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WEBINAR

WHAT IS A STRATEGY DENIAL AND DOES
IT MAKE SENSE FOR AMERICA?

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. MALONEY: Good afternoon from Sunny Washington, D.C. and welcome to all those of you who are tuning in from other parts of the country or around the world. I'm Suzanne Maloney and I'm Vice President and Director of the Foreign Policy Program here at the Brookings Institution. It's my great pleasure to welcome you to this event, "What is a strategy of denial and does it make sense for America"? I'm joined by my colleagues Michael O'Hanlon and Melanie Sisson, as well as former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy Enforced Development, Elbridge Colby.

This theme that we're here to discuss today happens to be the theme of a new book that Bridge has just published entitled "The Strategy Of Denial, American Defense In An Age Of Great Power and Competition". His research raises some of the key questions facing the Biden Administration today, as well as the rest of the world. How should the United States approach China in coming years? How might the U.S. Military convincingly prepare to win a war with China in order to deter such a war from ever taking place? Bridge's book presents much to consider. It's drawn an enormous amount of attention and I'm greatly looking forward to what promises to be a rich and though provoking conversation.

Before we launch into today's discussion, let me tell you a few words about our panel here today. First, Bridge himself; he is Cofounder and Principal of The Marathon Initiative, and he helped prepare the 2018 National Defense Strategy while serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Prior to entering government service, Bridge was the Robert M. Gates Senior Fellow at The Center for New American Security from 2014 to 2017, and he has worked in various roles at the Department of Defense, the Department of State and in the intelligence community.

We are joined today by Mike O'Hanlon, my colleague who is Senior Fellow Director of Research for the Foreign Policy Program here at Brookings and Director of our Center on Security Strategy and Technology. Mike specializes in U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force and American National Security Policy. He is the author of any number of books that are relevant to today's discussion, including the most recent one that he's published earlier this year, "The Art of War in the Age of Peace, U.S. Grand Strategy And Resolute Restraint".

We're also joined by our colleague Melanie Sisson who is a Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program Center for Security Strategy and Technology. Her research focuses on the use of the armed forces in international politics, U.S. national security strategy and military applications of artificial intelligence in emerging technologies. Her career includes experience in the U.S. Government, the private sector and think tanks such as The Rand Corporation and The Stimson Center, and her book "Military Coercion and U.S. Foreign Policy, The Use of Force Short Of War" was published last year.

Before we get into the substance of our discussion today, let me just remind you all of a few housekeeping rules. We are on the record and we are streaming live, and please send any questions that you may have for the panelists via email to events@brookings.edu or via Twitter using the hash tag #strategyofdenial. With that, let's get to the substance of our program.

Bridge, I'd really like to turn to you first. In your book you consider the question of what the best defense strategy for America might be and you lay out a very coherent and logical framework for what this strategy should look like as essentially an outgrowth of American grand strategy. Can you walk us through your case and specifically why you concluded that we need to be prepared to engage in deterrence by denial?

MR. BRIDGE: Sure. Well, first of all; thank you Suzanne and Mike and Melanie for the invitation. It's really an honor to be on such a great panel and with Brookings which is such a leader in this field, and of course I pay special respect to my friend Mike from whom I've learned so much about the defense strategy over the years, and so it's great to be here, thank you.

To your question, Suzanne; I mean, the book is essentially motivated by my sense that, you know, we are in effect continuing to pursue this sort of global strategy of heavy engagement that we've pursued since the end of the Cold War, but that we are now in a mismatch between that ability and our actual power, especially because of the rise of China; and so in this case, we're basically not unlike a company where we, you know, have too few resources to pursue or address all of the potential threats we might face unilaterally or mostly on our own. So, in this context the strategy is really important and I think my book, as you kindly said, is really designed to be a framework -- a coherent logical framework for

evaluating and determining what those threats are and how to meet them, and what the standards and the priorities are, and that's what I tried to do in the book; and so the denial is actually a two-level reference. I mean, as you said, a defense strategy, I think, to be reasonable and sound, and indeed moral, needs to proceed from some rational grand strategy; and there I tried to kind of get sort of more brass text, what is that we're really trying to do in the world in a way that's consistent with what I would say are Americans in light and self interest; and this is, in my view, we don't want to let any other state become so powerful that they could coerce us about our sort of core interests, you know, our freedom, our security and our prosperity, which are so central to the American ideal and American life. What that means in practice, in very simple terms, is that no state should be able to dominate through a sort of hegemonic position or otherwise. One of the key regions of the world and if you look at the world, economic power is not randomly, sort of, distributed. It's clustered as it has been, but it's expanding in Asia, Europe and North American itself because of the United States and the Persian Gulf; and if you look at that, Asia is by far the most important area of the world, it's going to be 50 percent roughly of global GDP; and in the world at large, by far the most powerful other state is China. So, that leads to the deduction that the priority for our foreign policy should be denying China regional hegemony in Asia, and I think it's fair to say that that is their goal and it's not a crazy goal, most state powers, in fact probably all in some respect, pursue such a hegemonic position.

So, if that's our objective of this sort of grand strategy GO political level, well how do we achieve it? Well, I think we can't do it all on our own, both because we lack the power but also because, you know, resolve tends to attenuate over distance, and Asia of course is far away from us here in North America. So, we're going to have to do it with a coalition, right; which is going to be a coalition that's together going to be stronger in some sense than China and its confederates in what you might think of as a pro hegemonic coalition. Ours is an anti-hegemonic coalition.

So far, so good. We sort of see that happening with things like the Quad and AUKUS, and any number of other indicators. So, that's good so far. China though is not a static actor; it has an ability to push back on that and I think in that respect China's sort of optimal strategy is what I think of as

a focused and sequential strategy. Basically think of this as instead of doing what, let's say, Hitler did in precipitating a large war with everybody; which you're probably going to lose and at minimum is going to be very costly and risky, you pursue a progressive strategy of kind of chipping away at important members of this coalition until you essentially cause a run on the bank, and it collapses or short circuits and China achieves regional hegemony from which position it will be globally perminate.

Now, China would probably rather do this without fighting, using economic coercion and that sort of power of its example, but I think over the last couple of years we've seen not only that that's actually in fact causing a lot of balancing behavior, but also the limits of economic sanctions. I think we can see that to Australia's credit right now in the Australian response to China's attempts to essentially get it to bend a knee for economic sanctions, and of course our record of the employment of economic sanctions is also very — you know, doesn't suggest a lot of ambition should come out of it.

