

**Madelyn R. Creedon
Rebecca L. Heinrichs
Congressional Commission**

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Moderator: Let me get started to be respectful of everybody's time today. The ground rules, as always, are this is on the record but there's no rebroadcast of audio or video. Please feel free to record for accuracy and quotes.

A couple of introductions. Evie Schumann is joining us today from Carnegie Corporation of New York. Our work would not be possible without their kind generosity, so thank you so much and the corporation.

We have four or five GWU National Security grad students with us today. Welcome. Please join the conversation. We're not only about elevating the discussion for these great reporters, but the next generation of national security leaders too, so we're really, really glad you're here.

Our speakers, of course, are from the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States.

Commission Member Rebecca Heinrichs is to my right. She's a senior fellow at Hudson Institute, and the director of its keystone defense initiative. She also serves on the US Strategic Command Advisory Group and the National Independent Panel on Military Service and Readiness. She's an adjunct professor at the Institute of World Politics. Rebecca, welcome.

Also here is Madelyn R. Creedon. She was the Commission Chair. She has served as Principal Deputy Administrator National Nuclear Security Administration, as an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs. She also serves, as many of us know, as the long-time counsel for the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

I don't want to embarrass Madelyn, but one quick story from my time as a journalist. My wife always cautions me, now dear, you only used to be Thom Shanker, so when I used to be Thom Shanker I emailed, called, left messages for Madelyn for years on end. She never emailed or called me back. At the time it was so frustrating as a journalist, but as a recovering journalist I am

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in awe of your discipline and of your commitment to Senator Levin who was one of the truly great public servants. I'd watch Madelyn and Carl passing notes back and forth and was like I want to be in that conversation.

Thank you both for being here. We are really honored.

As always, I'll ask the first question --

Ms. Creedon: I have to say, a note in my defense. When one works for Senator Levin the staff is seen but not heard. So.

Moderator: Right. And in my current capacity, I have nothing but deep respect for how disciplined you were. We love it when people leak, but I respect it when they don't. So that's that. Thank you so much.

I'll ask the first question, as always. Four of you emailed in advance to get on the list and we'll have an hour to go around the table. I'll save the last five minutes for our guests to have any final wrap-up.

Rebecca and Madelyn, opening question to set the table.

What has surprised you most about the reaction to your report? And what elements of the report do you think have been missed or misunderstood? And then to sort of follow that, if you could correct or foot-stomp your most important findings and recommendations for the American public to take to heart on this most important topic.

Ms. Creedon: Thanks, Tom. I truly appreciate everybody for coming and also it's very nice to have grad students from the Elliott School and I will circle back to that topic at the end.

But I would say probably one of the things that I have found most interesting -- probably two things. One is that a number of people have criticized the Commission because we did not do a cost estimate, and yet when you look at our report there's very little to cost. We made a number of recommendations because we laid out what basically are the issues, the problems. The fact that we have an upcoming situation where we will have two nuclear peers -- we've never done that before. So what that means in terms of our force structure, in terms of our policy, is very new territory.

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So we made a lot of recommendations but there's a huge amount of analysis that has to be done by this administration as they look at what are the various systems that are going to need to be developed and fielded.

The things that are in the report that we have clearly recommended, most of those are already baked into the budget in some form or fashion. So the nuclear systems, the program of record, the triad, that modernization is already in the program of record.

The other things that we have suggested might be needed like more submarines or more bombers, those are years down the road.

The thing I find fascinating is the conventional forces really are where the bulk of the expenditures are going to be and again, what we actually need other than tankers, which everybody knows we need, and more ships and shipyard capacity, which is not an original thought on the part of the Commission, but it's just reiterating what everybody needs.

So that's what I find interesting, is that people have already slewed to the material decisions, to the costs, when the analysis to support that has yet to be done and there's a huge amount of work to figure out what that is.

So I think that worries me a little bit because this isn't really about cost. Yes, it's going to cost more, we know that, but it's going to cost more over a very long time. So having that longer view is what I would really like to have the discussion on from a policy perspective and not just oh my God, it's going to cost more. That was, I would say one.

The second one, and then I'll turn this piece over to Rebecca, really is this concept that somehow we are calling for a new nuclear arms race, which we are not. In fact we've been very clear to say in many circumstances that we may need different or we may need more or we may need both, but again, there is analysis that needs to be done as to what it is that is important.

