

**Transcript of
Minot Task Force 21, Geostrategic Analysis, and the Air Force Association's
Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies 14th Triad Conference on "The Nuclear
Deterrent Enterprise Going Forward: Challenges and Opportunities"**

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MR. PETER HUESSY: We now have, again, two very good friends of mine: Rob Soofer on the Armed Services Committee in the Senate, single-handedly guided over the last -- more than a decade, I think -- making sure that the Senate finally got going in the right direction about modernizing our nuclear deterrent. We are where we are, Rob, because of your leadership on that committee staff and putting us in the right direction.

Our second speaker will be Chris Ford from the White House, who has often spoken at my seminar series, and has one of the sharpest minds when it comes to the connection between maintaining a deterrent and defense policy and proliferation. I'm going to have Rob Soofer come up here first to speak with us, and then my friend Chris Ford.

Rob, as you know, is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy. He supports the undersecretary of defense for policy and assistant secretary of defense for strategy, plans and capabilities. He's here to address us about some of the nuclear issues that they're facing in the department. Rob, on behalf of Minot Task Force 21 and my own business and the sponsors that are here and our guests, I want to thank you for taking the time from the Department of Defense to come out and talk to us. Would you give a warm welcome to our friend Rob Soofer?

(Applause).

MR. ROB SOOFER: Thank you, Peter, I appreciate that. I think you probably overstate my value in the process over the last decade. There have been a number of people on the Hill that have supported this, including some key senators such as Jon Kyl, a senator that I had the privilege of working for.

What I'd like to talk to you about today is -- I guess I've been sort of asked to talk about the Nuclear Posture Review, but actually I can't do that. That information has been embargoed and we can't release that information until we're done with the reviews. So I thought perhaps I might try to help convey some of the secretary of Defense's thinking on nuclear matters.

Peter, this is off the record, right?

MR. HUESSY: Yes, it is.

MR. SOOFER: Okay, good. The first thing you need to know is that the secretary strongly supports this mission. As you may recall, he actually visited Minot within the last couple of weeks, and crawled down into a launch control center. He spoke to a hangar full of airmen with a B-52 standing right behind him. It was quite an event because he met with the pilots who fly the B-52, and they were probably half the age of the aircraft itself. It was remarkable.

But the impression you got, especially out at Minot, is that these troops are committed to this mission, and he is committed to supporting them as well. So in addition to visiting Minot and STRATCOM, he also visited a U.S. ballistic missile submarine out at Kitsap Naval Station in Washington State, and spoke to the crew of the USS Kentucky. At these events, he has reiterated that the number one priority of the Department of Defense, the number one priority of the Department of Defense, is to maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent, so we make certain that those weapons never have to be used.

The secretary is committed to the mission. The secretary has also publicly reassured allies while sending deterrence messages to potential adversaries, as he did when he told the South Korean defense minister back in March, that any use of nuclear weapons by the North will be met with a response that is effective and overwhelming -- effective and overwhelming.

Let me just talk a little bit about the NPR process, even if I can't tell you about substance. When we started this process, it reminded me of a quote from the German writer Goethe. He says, where are we headed? Who knows? We hardly recall where we came from.

The point here I think for us is when we started this review we generally didn't have a fixed solution in mind. We were going to explore all the issues associated with nuclear weapons, arms control, foreign relations, what have you. But the point was -- and Goethe says, we hardly recall where we came from. The point here is that since the Cold War a lot of us have stopped thinking about the issues, so we don't know where we came from.

This is, in a sense, where Secretary Mattis places emphasis. He wanted the process to be an educational process. He wanted us to build consensus, both amongst the leaders in the Department of Defense, in the government, and with the American people in general.

So the secretary sought to involve a wide array of folks in the review. As Secretary Mattis says, we've got a review going on right now. I've got the smartest

people I can find, and it's Republican and Democrat, it's men and women, it's old people, it's young physicists, it's people who study history. I'm part of the old (crowd?). Everybody knows that.