So, that's good in the sense that that means that antihegemonic coalition should be pretty resilient to non-military forms of coercion, except if China's really resolute about pursuing this goal, that makes the military instrument more attractive and China does have a military instrument. Yes, it's been a A2AD, so to speak, anti-access area within the military, but it's very clearly increasingly a power projection one, designed to project power throughout Asia, but also beyond; as I think the China Military Power Report released last week — earlier this week suggests.

So, in this case what do we need to do? So, this is our priority, we've got to stand by this coalition. The key to keeping this coalition going is for states that are in it to think that they will be protected enough to make a rationale decision. I think a lot of states want to bounce, but if they don't think they're going to be protected, they're going to cut a deal; they're going to bandwagon.

So, that gives us basically our political goal for our military forces. And here I really wanted to get the sort of the baseline, not you know "Hey, maybe we'd love to sort of push China back and humiliate them", I personally don't, but you know, maybe you'd want something more ambitious, but really all we need to do is keep our, allies in particular and I'm happy to go into that — allies in particular in this coalition protected enough to keep going and stay on side; and that's where denial comes in.

Denial is a standard of denying China's ability to subordinate our willing allies and that includes Taiwan, I'm happy to discuss that as well in my view, basically it's tantamount to an ally, 70 percent say. But, that is a very different standard than say, I think what, you know, if you'd ask Don Rumsfeld or even Bill Cohen or others 20 or 30 years ago, it would've been a different standard; but it's still a very high one, and where I conclude the book is basically, if we're going to be able to do this for Taiwan, we need to now, I think, almost drop everything else. So, I mean I sort of jocularly say, but I think it's effectively true. If you're not working on China and the conventional forces nuclear deterrence or a low-cost counterterrorism posture, you probably should be looking for a new job in the U.S. Military. And the way we plug those remaining vacuums, gaps, in our overall posture in places that are important, even if secondary like Europe and the Middle East, which you know far better than I, is through working with our (inaudible) partners and getting them to step up, and that's of course easier said than done. But, I think I said something -- not in the book, but something else recently, I think we blew the chance to make a graceful transition and now we just need all hands-on deck.

So, hopefully I haven't gone on too long, but that's the, I think, meat and potatoes.

MS. MALONEY: Bridge, you've put a lot on the table and I look forward to coming back to the questions of China's intentions and Taiwan in particular, but a number of other issues. But, I want to bring in now, Mike. Mike, you have championed a concept of integrated deterrence which happens to some language that we've also heard out of the Secretary of Defense in recent months; and I wonder if you could offer your thoughts on why that is a credible alternative to a strategy of denial as Bridge has just outlined, and what it might mean in terms of U.S. posture?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you Suzanne, thank you Bridge; fascinating conversation. Let me just, by way of warm up, tick off three or four things about the book that I really like. There are a lot of things I like, but I'm just going to give my top highlights.

One, it's very seriously informed by technical military analysis, as well as sound geostrategic thinking; and Bridge, you're good at both and you've done a lot of work in both areas, and obviously in your work at The Pentagon you were focused on both. There are still too many people in our

field who are one or the other primarily.

Second, I like that fact that you try to get inside the Chinese mind and in fact, we have a former colleague, Rush Doshi who wrote a great book on Chinese grand strategy, agrees with some of your concerns and spent a lot of time going into the documentation; and you know, Rush did a dissertation and learned Mandarin and spent half a decade scouring for documents; and you and I may not have the same relative proclivities or expertise, but you're very seriously informed by trying to get inside the Chinese mind and think also about what would be optimal for them in the abstract, but also the indicators that they show about what they do care about.

I also like the fact that even though your strategy as you say is ambitious, it's not preposterous, it's not beyond the realm, and some people have used language in recent times in the United States defense debate to imply or suggest or claim that if we only follow the Mattis National Defense Strategy or the Obama Administrations third offset or some other refocusing and reprioritization of military resources that we can reestablish the kind of dominance that we once had in the western pacific maritime domains. I think that's incorrect and I think you recognize that it's incorrect. And so, in a sense, as I interpret this and you might want to comment and tell me if I'm oversimplifying, but in a way you're not necessarily trying to reestablish -- or you don't really think that we can reestablish that kind of dominance throughout the air and sea lanes of the western pacific; you just want to make sure we can mutually deny China the ability to use those areas to invade Taiwan, for example. So, I think that's a very commendable strategic way of thinking because it is, you know, it is disciplined by reality.

But, to answer now, Suzanne, your question more directly. What I would say is that integrated deterrence, I guess as I understand it and perhaps the Biden team is still defining it themselves for themselves and Secretary Austin has gone public a few times with his thinking, but it's a broad ranging term that can mean different things to different people; but starting from this evaluation of the military situation in the western pacific, I think it's quite unlikely that China will try to invade Taiwan. Although, I agree with Bridge, we have to think about that scenario and plan better against it, and there are a number of defense acquisitions that I would like to make in the way of more unmanned underwater vehicles, more

swarms and drone complexes that we could launch from various parts of the western pacific in various ways, various kinds of small unmanned aircraft that don't even need runways that could perhaps be effective even if China attacks Okinawa and our aircraft carriers in the region in a future war. There are a lot of things we need to do to be better prepared against the possible invasion of Taiwan, the attempt; but I still think that attempt is so much a cosmic roll of the dice for China, even today, even without our reprioritization; that China's pretty unlikely to do it, which means that I worry more about blockade and cyber-attack scenarios; which means that I'm maybe comforting myself by being at one notch lower of the seriousness or at least the immediacy of the scenario. This is an unlikely way to force Taiwan to capitulate in five or ten days the way that an invasion might, but it's still quite serious for an island polity that depends on foreign trade for two-thirds of GDP.

And so, in my integrated deterrence concept, and I'll wrap here and we can go into it in more detail later as you wish, but what I'm trying to think of are asymmetric ways of responding to a Chinese blockade of Taiwan, so that we don't have to literally go hunting for those Chinese attack submarines and trying to defend against all those Chinese missiles that could be launched against ships because those are pretty difficult missions where I expect that we would lose a lot of American lives and perhaps wind up in the very uncomfortable place of deciding whether to escalate by attacking bases on the Chinese homeland, which to me is, you know, already well on the way to World War III and the possibility of nuclear escalation once you get there.

