuable thing that we've got in the hopes of getting another dollar or two.

MR. O'HANLON: Stay up here. The second row, George, please.

MR. NICHOLSON: Sir, George Nicholson. Thanks for attending and thanks for all your support in the past for special operations and the chairman, the subcommittee on oversight of SOFT (phonetic) like Adam Smith was. Two weeks ago, we had a major conference on Capitol Hill attended and one of the things that came out with three of the former ASD (SO/LIC) is that they said it's critical to elevate the position from the ASD (SO/LIC) that the Undersecretary of Defense, you position on that.

MR. THORNBERRY: We're talking about it. I don't know that I have a considered judgment yet, that that is required. I recognize that they expressed that opinion. No question, it is a unique sort of capability and oversight and direction of that unique capability presents some challenges and opportunities. But if I can just go back rearranging the organizational boxes is not automatically the best solution for every problem. Now, it may be a good one and I still think it was probably the smart thing to do to break AT&L up into two components. But I just don't know enough about this yet, or hadn't thought through it enough to know whether I agree with it or not.

MR. O'HANLON: The woman towards the back and then after that, Pat right next to her.

MS. HYER: There we go. Lauren Hyer, Washington times. Can you talk a bit about what you see as a -- there we go, maybe this better.

MR. O'HANLON: I think it's better.

MS. HYER: Can you talk a bit about what you see as the Pentagon's role in combatting the coronavirus and whether you have any concerns about the military's ability to handle the breakout

both at home and abroad at military bases around the world?

MR. THORNBERRY: Well, the military -- as we saw with Ebola, the military has unique capabilities that sometimes have to be brought to bear in trying to contain a dangerous virus or biological element. That does not mean that the military should be on the front lines. One of my concerns is over the years, other elements of government have somewhat atrophied in a way so that we automatically turn to the military to go solve problems. And I think we put them in a hard place, but we got people in South Korea as we were just talking and all over the world that obviously steps have been taken there restricting access to the base and whatnot. So, the military has a seat, should have a seat at the table, but it's not going to be primarily up to the military to contain.

MR. O'HANLON: Pat?

MR. TOWELL: Pat Towell, CRS. Mr. Thornberry, first of all, thank you for all the many courtesies over the years. I've had the pleasure to visit with you, which was almost as long as I've been in business with the other guy. As I look around the room here, though three of us are in a maybe small minority of the people in the room who are playing in the game the last time we had to worry about peer competitors and great power conflict. That fact interacts with another thing because with the rate of turnover in membership is way up, therefore, the average tenure of members is way up and I wonder if that has implications for how the committees do oversight year-over-year-over-year and I don't -- I'm not going anywhere with this. I'm not a lawyer so I ask questions to the answer to which I don't know. But really, do we need to give more thought to some kind of systematic orientation to newly elected members, or at least new members of the Committee?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah, it would help, but you all don't have enough time for me to go into all of this even if I could think of it. I am concerned about the rate of turnover. I served on the Armed Services Committee 10 years before I was appointed to the Intelligence Committee and I had no clue what I didn't know. And it took years of being on the Intelligence Committee to gain some sort of insight into that element even though I've been getting intelligence briefings all along. It takes time. Not everybody is inclined to acquisition reform, but if you're that big a nerd, it takes time to dig down and

understand the FAR and all the implications and so forth and if your average tenure and don't quote me on this, is you know, roughly, six, eight years, then you're not going to have time to do it. And that goes to the state of our politics, but it also goes to, I would say, all right, as I leave (laughter), one of my biggest concerns is the state of our institutions because as people come and go, if the institution is strong, then that's okay. But I think, for a whole variety of reasons, there is less interests in strengthening and maintaining our institutions. It's more about me and whatever my narrow objective right now. And especially when it comes to National Security, the Chinese have a specific goal for 2049 and et cetera, et cetera and as we rotate people through the Executive and Legislative branches at that rate, it is hard for us to formulate and approach that can keep up with such things. So, yeah, I'm worried about it. I don't have any magic answers for it, but I will say I appreciate institutions like Brookings and others that do provide some continuity. You can never do enough to help educate members -- newly elected members even if they've served in the military. They have some specific deep expertise, but there's lots of stuff they haven't deal with and so I agree we need to do that, but anything any of us can do to strengthen and maintain our institutions inside and outside of government, I think that's good.