It's a grand review with lots of people. It's an interagency effort. We have folks in the working group from the Department of State, Office of Management and Budget, Office of Science and Technology Policy, National Nuclear Security Administration, DOE, all the services, all the commands. Everybody is involved, which I can tell you makes this review very difficult.

But everybody is involved. It's all inclusive. The working group itself is co-chaired by my Joint Staff colleague Greg Weaver, who I can't say enough good things about.

It is, again, a joint effort that's led by OSD and the Joint Staff, and we have the full support of the secretary as well as the chairman. Vice Chairman, General Selva, has also played a big role in this and is a huge supporter of this mission area.

When Secretary Mattis entered the NPR process, he did so with an open mind. He has acknowledged, publicly, that he previously questioned the triad. But based on what he's heard thus far in the Nuclear Posture Review, coupled with international events and a more complete intelligence picture of global nuclear trends, he has come to the conclusion, and I quote, "I cannot solve the deterrent problem reducing it from a triad. If I want to send the most compelling message, I have been persuaded that the triad in its framework is the right way to go." Again, he says I cannot solve the deterrent problem without the triad.

So what does he mean by this deterrent problem? Well, I think most of you understand that nuclear deterrence is more than just preventing nuclear attack against the United States, though that is the most important role for nuclear weapons. So the first deterrent problem is, how do we protect the United States against nuclear attack?

How do we ensure that adversaries cannot contemplate a pre-emptive first strike that eliminates our ability to retaliate? This is our nation's ultimate insurance policy. So in the secretary's words, he says, you want the enemy to look at it and say this is impossible to take out in a first-strike, and the retaliation is such that the enemy doesn't want to do it.

The secretary goes on to say, you can leave no doubt at all. Don't try it, it won't work. You can't take us out.

The triad is the most effective way to guard against potential technological or operational breakthroughs or changes in the strategic environment, because its attributes help to ensure the survivability and effectiveness of our deterrent forces. You've heard from others, and you will hear later, about the flexibility of the triad, the different attributes, and why they're necessary, and all that is important. But for me, for Rob

Soofer, the fundamental value of the triad is survivability.

It's the Pearl Harbor problem. A nation that was vulnerable to Pearl Harbor and the 9/11 attacks has to appreciate that this could happen in the future. If you don't mind, I just want to take a moment to read from a book about Pearl Harbor. It was a 2016 book called "Countdown to Pearl Harbor" by Steve Toomey.

He writes, "Admiral Kimmel," who was in charge of Pearl Harbor at the time, "watching from the submarine building second deck, began to feel he would have nothing left. He was witnessing the death of the United States' Pacific Fleet. For the first time in his career he had failed, and spectacularly so.

All of his assumptions were wrong, although he had copious company. The Imperial Navy could, indeed, sail thousands of miles and refuel repeatedly on the high seas. It would, indeed, take such a risk, however mindless. Japanese pilots were better than conventional wisdom suggested.

Torpedoes could work in 45 feet of water. Nets were necessary to protect the battleships. The attack violated Kimmel's every notion of what was militarily and strategically sensible, yet the Japanese were here. One had to admire them. The entire attack was beautifully planned and beautifully executed," he would say, "as if the enemy had engineered a feat beyond human conception, and in a sense, it had."

I think it's important to remember that. With all respect to my Navy colleagues who say that the SSBN, the submarine, is the most survivable leg, we don't know that for sure. By having three legs of the triad, we ensure that we do not have another Pearl Harbor.

The second deterrent problem involves extending deterrence beyond U.S. shores in support of vital U.S. interests in a regional context where a potential adversary may think they have an advantage in a conventional war against the United States and its allies by threatening nuclear escalation. According to Secretary Mattis, quote, "A robust, flexible and survivable nuclear arsenal underpins the U.S. ability to deploy conventional forces worldwide." So in a sense, nuclear weapons bolster our conventional forces to help preserve peace and deter aggression. In other words, it's not just about deterring nuclear attack, but about the role of nuclear weapons in deterring large-scale conventional war.