So, I am interested, not in any way in dismissing all of the ideas in Bridge's book. I think they should be part of the portfolio, but the additional part of the mix that I want to add is a form of indirect asymmetric warfare or integrated deterrence that would essentially lead with economic warfare against China by the United State and allies, and then perhaps reinforce that economic warfare with selective attacks in the Indian Ocean area and Persian Gulf where we have military advantages over China and where I think the battleground being far away from both countries is slightly less escalatory, although I have no delusions that this is somehow a safe containable conflict; but, I believe it's a more plausible way for the United States to respond initially to a blockade and then to buy time for a diplomatic off ramp.

So, that's just one application of this integrated deterrence concept, but it's not necessarily in any way, shape or form at loggerheads with Bridges point. I guess the only small direct descent that I will offer, and we can obviously talk more about this, is that I believe we have enough means at our disposal, we don't need to largely abandon interest in other parts of the world in order to pursue a reinvigorated focus of deterring China, and I don't want to. I think the NATO alliance is so crucial, the most impressive alliance in history. It's gotten bigger than I would prefer, but it's still 30 amazing countries with almost half of world GDP and more than half of world military spending. For all the burden sharing problems and other challenges it brings us, it's a remarkable group that also is crucial to how we handle China's (inaudible) and so I don't want to in any way, shape or form relegate that set of commitments to a lower place in the pecking order. The Middle East, you know, I think most of us would like to reduce where we can, but I just think it's hard to actually make those reductions, so you've got to do it patiently and case-by-case. I'll stop there, thank you very much.

MS. MALONEY: Well, we've got a lot on the table that I hope we can come back to and pull on some of the threads of what you've just laid out, Mike; but I want to turn now to Melanie and get your view of whether these are competing concepts, whether we should be thinking about deterrence in a different way, and effectively, what are the implications of either embracing a strategy of deterrence by denial or adopting a different approach.

MS. SISSON: Thanks Suzanne, and that's an understatement to say that there's already a lot on this table. So certainly, Bridge, Mike have given us already a lot to think about. Let me start also by extending a bit of gratitude to Bridge. I am grateful that you wrote this book. I really-really appreciate that you made explicit why you're convinced that the United States will be best served by a strategy of deterring by denial; and in particular, that you elaborate that through reference to international relations history and theory, and the ways in which those apply to today's conditions. I think it's really useful to look under the hood that way and we too infrequently do. I also want to note that, you know, you clearly are passionate about this subject and that's laudable. How we manage our use of force in the coming decades is going to be enormously consequential and so it's only right and proper that those involved in

forwarding and arbitrating ideas about how to do that in ways that are compatible with U.S. interests, you know, should come from a place of considered conviction, which clearly that you do.

So, I trust that you will take it in that same spirit that I'm actually going to highlight for you a few ways in which I disagree with the case that you make for the strategy of denial. So, please bear with me, I don't mean to be pedantic about this, but I do want to make sure that I put on the table, you know, my understanding of your argument so that you can correct it as needed, but at a minimum so that you'll understand how I've interpreted it and arrive at my own sort of concerns about it. So, I promise I'll be succinct.

So first, you covered very well that you identify preventing Chinese regional hegemony as a primary U.S. interest in competition today. I understand you believe that achieving this requires the National Defense Strategy be designed to ensure that the United States can fight and win a war with China and that it's not distracted by or made resource poor by lesser activities of daily competition; and that the status of Taiwan is the most important conflict of interest that might require the United States to prosecute that war with China in the near term. So, on the basis of that understanding, here are my points of dissent.

First, I think that the United States can retain the influence it needs in Asia to defend and promote its priority National Security interest even if China does invade Taiwan. You're clear in the book, I think, that you think a successful invasion of Taiwan would be the first in a cascading sequence of events that would effectively over time neutralize the United States in the region; and I'm unpersuaded by that particular progression. I think in the case of an invasion of Taiwan the United States and its allies would impose significant economic, diplomatic and potentially other costs on China and that China would be constrained by the work and expense of occupation. In fact, I think the prospect of those costs together are adequate to deter China from invading in the first place, which of course now won't surprise you is the basis of our second point of disagreement.

My view is that a strategy of deterrence by denial is overpaying in both costs and risks. By costs, I'm thinking about both the fiscal cost, but also opportunity costs. The goals that we leave

unachieved as a result of a defense strategy focused predominantly, if not exclusively, on war fighting. I think that the activities of daily competition actually matter quite a lot. I think that's where the international order is instantiated and practiced. They're the behaviors that constitute the order and so it's in the activities of daily competition that the international order is either enforced and maintained or neglected and eroded; and the overpayment and risk of course is the risk of war. I am not nearly as optimistic as you are about the ability of China and the United States to manage the impulse to arms race to arrive at the same conclusions about the local balance of power, much less about who would win in a war or about escalation control; and so I really worry that a forward and aggressive strategy of deterrence by denial increases the likelihood of misperception and miscalculation, and makes war more likely rather than less.

So, I'll stop there so we can actually get to some of the things that are already on the table. In addition, and just a quick note of thanks again, as I say, it's really important and valuable that you put the sweat equity into really making the basis of your argument very clear.

MS. MALONEY: Bridge, I'm going to pull you right back in because obviously there's a lot here that you can respond to, but I think, you know, now that we've sort of touched it, let's get into the question of Taiwan especially and Chinese intentions to the extent that you wish to do so.

MR. COLBY: Sure. Well, I mean, let me just say to both Mike and Melanie that those were exceptionally thoughtful and I think lucid comments that get a very real issue. I hope I wrote the book, well I know I wrote the book, I hope it was received in the spirit not that I have a kind of adamant certainty about each and every point, but rather that a lot of these are sort of 70/30. I mean, for instance like, there was a review the other day that was sort of suggesting I was kind of sanguine about the ability to control a superpower war. I'm not at all, I have no desire to risk it. My concern of course as you could imagine is that I'm concerned that if we're not prepared and the Chinese are, that we will actually increase the risk of war. So, these are essentially probabilistic matters and actually the conversation that we are having now, I hope they're having in The Pentagon, and I said to Mike a little while ago when we were doing something else, I said "You know, this is the kind of conversation -- this is the real weighing of cost". Melanie, your points about competition, about the security dilemma, about arms racing, about the

perception of local balance; those are exactly the kind of tough issues that are at issue; and actually, one of the things that I came away, from my time in The Pentagon that I think The Pentagon needed more of was, a sort of -- I'm not -- my main legal advice is don't take legal advice from me, but I do think the adversarial process is the one that refines the best answer. The synthesis if you want to use the haggle thing you know, but that's kind of where we should end up. But, I think just briefly, and again with all those caveats that I've just said, I think that what I worry about is that if we're not adequately prepared with the denial strategy, that China will actually have a rationale incentive to push and not to stop at Taiwan because China's interest in Taiwan is actually over-determined, it's not just irredentism. It's actually critical to the geopolitical balance given its salience and its status as an indicator of what I think of as American differentiated credibility. So, what I'm worried about is more, of course, that they will see a rational basis for aggression and moving further. And if they're goal is regional hegemony, I don't see why they would stop. It's not that they would seek to annex the Philippines or ultimately Japan, Vietnam, etc.; but that they would seek to ensure that they could coerce them to exceed to China's regional hegemony. I think that they're force development is actually what that -- it looks like it's a sort of very credible signal of what they're seeking to be able to do.