MR. O'HANLON: Here in the second row, please.

MS. KENNEY: Thank you. Hi, I'm Caitlin Kenney with Stars and Stripes. My question is what are your thoughts on the recent Afghanistan Peace Deal, especially troop is leaving within 14 months and the release of the Taliban prisoners?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah -- excuse me, the short answer is I'm worried about it. Especially because it is not clear to me what the conditions are that would lead to our complete withdrawal in 14 months; who decides whether those conditions have been met; and what the metrics are for it and so forth. Is there a chance this peace deal would be a -- ultimately, a positive thing for the people of Afghanistan, the people of the United States? Yes, but as with every agreement, enforcement is the key and as you know, there are some people who are concerned that this is window dressing for a withdrawal and the way to disprove that is to be very explicit, in my view, about, okay, here's what the Taliban and others, maybe, have to do if we're going to go below 8,600 troops. And here's how we're

going to know whether they're doing it; and here's who's going to make that judgment call. I mean, those are some of the questions as we dig into this in Congress that I'll be asking.

MR. O'HANLON: Stay on this side of the room for a moment. Gentleman here in the red tie in the front row, please.

MR. THEOROS: Sir, it's been a remark -- I'm really happy I could make it today. This has been remarkable. I spent a large part of my life in the Foreign Service, particularly in the Reagan administration negotiating throw weights (phonetic) and stuff like that --

MR. O'HANLON: Would you mind telling us your name, please.

MR. THEOROS: Patrick Theoros (phonetic).

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

MR. THEOROS: I missed -- I don't -- there wasn't much discussion of the diplomatic component as we talk about nuclear weapons and relationships. Could you comment on that?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah, obviously, diplomacy can play a critical role, but I think in the Reagan administration, guided largely by President Reagan himself and others, there was a strategic construct under which the military and the diplomatic corps could operate. We knew what we were trying to achieve and so, we had to convince our European allies we're going to deploy Persian 2s and Glickoms (phonetic) and -- but the diplomats also had to charge that if you can get everybody down to zero, then that's a go. I'm not sure what the strategic goal is now and again, this goes -- I may be overstating a little bit, but I worry that the sort of expertise of nuclear deterrence especially the way it is today, has atrophied in our country and then, there's a whole other set of issues we hadn't -- I haven't said this word once, even though we talk about it all the time, is whole of government approach and to be successful, then we are going to have to do better at getting all these tools of national power and influence to work together. Diplomacy is obviously a key part of them, as our economics and values and other things. All of that has -- presents us with a lot of challenges.

MR. O'HANLON: Gentleman right here in the third row, please.

MR. GRADY: Hi, John Grady from USNI News. Questions on the Navy budget which



was created with more skepticism than usual, particularly when it applies to modernization. Would you change the way the chips are counted to include unmanned large vessels in their plan to get their 355 ships, or modernize the fleet, or would you leave that standard, stay there and then continue to modernize in other areas.

MR. THORNBERRY: Let me just make a preliminary comment. One of the things that came out in my questioning of the Secretary and CNO was if you compare this year's budget to last year's budget, they increased ONM funding about \$4 billion and they decreased ship building by about \$4 billion because they made the considered judgment that they had to do better, as I was kind of referring earlier, to getting the ships that we already have operable. And that we can talk about numbers, what counts, what doesn't. Is it a tugboat, is it unmanned, but if you what you got doesn't work, then it's not doing anybody much good. So, that's number one.

Number two, I think the other thing that I took away is everybody sounded like, including the Secretary of Defense, are anxious to have a more comprehensive ship building, not just ship building, but ship building and maintenance plan from the Navy. And so, no question, there will be more unmanned systems in the Navy, just like there are in the other services. I think we've got to focus more on the capability rather than just numbers and the Navy's going to have to help show us the way where they think it ought to go.

MR. O'HANLON: We will come here to the front row and then we've got a couple more before we finish up.

MR. THONBERRY: All right.