This is now complicated by the growing numbers and types of Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons, tactical nuclear weapons, and a nuclear doctrine supporting their use during wartime. It will require, therefore, a broad range of forces of various ranges, various yields, some deployed in the theater, others employed from the United States, which can defeat Russia's and China's nuclear strategy.

So now a third problem is actually assuring our allies that the U.S. nuclear umbrella is credible and will be there when needed. As potential adversary arsenals and

public threats against our allies grow, the U.S. must demonstrate in words and capabilities that we and our allies have the capabilities and will necessary for credible extended deterrence. Accordingly, Secretary Mattis has encourage NATO efforts to strengthen conventional, cyber and nuclear forces to deter Russia. Failure to assure allies could lead to a number of undesirable responses, including the acquisition of national nuclear forces, exacerbating an already complex nuclear proliferation problem.

A fourth deterrent problem acknowledged by Secretary Mattis is, quote, “We face unpredictable circumstances in the future.” We face unpredictable circumstances in the future, which is to say, we need a nuclear force capable of dealing with future uncertainties in this strategic environment.

Incredible changes took place after the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review. Officials working on that earlier view could not image today’s great power competition with Russia and China, or Russia’s explicit nuclear threats against our allies, or the pace of nuclear modernization in North Korea and elsewhere. So this aspect of the deterrent problem, this uncertainty, makes a requirement for a responsive nuclear infrastructure and responsive nuclear forces that can adapt to stay ahead of threats.

A final potential deterrent problem is, how do we deter new non-nuclear attacks that could have strategic effects: catastrophic mass casualties, cyber-attacks against U.S. infrastructure, chemical or biological attacks, or attacks against U.S. critical space capabilities? This is one of the complex issues that we’re examining as part of nuclear deterrence in the 21st century. But while the situations and circumstances in which nuclear weapons could be used have become more complicated since the end of the Cold War, the nature of nuclear deterrence remains constant.

It’s about having the capabilities to impose costs and risks upon specific adversaries to convince them that nuclear use is their most woeful option, in fact, not an option at all. That, of course, is easier said than done. For this, our best course of action is to modernize the triad in a manner that preserves the president’s flexibility and deterrence options. It’s not about nuclear war fighting, but rather deterring aggression at the outset, which is what the NPR is all about.

Thank you.

(Applause).

MR. HUESSY: And now we’re going to hear from my colleague and friend, Chris Ford, from the White House.

MR. CHRISTOPHER FORD: It’s a pleasure to be here. Good morning, everybody. Let me know if you have trouble hearing me. I know this room is very long in both of these dimensions, and sometimes towards the end the air conditioners can be a little whiney, or breathy, if you will. If you can’t hear me signal or something and I’ll try to talk more loudly or move the mic around.

It's a pleasure to be here, a pleasure to be here with not only old friends and colleagues, but also with Rob, an old friend of mine. We used to be in the same Navy Reserve unit really a long time ago, but it's a pleasure to be here and to get a chance to talk about these issues with such a knowledgeable audience.

Rob had me with Goethe. I can't compete with that. On the other side, I think I've gotten my wires crossed about this being off the record, so I went to the trouble to get my remarks cleared.

MR. HUESSY: It was originally on the record.

MR. FORD: Okay, in any event my Q&A I would like to ask that you keep off the record, to the extent that I answer any questions whatsoever. But as to the prepared remarks, feel free to quote me, I suppose, since the press people tell me that I'm not going to get crucified for that.

Rob has been giving you, in fact from what I've heard of them, all the earlier speakers this morning have been giving you some fantastic advice and pointing to some very important things. I would like, myself, to range a little bit more broadly and talk a little bit about a question that people frequently put to me in connection with all these issues of nuclear modernization and U.S. policy and where things are going. That has to do with the question of, is it still possible at this time of modernization efforts across the nuclear arena by essentially every possessor of such tools -- and worsening tensions in the strategic arena -- is it still possible at this time to talk in a coherent and intelligible way about nuclear disarmament? I realize this is not the sort of crowd to bring these things up in, but hear me out and give me a chance.