I'm also just -- and Mike, you know, this is where I would -- and I think both you and Melanie where we already disagree, is I think balance is a sort of a red herring or a false God, if you will, or false hope; because I don't believe that we would impose the costs cohesively and firmly enough on the Chinese to get them to discourage the issue and if people saw that that would happen, I think it would erode very quickly; and I don't think -- you know, for instance, if we attack them in the Indian Ocean and so forth, that that would also be enough.

So, I think actually the point is I'm actually very rooted in the problem of the asymmetry of resolve. I think when you have a lacking position in that balance of resolve, denial is more attractive. Of course, a controlled denial, one that we, you know, we can only hope would be controlled; but, I think that's the safest bet for us, is that the Chinese will see very clearly that not only would they probably suffer a lot, but that they would be frustrated in their goals

because I think that's the most effective form of deterrence. I actually think the Chinese are going to be very-very cautious about the cosmic roll of the dice, but if they have a high degree of confidence, it is very advantageous to them. If they think there's a good chance they will fail, I think they will be cautious, not only because they may end up on literally the chopping block, but also it could really damage their regional ambitions by emboldening others to work with us.

So, I just think denial is the safest point and I would take those risks that Melanie rightly laid out, that are real; but that I feel in some sense the Chinese are already racing against us anyway, so I'm not sure how much cost there really is in that front.

MS. MALONEY: Mike and Melanie, let me bring you back to the conversation. You know, you've both suggested that essentially punishment can be a deterrent -- or the prospect of punishment can be a deterrent to Chinese ambitions, and I wonder if you can expand upon that a little bit more and why you think that that actually would be credible to the Chinese under current circumstances, but also specifically to the question of Taiwan. I know, Bridge, you've projected that the Chinese may be emboldened to act quickly as they watch the United States essentially prepare for different scenarios, to move more quickly in a sense to preempt American capacity to respond. You've suggested maybe even within the next few years we can anticipate -- and that's certainly other voices saying similar things. I'd be interested, Mike and Melanie, to the extent that you want to comment on the Taiwan issue, how central is it, how urgent is it, and to what extent should it be driving our overall approach and defense strategy here?

MR. O'HANLON: Do you care who goes first? Should I let Melanie go first this time?

MS. SISSON: Sure, I'll go first, Mike, yeah, thanks. So, thanks for that Bridge; some good and important points that you raise and I actually want to follow up. I'll quickly touch on your question, Suzanne, and then I want to actually press Bridge on a couple of quick points.

So, I do not think that the Taiwan issue should be the center of gravity of our defense strategy. I think it is an important issue and I think it needs to be dealt with cautiously, but with an eye towards the larger priorities that the United States has in terms of its overall competitive approach with

China moving into the coming years. So again, that's not to say we should, you know, dismiss it and not be prepared, as Mike I think really adequately put it earlier, but it's to locate it properly within the larger set of objectives that the United States has, and that the military can and should be involved in helping it to pursue.

So, Bridge, what I want to return to you are these two questions. You used the word "coercion" and you've also mentioned "resolve"; and one of the things I'm a bit turned around by is the notion that the only way for the United States adequately to have resolve in this case is to commit wholesale to the defense of Taiwan in the military sense, right? And so, I get a little turned around about how you think about resolve and what indicates resolve and what communicates resolve, and if we ever really will or can have a balance of resolve with China, or if this is just a place where the interests are different; and so, the national approach to these interests will be different.

And the second thing is, maybe just a little bit of my own particularity, but we use coercion very frequently as though it's a dirty word, or as a cursive word as my daughter would say, right; but, it isn't right? Coercion, we undertake coercion all the time in international politics. It is just the state of affairs and there's nothing inherently wrong or bad about it. You can coerce, which is to say to attempt to shape the behaviors of another actor through inducement, through assurance, through deterrence, through compellence; right? All of this is part of coercion and so I just want to be clear that, you know, we're not trying to prevent China from, you know, the practices of international politics in so far as there are these constant negotiations, right? So, it needs to be something a little bit different. When I think about the interests we're trying to promote in Asia, to say that we don't want the regional neighbors or the United States to be coerced by China, I think it's got to be something a bit more nuance than that. So, I'll pause and see, Bridge, if you have any response to that.

MR. COLBY: Sure. Suzanne, I don't want to preempt Mike, so to speak, just because you -- I mean, excellent--excellent points. I think Taiwan, think of the Ardennes. The Ardennes was not that important geopolitically, but as a military position it was incredibly critical because of the German's ability to penetrate through it and then create geopolitical impact. Taiwan actually geopolitically, I think, is

relatively on the margin, but it's very significant, and for at least two reasons. One is its place in our differentiated credibility, I mean, it's rationale for actors in Asia to regard Taiwan as a canary in a coalmine for how we would treat them and I think they do. Likewise, it's also important from a military significance point of view, I mean, if the Chinese can seize the island, they will actually accelerate what they're already doing, which is transition to a power projection force and not a near cease force; and so, I mean, I think almost every indicator we look at, and of course their nuclear forces, suggest they have broader ambitions. So, the question is, do we try to defend and maintain a sufficient sort of weight and force in the antihegemonic coalition at Taiwan at its sort of basic kind of gut level. What my view is, is we're better off at sea, in the air, in space and in technology, and Taiwan is an island; and I think actually something that's underappreciated is if we lose Taiwan we're going to have to compensate by rather dramatic actions, probably in the way that, you know, say after Korea or something like that, maybe not a perfect analogy, but the loss of Taiwan would be -- which I think would happen if we didn't have a denial strategy because I just don't believe that we would go to the mat, I don't think the American people would do it. I don't think the Japanese or the Europeans would stand by us anywhere near to the degree sufficient to coerce the Chinese to reverse it. If that happened, I think we would have to compensate in a way that I think would be ill advised. So, I'd rather hold the line if possible, but the key, precisely because of the resolve issue, Melanie, that you raise, is that we don't have an advantage in the result. Almost certainly -- this is something I try to address at length in the book, is we don't, we won't, but we need to make it not so much purely as a, you know, (inaudible) bottle or what have you, just purely a contest of resolve. We can compensate for resolve, A. by power and using military geography, it's just difficult to mount an amphibious invasion, not impossible, we've done it a lot of times, we certainly have the capability; but that's what I want to do and so I want to put every extra increment of capability contra to your point. I'd much rather take risks in other theaters where I think we can reverse -- A. if things happen, they won't be as bad and B. it's much easier to reverse whereas if China's able to kind of steal a march, to use a tactical term, then I think it will be far-far harder to do that. So, I think those are the big points I'd want to respond with.