MR. GALAVAN: Carl Galavan -- just a few days ago, Elon Musk of Tesla has basically (phonetic) discovered that the era of the manned, the fighter aircraft has ended. He said it augmented AI, or AI augmented the drones could simply defeat fighter aircraft. Of course, space tech has brought us reusable rockets, just if you could comment on what Elon Musk said and whether, if it's space tech might be their Starlink satellite system is out interacting with DOD in some operations, might space tech's be a contractor for developing such a competitive drone?

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah, maybe. We need visionaries and by any definition, Mr. Musk is a visionary. The challenge for the Department and to some extent, us, is how do you get from here to there with an acceptable amount of risk. And that's hard sometimes. So, we put a lot of investment into F-35, for example. It has incredible capabilities. Our partners are buying it, so obviously, we're not going to walk away from that. But is there a further term objective, whether it's ships, planes, ground vehicles, et cetera, where we reduce the danger that we put human beings in, sure. And it's important that we encourage the sort of out-of-box thinking within the government and outside the government that that represents.

Now, there may be some foolish ideas that come. That's okay, but we want to nurture those ideas and some of them will unquestionably come from private industry, many of them will.

MR. O'HANLON: Woman here in the fifth row, or fourth row and then we'll stay on that side and then we'll come over here for a final question. It's not working.

MS. WONG: Thank you, Katie Wong with NTD TV. I have a couple of questions regarded to --

MR. O'HANLON: Just one, please.

MS. WONG: Okay.

MR. O'HANLON: Part of the system.

MR. WONG: Yeah, it's related to this coronavirus breakout in China because we have seen that it has a big impact to the global wide supply chain. Does this also have any impact to the--our defense supply chain in the United States?

MR. O'HANLON: Good question.

MS. WONG: Thank you.

MR. THORNBERRY: Sure. Because it's not just civilian businesses that are dependent upon products and components that come from China and so, to the extent those are threatened in some way, or economic commerce is threatened, then, of course, it could relate to defense weapons and equipment. The extent to which global commerce shuts down also leads to all sorts of geopolitical issues

that may also require attention. I mean, I hesitate to say this, but maybe -- I mean, obviously, we want to get coronavirus contained, eliminated as fast as we can, but maybe we can also take this opportunity to use it as a wake-up call that being so dependent whether you're talking about equipment, or you're talking about pharmaceutical components, or whatever it is you're talking about, being that dependent upon one country is not a good and healthy thing and we need to diversify our supply base.

MR. O'HANLON: Gentleman here, please.

MR. HUN: Thank you, Duncan Hun from Radio Free Asia. Also, need to follow-up quickly on North Korea's yesterday's provocation. As you know, on North Korea's provocation has been thus, the short-range missile so far and what's your view on what if they shoot an ICBM? Would you say the administration should call off the negotiation? Alternatively, if they proceed with satellite launch, would you consider that equivalent to testing ICBM technology?

MR. THORNBERRY: Oh, I -- sorry, for years, whether you're talking about North Korea or Iran, we have said, if you can put a satellite in space, then that is the capability for an ICBM launch. I'm not going to tell the administration how to react if something particular happens. I would expect a series of increasingly provocative actions by the North Koreans because it's what they've done for decades. And then, the administration will have to figure out an appropriate response to pushback against them and that appropriate response has to be made with our close allies in the Republic of Korea and in Japan. And our close allies in the Republic of Korea and Japan need to work together to make sure that we are all on the same page.

MR. O'HANLON: We've got the gentleman in about the ninth row in the checkered shirt.

MR. LAFAVE: Hi, I'm Joseph Lafave (phonetic) with National Guard Magazine. This question is about the Space Force. Many of the Adjutant General are in favor of creating a Space Guard concurrently with the Space Force, but I'm wondering what you think is the best way to organize the reserve component of Space Force.

MR. THORNBERRY: Yeah, we'll talk with both the Reserve and the Space Force Commander about how to do that. I think it is inevitable that there will be a reserve component

associated with the Space Force. Timing, structure and so forth, we'll need to work with them on, but it's like cyber, it's inevitable. We've got to take advantage of the tremendous expertise that people have in this field. And one way to do that is having reserve guard.