I think the answer is yes, it is possible to talk in a coherent and intelligible way about this, but only if we are honest and realistic about where our disarmament discourse may have gone off track in the past. As I see it, U.S. policy on disarmament is today at an important crossroads. Some of the approaches that were designed in response to the security conditions that existed at the end of the Cold War and into the post-Cold War era, including in particular some of the elements of the Obama administration's disarmament focused Prague agenda, as it was called, some of these may not be tenable anymore. As a result, I think we may need to think about some degree of course correction.

For decades, the U.S. has taken the position that it seeks the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, even to the point of committing as a matter of law in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in its Article VI, to pursuing this ultimate goal. While arms control mechanisms, however, helped the superpowers manage the risks and the challenges and the dangers of their spiraling arms race during the Cold War, and limited that spiral in some very important and significant ways, no actual agreement was possible on significant reductions in arms until the waning of those Cold War tensions, until the relationship in fact between the United States and the USSR and then Russia changed and

made possible those kinds of adjustments. Changing conditions made reductions possible, not the other way around.

The lesson of that period, to me, is that significant arms reductions are only likely to succeed when the underlying strategic conditions change in ways that permit them. In light of this, you might think it would be obvious to everyone that the best way, and indeed perhaps the only way, to increase the odds of achieving a peaceful and stable disarmed world would be to create ever more felicitous strategic conditions by focusing upon the, and I'll quote you here, "The easing of international tension and strengthening of trust between states," that is described expressly in the preamble to the NPT, and which it envisions as being in order to facilitate disarmament.

This was certainly obvious -- if you'll permit me a little history discourse -- this was obvious enough in years past. It was obvious to U.S. and other Western leaders as far back as 1945, long before the NPT, of course, when the U.S., British and Canadian heads of government jointly declared that the only genuine answer to the problem of disarmament lay in creating conditions of mutual trust. I don't mean to suggest there wasn't some debate on this score from the very start of the nuclear age.

As the U.S. representative to the Security Council observed in 1949, disarmament opinions have been divided between those who emphasize, on the one hand, the necessity of developing conditions of world confidence before disarmament; and conversely, those who emphasize disarming in order to engender conditions of world confidence. The U.S. has traditionally come down in the former camp, taking a conditions-based approach to disarmament throughout the Cold War. By contrast, much of the conventional wisdom of the broader disarmament community has often sought to address the challenges from the opposite direction by focusing principally, and sometimes exclusively, upon the nuclear tools themselves, rather than the underlying conditions of conflict, competition and security concerns that continue to require nuclear deterrence, or extended deterrence as the case may be, which for other reasons may lead countries to wish to possess nuclear tools.

The broader disarmament community's focus upon tools rather than conditions hasn't changed for a long time. U.S. policy seems, to some degree or other, to go back and forth. In the post-Cold War era, though most U.S. policymakers have been much more sensibly mindful of strategic challenges and necessities and conditions than disarmament activists, some officials have felt it important over time to demonstrate that they, in fact, were leading the way towards nuclear disarmament, in particular by steadily reducing the number of U.S. and Russian weapons, which indeed looked possible for a while, as long as security conditions appeared to be improving.

President Bill Clinton's 1994 Nuclear Posture Review, for instance, tried to hedge against uncertainty, but it also emphasized the importance of leading -- and that's another catchphrase from that review -- the international community on disarmament, with the objective of demonstrating fidelity to the ideal of disarmament by moving to reduce. This was given particular prominence, of course, by President Obama whose Prague

agenda, as it was called, promised gradual concrete steps leading towards the eventual elimination of all such weapons, even if this might occur, as he himself rather sensibly put it, not necessarily in his lifetime.

U.S. policymakers also assumed, as was made clear in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review as well as in President Obama's 2013 State of the Union address, that showing disarmament progress by making gradual numerical reductions along a presumed road toward elimination, would elicit nonproliferation cooperation from others while not actually harming U.S. security or extended deterrence relationships along the way. But much of this approach hasn't worked, and it probably couldn't have done so because it focused too much upon the tools rather than upon the actual conditions under which so many countries clearly still feel the need to have such weapons. Today, the post-Cold War U.S. approach to disarmament seems to have run out of steam.