MR. O'HANLON: Excellent back and forth, and maybe I'm somewhere between you two to an extent because, you know, I've worked through some of these war games that have been famously described in your writing and Chris Brose's book, the stuff that David Ochmanek at Rand has talked about and that Senator McCain was briefed on at The Pentagon where, you know, we lose to China 17 times in a row in war games over Taiwan and I've seen a little bit more of the texture of what those war games entail, although of course their classified and the performance parameters of weapons that go into defining the parameters of the war game are classified. So, at an unclassified level I was only able to see so much, but I think we have to start to, you know, look at these, and I'm sure you would agree, scenario by scenario.

So, on the outright invasion scenario, China's got a dilemma. Do they attack us preemptively or not? Because if they let American bases and American assets in the region go untouched as they begin to bombard Taiwan airfields and try to jam and destroy commanding control, and I know you've looked at this at least as thoroughly as I have, but then we have a lot of capacity we can bring. Now, some of it would take too long to get there, but if whatever assets we have in the western pacific are left unscathed because China is trying to keep the United States out of the war, then we can start to do things like jamming their communications and jamming their satellite downlinks without even having to shoot at them or kill Chinese, because I think both sides are going to be reluctant to draw first blood. And then, that invasion scenario is harder for China. It's not hard enough, which is why I love your book and I love Chris Brose's book, *The Kill Chain*; and I endorse the agenda and other people like Kath Hicks, Deputy Secretary Hicks, have endorsed similar kinds of notions at The Pentagon and (inaudible) where you try to create pools of funds and ask the services to compete for some of these funds in order to do things in new innovative ways with, again, unmanned underwater vehicles that can launch swarms of robotic sensors or assets that could ultimately destroy amphibious ships trying to do invasion that don't require fixed or big infrastructure that's going to be attacked by China potentially. So, I want to get better at this scenario, but I still am not quite convinced that China's going to do it, even today; except in the most extreme of all circumstances, Taiwan literally wakes up one day and declares

independence and says it has a nuclear bomb project in the basement that it's had all along or that it's starting. Those are the kind of things that I believe would lead China to try its best to attack and throw caution to the wind. In the absence of that, they really are in this conundrum where they've got to risk bringing the United States directly into the war and the last time an Asian power thought that an attack that killed a few thousand Americans would deprive them of their key assets in the central pacific, and that therefore maybe America would just sit out any kind of retaliation. WE all know that, that was Pearl Harbor; it didn't work out so well for the Japanese. This is a different time. You use history in a very rich in texture and nuanced way, I'm not suggesting a perfect analogy here either; but I think for China that is a huge-huge roll of the dice, and we would certainly think about all sorts of different kinds of military retaliation, even if we decided not to try to liberate Taiwan itself.

So, that's why I come back to the blockade scenario and that's why I feel like I need to deliver asymmetric options, because the problem is that even though the blockade is sort of a more patient strategy for China, it's harder for us to defeat in some ways because we have to ultimately hunt down several dozen of their quiet attack submarines and a couple thousand of their accurate ballistic and cruise missiles, which are all in the Chinese homeland; and so I think now we've got to start shooting at things on the Chinese homeland, unless we want to just leave our ships and people out there getting attacked by the Chinese for weeks on end.

So, I've gone on long enough into the nitty-gritty of defense scenarios, so I want to conclude by saying that I think the blockage scenario to me is the most worrisome. I don't want to have a zero-sum debate with you about which one should we prepare against, I want to prepare against both; but I want to keep that part of the conversation going as well; partly because I really don't think China's going to kill 20,000 Americans in a preemptive strike. It's a huge roll of the dice to try to invade Taiwan for so many reasons. Yes, let's make it even less appealing, I agree; but I think the blockade scenario, which they can sort of turn up the rheostat, turn it down, is an important one. I like your idea of imagining what kind of a Berlin air lift could we do to Taiwan to keep them going during that blockade. You wrote about that in the Wall Street Journal this year, very good idea. A lot of

U.S. allies need to diversify their supply chain dependence on China to build up national defense stockpiles of minerals and metals they only get from China to build up more strategic petroleum reserves that China may try to interject because we have to be ready for this protracted economic warfare that I think may wind up being our best strategy against a blockade attempt.

MS. MALONEY: Bridge, I know you've got a lot to respond to here and I can see that the wheels are already turning, but as you respond I would love to hear you bring in the sort of larger question that I know has been raised in a number of places about what you've proposed here, which is the more that we do to demonstrate to the Chinese that we're prepared to deny their capability to exert hegemony over the region; do we essentially create a security dilemma in which they're just much more likely to move more quickly and perhaps undertake greater risk in order to achieve early objectives and to effectively deny us the denial?

MR. BRIDGE: Well, this is great, I mean, this is amazing. So, I'll try to be really telegraphic. I mean, I agree with you, Mike; Chris Brose and Dave Ochmanek are giants, both of them, and I think honestly, one of the frustrating things is that the kind of things that Dave Ochmanek is laying out that would help us solve the invasion from, it's not that much money by the defense budget's standards, it's well under 10 percent; but we can't do it and that's sort of -- you know, one of the things people often, Graham Allison among others, miss out on, you know, we're losing the war games all the time; as General Hinote of the Air Force points out, we know how to win it, we're just not making the investments yet. And that's what's so frustrating is this is not -- it is rocket science, but it's not impossible, it is feasible. I mean, it's mostly about sinking ships and shooting down aircraft and sensors, it's within the realm of possibility, so we should just do it and that's part of the thing that motivates me is that I don't feel that this is an impossible task. I feel it is feasible to the relatively low standard I'm talking about.