MR. O'HANLON: One more question over there if we have one, and then otherwise, I've got one more to finish up. Okay, the woman over here in the red. And then we'll move towards --

MS. HYSER: (Inaudible)

MR. O'HANLON: Wait one sec.

MS. HYSER: Oh, sorry. Hi, Eleanor Hyser with Synopsis. You were talking about the administration taking on the authority of just rewriting Congress' budget. In the FY17 NDAA, you all required that military medical research be moved over to the Defense Health Agency and the RME has let me know that they have no intention of moving it out of OMBC's Command. I was wondering if you are still talking to the Army about this, or if they're just doing it willy-nilly?

MR. THORNBERRY: It goes back to where we were talking about. Sometimes Congress maybe rightly, maybe wrongly makes different judgment calls than the Department does. But I believe that one of the essential elements of rule of law is actually enforcing the law. You know, whether it's a good law, bad law, ugly law. It is not up to the Department any more than it's up to the Department of Agriculture, or Health and Human Services, or anybody to rewrite the law to suit their own preferences.

Now, they can come and say, this is really stupid what you all did. We need to change it. Here's why. That's fair, but to just say we are not going to comply with the law, I think is -- I had a great quote and I didn't bring it with me, but Carl Vincent got into a tussle with the second Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson and basically, he says, it's a matter of basic Constitutional principle whether Congress is going to decide what kind of defense we have, or whether the Department is going to tell Congress what kind of defense they will let us have.

So, this is not new, but it is something that is bigger than wall, no wall and some of the other ways it's portrayed. That's why I'm a little exercised about it because I do think it is a matter of constitutional responsibility and authority going back to what I said about institutions, man, if we don't

respect the Constitution and the rule of law, then we are fundamentally changing this country.

MR. O'HANLON: So, last question, if I could pose it to you, sir, and I'm going to put it in terms of the Defense budget, but it has larger implications and it gets to your interests in reminding the country. I know you're going around the country talking about the importance of foreign policy and global leadership. So, I'll put this in Defense budget terms, you may want to comment on the broader issue as well. We're now, apparently, reaching a plateau in the Defense budget. You worked very hard to get the number up. There's been some substantial progress because the number is higher, but now, it looks at best, even in real terms and maybe even when you factor inflation in, slightly declined over the next few years, at least according to Trump administration projections. Now, there'll be a new election. There may be a new president, or there'll be a newly re-elected president, so all this could change, but since it could change, what would be your advice to future lawmakers and presidents about how much the Defense budget needs to keep going up, or do you feel that we can do pretty well in sort of the mid-\$700 billion range if we make the smart kinds of choices and reforms that you've been promoting?

MR. THORNBERRY: In a different context, President George W. Bush said, beware of the soft bigotry of low expectations. I worry that you're already here and all around town, oh, we're going to have to have a CR. They'll never be able to get anything done this year. The Defense budget has plateaued, it'll never go up after here. We ought to talk about what we need, not kind of play to the cynicism and try to look smart with soft bigotry of low expectations.

So, my request for everybody in the room is, hold us to higher expectations. We may not always meet it, but keep -- tell us what we ought to do. Getting our budget on time; what's the right amount, et cetera; hold us to higher expectations. I don't know of a better number than the National Strategy Commission came up with a couple of years ago, which is 3 to 5 percent real growth. And they looked at the threat; they looked at what we were doing; and, I think that ought to be the target. And you can talk about the components within that, but a -- it's not too much to ask to defend this country and our way of life to say 3 to 5 percent real growth especially when if you look at the whole Federal budget, Defense is 15 percent of the Federal budget, one five percent of the Federal budget. We are nearly at

the lowest level we've ever been compared to gross domestic product. And yet, the Defense budget defends all the rest of the gross domestic product. So, I think there's a good case to be made for at least 3 to 5 percent. That's what I would target it because a lot of smart people came -- I told you I borrow ideas. A lot of smart people came together and said that's the target and that's what we ought to go for.

MR. O'HANLON: Congressman, thank you so much for your service to the country and for joining us today. (Applause)

\* \* \* \* \*

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

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