Over time, tensions developed within that agenda as large numbers of weapons that were made unnecessary by the end of the Cold War have been gradually dismantled, constricting our ability to demonstrate disarmament bone fides by showing continuing numerical reductions. And, of course, the global environment, as we've heard already today, has evolved from some very benign situations during the 1990s to the present day, which is considerably more problematic and more complicated. As a result, I would argue it became much harder to continue forward movement on disarmament, if you conceive of disarmament as being a purely numerical standard, without harming U.S. national security interests and alliance obligations, the two main elements of the traditional post-Cold War approach; in other words, that is, seeking to demonstrate disarmament progress while avoiding steps that would undermine security have come to interfere with each other.

I first pointed this out back at the Carnegie Endowment in March, but I do think that it is clear from the evidence that that approach has been running out of head space in which to operate. Indeed, to some extent, I would argue that the very enthusiasms that were associated with and fueled by the Prague agenda may have helped make those problems worse, and I don't just mean that the emphasis upon total nuclear disarmament created the frictions within U.S. alliance relationships, inflamed disarmament related political disputes within allied political systems, and encouraged unrealistic expectations that fueled the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty that was negotiated this past summer, and increased its potential to do harm to the global nonproliferation regime.

I would suggest, also, that from the perspective of Russian and Chinese planners, U.S. policy is particularly alarming not just despite being part of a numbers driven disarmament agenda, but in fact precisely because of it. From their perspective, the U.S. disarmament agenda seems less like a salutary moral imperative and more like a trick by which to put them at the mercy of U.S. conventional power. They seem to fear, for instance, the possibility of a pre-emptive war in which the U.S. would employ a combination of strategic nuclear and non-nuclear strikes in order to attack their nuclear forces, destroying enough of those forces that U.S. missile defenses would be able to protect the U.S. from what remained.

As seen from Moscow and Beijing, therefore, it is a question of ratios. The lower their nuclear numbers the more alarming the threat would be, from any given level of U.S. missile defense and non-nuclear strike tools. From our American perspective, of course, as you will all know, these ideas are basically paranoid fantasies. But officials in Moscow and Beijing give every indication of actually believing them. More importantly, at least in part as a result of such concerns, they have been -- or may have been -- adopting behaviors and developing capabilities or adjusting their own nuclear postures in ways that could have destabilizing consequences.

I've argued repeatedly that if Russia and China are really worried about these dynamics, then we and they have a shared interest in reigning in the North Korea and Iranian ballistic missile threats, for example. For these, after all, are the common rationale for the augmented defenses that Moscow and Beijing so dislike. More constructive efforts from them -- that is to say Moscow and Beijing -- to help us control those threat would go a long way toward alleviating some of the pressures that Russian and Chinese officials say that they face as a result of our defenses.

So to the degree that they do not join us in reigning in the threats from North Korea and from Iran, they may continue to face what they interpret as increased strategic threats from the U.S. This may encourage behaviors in response to those perceived threats that we ourselves don't like. So in a presumably unanticipated side effect of the Prague agenda, the political drive to demonstrate movement toward ever lower numbers of nuclear weapons is likely to exacerbate these challenge, because it threatens to make their offense-to-defense ratio problem more acute.

I would also argue that the effort to show, over the years, relentless forward movement on disarmament with its concomitant political pressures to avoid anything new or different in terms of weapons or doctrine, however important such innovations might actually be to U.S. national security, may be harming long-term U.S. nuclear planning, particularly with regard to achieving and maintaining an effective nuclear infrastructure capable of responding effectively to future threats in an unpredictable world. A task force report in 2008, as many of you will recall, found that policies adopted in the post-Cold War environment had devalued nuclear missions, creating a series erosion of focus, expertise, mission readiness, resources and discipline in the nuclear weapons enterprise within the Air Force. In 2010 10 former directors of U.S. national security laboratories wrote to the Obama administration to warn that certain policy restrictions were at risk of stifling those laboratory's ability to react effectively to future security needs.