To your point, Mike; the way I would put it is, it is a cosmic roll of the dice, but the games are enormous. The games are enormous and they can improve the probability, and if you bring up the probability from the PRC point of view and the games are there, it's not only revanchism, which would be

Xi Jinping, the hero who achieved what Mao could never achieve, plus the goal is taking on the United States. If they want to achieve regional hegemony, at some point they will have to puncture our word and the best way to do it, as I think you put, is in a narrowly focused war; and that's why I'm so focused on the fait de complete, but I think you put your finger on a really critical issue, which is I actually think they may be even adapting to our discussion about the

Fait de complete by thinking more clearly or preemption. You know, in some sense the strategic ambiguity debate is kind of missing the point that I think the Chinese are already calculating that we would intervene and so they probably are already saying "Well, then we're going to go big". So, the question is, I think China's best strategy is to localize the war Bismarck style as much as humanly possible. But if they regard that as, you know, it's not going to work, well we might as well knock the Americans out and back, and create a fait de complete that way. You're right that it's very risky and actually that's good for us, I mean to be a bit bloody money, that's good for us in the sense that they have a higher threshold, but if they can succeed that would be devastating for us and enormously consequential for them, to Suzanne's point about regional hegemony; so, I think this is actually where we're going to have to have some resilience in our force that if the Chinese decide to go local, really local, or if they decide to go big, we're going to have to prepare against both eventualities.

And I mean, to your point about invasion, I mean, this is -- I said this to somebody else, I mean, I sometimes feel like I'm crazy, like, am I exaggerating, I mean, I grew up in the 80's and 90's -- well, particularly the 90's; a major war, what kind of -- you know, what do you talk about, this is nuts; but I look at it analytically and I say to myself, the problem with the blockade is it leaves so much in our and in Taiwan's hands, and it's so much -- and you know, I use the Napoleon line that Madison improved on; if you're going to take Vienna, take Vienna, right. I mean, I think there's a reason you see so few cases of serious blockade because if you have the option, you go directly do it and you resolve it; as we did in Iraq in 2003. Not to annex Iraq, but to coerce it, to Melanie's point, which I use that term in an empirical sense. So, I think, you know, if I'm -- and then I think, well if I need surprise if I'm going to go into invasion, I don't telegraph. This is why I don't think they've gone after the offshore islands or why they

don't do this gradual stuff. That's why I'm sort of trying to sound the alarm in a way that's almost -- even to me, seems a bit shrill because I think we need to frontload as much as possible because I think if they start, it's going to be really hard for them to pull back; but they're going to be cautious about starting. So, I want to frontload that as much as possible in international conversation.

And Suzanne, to your point of view, I mean, I --

Absolutely it's a risk. I mean, I think we are seeing in some sense an action/reaction, but I think the more important thing right now is elevating our deterrence because I think if you look at the facts -- and I don't mean to say that in a way that suggests that you're not grappling with the facts, but I mean, the Chinese have been increasing their defense spending laser focused on the United States and our allies for 25 years, I mean, 10 percent every year, and we've been doing all kinds of other things; and so, cosmic roll of the dice is Herald Brown. I mean, another great Herald Brown one is, you know, we -- whatever. We raced and they raced, and then we stopped and they continued racing or something to that affect; and I feel like that's kind of where we are. And so, what I want to do is I want to do it a sprint up now to get to a strong deterrent where they are always saying "Today's not the day" and then they taunt actually; and this is where I part company with a lot of my hawk friends -- I don't like the term "hawk", I don't accept it, but you know, whatever you have these little things; but you know, I'm not looking to regime shame them or humiliate them or stop their growth, but I want them to have to negotiate the terms of their future rise on terms that are acceptable to us, and that gets to Melanie's point, is I think my objectives are relatively low compared to geopolitical aims of many in Washington and elsewhere, but I think paradoxically to get even to that low standard we are going to have to do some things that seem pretty severe right now militarily.

MS. MALONEY: Melanie, you look like you're ready to hit the unmute button, so I'm going to encourage you to do just that.

MS. SISSON: Thanks, Suzanne, I appreciate it. Yeah, I did get an itchy mute finger here for just a moment because I think, Bridge, and I really just fundamentally disagree on what deterrence requires and sort of what we're seeking to achieve in terms or how we're seeking to achieve the deterrent effect that we desire, right? As I understand your proposition, Bridge, it's that only the prospect that

China would be unable successfully to invade Taiwan, in this case, right; would prevent it from doing so, that it's a binary sort of calculus and so long as China believes that it is an option that it can pursue, it's interests are such that it is more rather than less likely to do so, right? I look at it very differently and say that when I think about deterrence, I think about it as this constant sort of moderation of costs and benefits. If you're correct that the benefits to China are so great that it will proceed with an invasion regardless of the costs, then we actually need to be having a different conversation in Washington about how much we ought to invest in trying to foreclose that as an option, right? If they're that set on it, what are we buying by seeking to prevent it in this particular way? I think my view is that it is not that stark of a circumstance at the moment. I'm inclined, as I think Mike has expressed that he is, to say there is still time and there is still room, and so what I would like to see is us to start thinking very seriously about what kinds of costs we can levy on China were they to act aggressively towards Taiwan.

In the blockade scenario, Mike, I think thinking through the scenarios that you described is incredibly useful, and Bridge, that you did as well to say these are ways that we can change the cost/benefit calculation that Beijing makes about proceeding in this way, right?

One final note on that, I think Mike, in your really excellent book, you mentioned that we're not particularly well organized right now to have that conversation about how to pull together all of these elements of national power so that we can really coerce effectively; and I think that's something that we also should be considering as we look at competition broadly moving forward. And this may be the most proximate case to sort of be the forcing function to get our organizational act together in getting more of that sort of cross tool coordination that we've done in the past and that I really think we need to do again in the future.

MR. BRIDGE: Just briefly, because it's an excellent point and I mean this is kind of my bread and butter because I started out more in the kind of nuclear deterrence field. It's not that I think that the Chinese are sort of Genghis Khan style or that cost imposition can ever work. In fact, I've argued against a lot of people at the nuclear level that we shouldn't pursue a nuclear strategy of, you know -- in fact, Jim Miller and I have had debates about Mike's -- Mike's friend as well -- about the ability to deny

retaliatory strike and so forth. What I think though is in this situation in which the asymmetry of resolve does not favor us and we are in a situation of effectively (inaudible) destruction, not only at the nuclear level but at the economic level in other ways of imposing costs, that there's no rational basis for us to think that we would be advantaged by the imposition of cost because they can return the favor. I mean, just to be, you know, if we block Walmart imports, well they can block, you know, financial instruments that we're trying to use. You know, there's any number of things that you could think about, and they're also adaptive. And so, my basic view from my study of nuclear strategy -- in a sense I approach this whole issue deductively in a way in this fashion is the side that usually is going to win in a Brinkmanship contest is probably the side that is -- the natural focal point of a Brinkmanship contest, essentially a cost imposition contest, the two scorpions in the bottle, is likely just going to be to stop where things are. So, the key then is to actually change the facts on the ground; and so the burden of escalation is a really critical concept in my argument and throughout the whole idea is to force the burden of escalation back onto the Chinese, and another example of that, Mike, is that dilemma. We want them to face that dilemma where the burden of escalation is on them. We want to deny their invasion of Taiwan, not so that we can dominate them, but so that they face the choice where they have to escalate in a way that's likely to catalyze our resolve, you know, the flashing sort of vengeance of (inaudible) and the sympathy. And so that's -- I want to use -- in fact it's an integration -- and I've been critical of the concept, but it's an integration of denial and cost, particularly as you go up the escalatory ladder, but I think it's critical to try to get denial at the local level because that's where things will resolve, at that level.

MS. MALONEY: Bridge, let me bring in one of the questions that we've had from our audience and it is actually in reference to some writing by another Washington analyst who might rightly be described as an uber hawk. I will say upon reading your book, you did not strike me as an uber hawk, but --

MR. BRIDGE: Thank you.

MS. MALONEY: -- But, obviously --

MR. BRIDGE: Thank you, I appreciate that.

MS. MALONEY: It's a deeply realist point of view in many respects, I guess coming from my perspective on the Middle East, but we have a question from Edward Levine in our audience who asks about some writing by Matt Kroenig, who might wear the badge of uber hawkness proudly if I know him well, and his advocacy for the deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons as a means of bolstering the defense of Taiwan. We've had a few questions in different regards about, you know, sort of Taiwan's own self sufficiency in terms of defense capabilities, but I wonder if you'd maybe try to tackle both of those, the Kroenig argument but also, you know, what Taiwan needs to do for itself?

MR. BRIDGE: Sure. Well, I mean, and great to hear from you Ed, good question. I differ from my friend Matt on a number of critical points and we would differ publicly over the years and this would be one of them. In fact, my fanaticism — my borderline fanaticism on the conventional balance is so we don't have to get to the nuclear level, and this also gets the balance of resolve. I don't think that deployment of tactical weapons is even going to work because I think what the Chinese are pursuing now is conventional dominance in theatre with essentially mad equivalent, I mean, you know, mad as a technical term, but basically a assured large scale destruction, which his going to take off the table for us a rationale basis for first use, for ready reasons I tried to discuss in the book; but I think, you know, that actually begs the question, where we're likely to go, unfortunately, if we fail at conventional dominance — conventional denial in theatre is probably friendly proliferation, which even itself, I think I end the book with this, is not likely to be a (inaudible) either. So, we may get to that point, but I think everybody, hawks, doves, owls, you know, wherever you are in the menagerie should be hopefully trying to pull for conventional denial. On Taiwan, I mean, you know, I try every tool in the friendly coercion, to Melanie's point, induce behavior. I mean, they have to step up, you know, and this is not merely an outsider — I mean, you hear this from people on the inside; the single most important factor in Taiwan's survival as a free society is their own efforts. And I understand they have political complications, but I think we're beyond that. And so, you know, I know there's legislation from a variety of sources on the Hill. I hope it's something that both republicans and democrats can get behind because I think we all, even if you have a more sort of "conservative old-fashioned view" of strategic ambiguity and the Taiwan Relations Act, that

has a provision of, you know, articles to Taiwan. So, let's do that and let's ensure that they buy the right stuff and get the right training.

MS. MALONEY: I'm not seeing anyone jump to the cue in terms of coming in on that point, but Mike and Melanie, if you do want to, please jump down. Mike, there you go.

MR. O'HANLON: I'll just make a brief point to agree with Bridge and just take it to the next level in specificity. Some of the things Taiwan needs are smart mines that can be rapidly deployed in the shallow waters and a little further out from their shores. They need distributive command and control because China's going to come hard at their integrated national command and control with everything it's got, and they've got to be able to have sensor networks, as well as localized networks that are resilient against decapitation strikes against their top leadership and the infrastructure the top leadership would normally use to reach troops in the field; and they've got to have a plethora of distributed antiship missiles. These are just some of the things, but as Bridge says, most of these -- well, they all exist technologically and most of them are fairly cheap, and it just is stemming out of the mentality that having a better fighter operating up a runway that's not going to exist in the opening days of this kind of campaign, that kind of a mentality are friends in Taiwan are going to have to move away from.

MS. MALONEY: Bridge, let me pick up on something that you said just a few moments ago about republicans and democrats coming together and, you know, it's been notable that at a time of deep political polarization domestically that China's been one area where there does seem to be at least some convergence of bipartisan foreign policy. But, you talk a lot -- so, I wonder if you'd speak to that, how sustainable is it, how durable; but also just the broader question of the moment that we're in as a country and as a society. You talk a lot in the book about credibility and the need for U.S. credibility, and there are lots of different ways to establish that, but there are of course real questions about our credibility at a time when there appears to be an erosion of our democratic norms and institutions, and how do we handle that in terms of the impact that it might have on our credibility internationally?