Thankfully, our current program of record for nuclear weapons modernization retains the significant bipartisan support that it acquired in part through a sort of grand bargain that Rob and others helped bring about between Congress and the Obama administration over ratifying New START. Nevertheless, there clearly have been challenges over the years as we have struggled with how to retain the focus that we still need upon nuclear deterrence while simultaneously trying to convince onlookers that we are making the relentless numerical progress that they expect to see towards eventual

elimination. It's also true, I'd say, that the Prague expectation that movement towards disarmament will elicit support for U.S. nonproliferation agenda items, has also not lived up to its billing.

To begin with, in contrast to our conventional military might which they do seem greatly to fear, the proliferators and the would-be proliferators of the world don't seem to care very much one way or the other about our nuclear forces. Nor do belated U.S. moves to maintain and modernize now our nuclear deterrent appear to have caused any third party country to slow down their cooperation with us in nonproliferation areas in bolstering the nonproliferation regime. So the idea that doing more on disarmament is some kind of a key with which to unlock nonproliferation cooperation and success around the world, that's a theory that remains still unsupported by evidence.

In fact, far from U.S. disarmament postures having catalyzed an era of phenomenal nonproliferation successes, the decade and a half that followed the 1994 Nuclear Posture Review -- a time of sweeping reductions in U.S. arsenals such that the U.S. has now come down by something like 87 percent from its peak in the 1960s -- that same period of dramatic reductions saw three additional countries test and acquire nuclear weapons; and two more be discovered in secret nuclear weapons programs, facilitated by a worldwide proliferation network. I'm enough of an intelligence analyst back in the day to realize that correlation is not necessarily the same thing as causation, but it is striking how little we seem to have gotten by way of nonproliferation success, from our 87 percent reduction.

So I think on the whole the evidence is that we clearly need some kind of a recalibration of where we're going on this. The traditional post-Cold War approach of seeking to demonstrate disarmament bone fides by showing steady numerical movement toward elimination, while avoiding steps that might actually undermine our security, has largely run its course and is no longer tenable, especially given evolving security conditions.

So it's time to explore alternative approaches, and that's what we are doing. But it may be the answer turns not to be something new but a wisdom that has been hiding there in plain sight all along, and in a form with which most of the countries of the world have already professed themselves in agreement for nearly as long as I have been alive. I refer to the NPT.

The NPT preamble points out the need, as I mentioned before, for the easing of international tensions and strengthening of trust between states in order to facilitate disarmament. This, and the causal ordering that that phrasing signals about how to facilitate disarmament, I think that's the conceptual key to understanding what effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament -- that's a catchphrase from Article VI of the NPT -- that's the central key to understanding what Article VI actually means and what it tells us. So it's certainly true that the reductions that we made in the wake of the Cold War were effective measures, as conceived by Article VI, but I think it's also true that as we look now to the future, measures that focus on resolving the international conflicts

and rivalries that produce the perceived need for nuclear weapons, are much more likely to be effective measure, if you will, than focusing solely upon reducing the numbers of weapons themselves.

If there exists a viable road to disarmament in the current security environment, in other words, it surely must run through the amelioration of those adverse geopolitical conditions. And if we can successfully address those conflicts and rivalries, reducing or eliminating the weapons themselves is presumably fairly straightforward, or at least relatively speaking. If we cannot address those underlying conditions, then it's hard to see how any weapons-focused agenda could possibly succeed.

There's no guarantee, of course, that this will work. The conditions that might make the elimination of nuclear weapons possible are clearly not present today, and it's hard not to agree with the unanimous bipartisan conclusion of the Strategic Posture Review Commission of 2009 that establishing such conditions would likely require a fundamental transformation of the international political order, a transformation that certainly doesn't seem to be anywhere on the horizon at this time. Nevertheless, I'm convinced at least that it is still possible to have a vision of a nuclear future that is fully compatible with our obligations under Article VI and with longstanding hopes for eventual nuclear disarmament, and a vision that is in reality more conducive to making real progress on disarmament than the United States' traditional post-Cold War approach.