MR. BRIDGE: Great, thanks; this is a really important question. I mean, on the first one, I mean, in a way I'm almost encouraged by the fact that the China issue has become politicized because

it suggests it's important if the parties are competing over who's better on it in a way. I mean, that may be a little bit too cute, but, I mean, I think there is a real commonality of interest. The point I made, and I mean, you know I'm a conservative republican although that's not -- I genuinely don't think that's relevant to the book, I mean, I try to have the book -- the goal of the book and the strategy in the book is for us to be able to address (inaudible) that we can solve our problems on our own terms, not under the shadow of someone else's coercion. And I think that should be something shared by everybody across the political spectrum. And so, when I, you know, I think that's true in an audience like this one or an audience in a different part of the political spectrum, and I'm sure people are from across the political spectrum here. But, I think that's good and I think, I mean again, I think the way Mike was just talking about it is, like, let's not overcomplicate it because in a sense we're not actually -- we don't actually need to do a denial standard and convince the Chinese not to do it in the first place. We don't need to fix all of our problems internally, and we have a lot of them, but you know, so does China, so does Europe, so does Japan; right? There are specific concrete things that we need to do and it is within the realm of the possible. I mean, you know, Senator Reed has been very vocal and eloquent and strong on the issue, specific to deterrence issue along with Senator Inhofe and Chairman Smith as well with ranking member Rogers also doing a lot together. So, I think it is possible. In terms of our, you know, our posture in the world; I mean, you know, I tend to not think it's as much of a problem as some, I mean, maybe because I am a realist. I mean, I think, you know, I was asked by a French reporter a few months ago and she was like "Well, Bill Maher says you're silly" and that sort of thing, and I said "Well, you know, I mean, yes, we have a lot of problems internally, but we are looking at them, you know, candidly and we're trying to address them". Perhaps not particularly well, but, I mean, I think that's actually fairly consistent, I was talking to an Australian radio, actually a retired senior official in the Australian government and he pointed out the point I thought about before too, is that, you know, in the 1960's there were riots in the cities, there were huge demonstrations, people were burning themselves on The Pentagon grounds, there was social decay, crime was skyrocketing. You know, and we ended up winning the Cold War, the 70's were not a good period in the United States. So, what I'm sort of -- and actually, this is a point even on the right, you

know, recently there was a conference where, you know, sort of conservatives where a lot of people were sort of attacking the idea of defending Taiwan because, you know, we're so — there's so much rot and decay in our society and that kind of thing that's it not even worth it, and my counterpoint to them is, like, well if you think there are problems in our society, they're not going to be improved by letting the Chinese dominate Asia and then intervene directly in our international life. So, my view is, like, I mean, I want to be able to protect our ability to have these debates peacefully, you know, these peaceful struggles with each other, which are about fundamental issues. You know, and I think it's compatible with having a strong international policy and I think that's a historically grounded assessment.

The only other thing I would say on that, Suzanne, is Michael Pettis, who is a very interesting kind of political economy expert, he's actually based at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He pointed out earlier in the year, you know, after the, you know, the things earlier in the year. He said basically, you know, there's all this talk about America and how there's this chaos and China appears so stable and placid, but that might actually, you know, conceal a brittleness, right? I think we can see that, so if we're — I mean, I'm not — I don't want to say that our situation is good, but I don't think that the Chinese situation is necessarily good either. So, if we're thinking of it in competitive terms, I mean, I'd actually rather be in the sense of we're at least open and trying to resolve and work through our debates rather than probably just concealing them; and literally putting people in jail or killing them in China.

So, I guess the bottom line is I think we can do both and, you know, it's within the realm of the possible, but hopefully we will.

MS. MALONEY: Bridge, thank you. This has just been a really rich and fascinating, important discussion. I hope that we can return to do more. Before we just wrap up since we're at our final hour here, I'd like to give each of you just a last word or comment that you might like to make. Beginning with you Melanie and then over to Mike, and then concluding with you, Bridge.

MS. SISSON: Thank you Suzanne. Let me also say thank you for doing such a great job keeping us in order and making sure that we are addressing a lot of what each of us has been able to raise for discussion here. Bridge, again, congratulations on the book and I agree with you that I also

hope that these are exactly the kinds of conversations that are happening through government right now because they are the kinds of assessing of ideas and scenarios that I think is the only way to arrive at a clear statement and articulation of our priorities, the development of a strategy to pursue them as safely and effectively as we can. So, thanks again, nice to see everybody and over to you, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks, Melanie. I'll take the prerogative of speaking to this issue of domestic politics and its relevance to foreign policy because I very much agree with that Bridge said, but I do want to make just a couple of specific points from my own vantage point to sort of add some granularity to the overall situation. I think a lot of the debate on Capitol Hill right now is pretty healthy. I think a lot of the debate in the strategic community is pretty healthy. And I think the Mattis Pentagon with Bridge as one of the key players did an excellent job at rethinking national defense strategy. I worry a lot about the previous President who may be a candidate to be President again because I think chains of command and clarity of respect for our institutions are among the most serious vulnerabilities in any kind of a China scenario for example; and usually we think about our vulnerabilities in terms of computers that can be hacked or bases that can be struck by missile or aircraft carriers that can be sunk on deployment by modernizing Chinese military, but if we are not able to maintain the chain of command according to the legality and the institutional divisions of power that our Constitution -- that our legal system require, then I think we could be in trouble in a Taiwan crisis. And so, a very specific point that the Commander in Chief matters a lot and this is partly meant as a criticism of Donald Trump, but it's also meant as an admonition that I think we need to rethink war powers, how much power and decision making authority we put in the hands of any one person, and there are a number of ways by which I believe we need to think a little harder about checks and balances, and strengthening Congresses role in decisions on the use of force. So, I'll leave it there and again, thanks to all and Bridge, I look forward to your final word as well.

MR. COLBY: Well, thanks Mike. Just on that point I really agree with you about the need for us to reexamine a whole host of things. I mean, obviously in this, and thank you Melanie for your kind words as well about defense strategy, but also the balance of a power sense of roles in our system and I actually think Congress -- whether it's on the War Powers Act or, you know, use of other congressional

prerogative is actually a good thing. I mean, in some sense that -- this is not fit for public (inaudible). There should be a balance -- in fact, one of the things I sort of really have kind of concluded, especially over promoting the book, has been that a common theme I think that actually balance of power realism sounds very antithetical to American political theory in life and actually I think that's wrong. I think that the core of the American idea is a balance of power internally, but nobody should have too much power. And I think that that is -- Mike, to your point, nobody should have too much power, republican, democrat, whatever; and that that balance and that's always adaptive and it's always changing, and it can be messy, but that is actually what we really want at home and abroad; you know, is a balance and so forth.

But, I would just like to say in closing, I really am very grateful to you all, to Brookings. I don't exaggerate when I say these are some of really the most thoughtful reactions I've had to the book and illuminating and they are challenging in the best possible way; and you know, I think that represents Brookings at its core, but I'm really flattered and I'm honored that you gave it the consideration engagement you did and thanks to everybody for participating.

MS. MALONEY: Well, thank you, Bridge, for writing such a terrific important book and really galvanizing the debate that we have had today. Thank you all for staying a few minutes extra. I think that the final closing words were really worth the additional time out of your calendar, but we're so grateful and so appreciative for this opportunity. We look forward to continuing the conversation in the future. For now, have a wonderful weekend.

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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

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2024

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