So we must acknowledge several things. We must acknowledge how far we are today from the conditions that would actually make elimination possible. Addressing those underlying conditions is really the rub of the challenge, without which no approach that focuses solely on arms could succeed. How little we really know about the future and the threats that we might face therein; and the degree to which a full flowering of the world envisioned by Article VI of the NPT must necessarily await a strategic environment that is quite different from the one that we face today.

There will, of course, be many in the disarmament community who will not like hearing this, but such a vision that I'm suggesting would not give up on the possibility and the long-term goal of disarmament. Nor would it give up on the hope of negotiating incremental downward steps over time when, and to the degree that, real world conditions so permit. Indeed, if we could escape the conceptual ruts of the current conventional wisdom and devote ourselves more effectively to addressing the conditions of conflict and insecurity that are the real problems that inhibit progress along this axis, such an approach has the potential to end up being a better way toward a disarmament facilitating easing of tension and strengthening of trust than we have yet seen.

Article VI obliges us to pursue effective measure, not ineffective measure. So why not explore such possibilities? If others agree that such a vision makes sense and that it is as honest and realistic and sound and as potentially promising as I think it does, we will all have much to do as we talk and work together in trying to achieve an incremental agenda that actually contributes to developing such effective measures; to ease tension and strengthen trust in ways that the drafters of the NPT way back in 1968

seemed in fact to have envisioned.

Anyway, that's a lot of talking. I look forward to our discussion, but thanks for your patience and it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you.

(Applause).

MR. HUESSY: We only have a few minutes for questions. Does anybody have a question they'd like to ask Rob Soofer or Chris Ford?

Tony.

MR. : Is this off the record or -- I'm not clear about that.

MR. SOOFER: I think I may have confused things. My prepared remarks were cleared for release back at my building. I think everything else probably has to be off-the-record or Chatham House or whatever you guys arrange for today.

MR. : What is Chatham House?

MR. SOOFER: Off the record.

MR. : What is the status of Pentagon official funding for missile defense? General Dunford the other day said there's a supplemental in the works? Today we hear that there's a \$416 million reprogram. It's a little confusing.

For Mr. Ford, SOCOM has recently gotten into countering weapons of mass destruction mission, (joining up ?) with NORTHCOM. How are you working with that? How do you define how best to implement that new mission?

MR. SOOFER: The question is, what is the status of additional missile defense spending on Capitol Hill. A couple of weeks ago the Department of Defense sent an above threshold re-programming request, an ATR, for about \$460 million to support additional funding for various aspects of missile defense and what we're calling missile defeat, which is left-of-launch, those things that you can do to detect mobile missiles and try to intercept them before they're launched, as well as traditional missile defense items that support shooting them down after they launch. Part of that, for instance, is an additional Ground Based Interceptors that would be for Fort Greeley, Alaska.

So we have before the Hill, a request for about \$416 million of missile defense activity. The department is in the process of working up a supplemental request for FY '18. As you know, the House and Senate have passed National Defense Authorization Acts. What we're planning is a supplemental as well for additional funding in the area of both active missile defense, as well as missile defeat or left-of-launch activities.

MS. : Can you give us a sense of roughly how much we're talking about?

MR. SOOFER: I can't give you a sense of the supplemental at this time.

MS. : It may go up in the next month, or week or two, or three weeks?

MR. SOOFER: It's imminent. It's within the timeframe that you mentioned, a few days perhaps.

MR. FORD: Just quickly on the coordination role, yes there has been and there is a transition that has been made between STRATCOM and SOCOM on this, a coordination role. We are very excited about that, from what I've seen of it so far. We did work with them, obviously, on this. The SOUTHCOM folks have a very good forward-leaning attitude that I think will bring a lot to the table in those missions, and we're very pleased with it so far.

MR. HUESSY: Rob, thank you very much. Chris Ford, thank you very much.

(Applause).