The one area that we all agreed is that we need something that is a more regional approach. A lower yield. And again, what that is, [Key] [Inaudible] could be that but we did not endorse

the [Key] [[Inaudible]]. We endorsed capacities and capabilities. So I think that's the other thing.

And we have an entire chapter on risk reduction and how you think about arms control in the future and how we have to be substantially more creative and have a whole-of-government approach to deterrence in the future. So we are not by any stretch of the imagination suggesting a new arms control race, suggesting that we match one-for-one China's and Russia's nuclear forces. It's not where we are. It's like what do we need for the US force structure.

Ms. Heinrichs: It's a privilege to be here. I just want to add a couple of points to what Madelyn already said.

The other piece to the arms race criticism or accusation, and I'll refer back to what General Hyten said in our initial roll-out on IDA when somebody asked this question, which is that we are responding to what the Chinese and Russians are doing. So everything Madelyn said is true. We didn't give any specifics on what kinds of new specific numbers of things we might need additionally, although we said we may need more. And if you look to, if you kind of go into the report and you look at the initial letter from Madelyn and Senator Kyl. They make clear that some of the Commissioners did believe that, or do believe that it's inevitable that we are going to need to increase numbers simply because the target set is growing, so even if you do different things like uploading on bombers, et cetera, that some of us still believe that if we continue moving down the path and the adversary continues to behave as they are now, that in the future we are necessarily going to need to increase numbers of nuclear warheads specifically. But that was not a consensus recommendation specifically that the Commission came to.

The point is, we are responding. We do say to the program of record it's necessary but not sufficient for dealing with the threat that we're supposed to look at. But again, it's because we're responding to what the Chinese and the Russians are doing and so we are not instigating this race. We are trying to catch up to where they are to ease it essentially, and to stop it.

The other point that I would say too, besides the cost because I agree with Madelyn, I've gotten quite a bit of pushback on you didn't even make any suggestions for what you would cut. Well,

because that's not what we were asked to do. We were asked to look at the threat and then make recommendations for what our own force should look like in response to that.

But the other criticism that I've received or I've gotten quite a bit of pushback on is, there's no, you sort of didn't, you didn't even try arms control. Like there's nothing in there on arms control, and it is provocative what you are suggesting.

If you look at the rosters of who the Commissioners are, that is just simply not the case, that this Commission did not want to have, did not think about and consider options for what we might be able to do diplomatically. It's just that the threat environment has deteriorated so much that we don't see it as something that is likely in the near future.

So rather than sort of criticizing the Commission or findings or recommendations on that, I would put it back on the person to consider the fact that we spend so much time together in the Commissioners that we do have and how dedicated some of them specifically are to diplomacy and arms control, and we still came to the consensus recommendation that the situation, opportunities for arms control does not look very bright.

We do make a recommendation specifically that we would like to see restrictions on the FOBS. The Chinese testing of the FOBS is something we all agree should not continue and that if we are going to be focused on one particular initiative, the arms control folks should be focused, if there is something they should be focused on, that would be our recommendation, to get allies and partners to altogether condemn, and the Chinese and the Russians obviously ideally, a ban on testing of the FOBS.

There's other criticisms, but we'll leave it there.

Ms. Creedon: One thing on the numbers, too, which is a subtlety that's often missed, is under New Start we have 1550 deployed but we actually have more and it has to do with the rules of the New Start.

So when we talk about increases, it's increases in the context of what exactly. I mean the US stockpile right now, the total US stockpile is about 3700 ordnance. So when we talk about increases, some of the increases really is on the number of deployed and not the total stockpile.

We even made some suggestions that if there is a need to deploy more, we have the ability to do it post New Start in a number of different ways -- by uploading, by reconverting some of the systems that were converted to non-nuclear capacity. So you can deploy more without increasing the total numbers in the stockpile. And that's a very subtle distinction that I think is just often missed.

Moderator: Thank you both.

What I found so interesting -- my words, not yours -- is that when you look at the eventual US stockpile it's not adding Russian numbers with Chinese numbers plus one. It's a whole different calculation. It's great.

The first question goes to Tony Bertuca of Inside Defense.

Nope?

Bill Hennigan, New York Times.

DWG: We're talking about increasing the size of the arsenal after we've had years of reductions and it's been a priority to reduce the number of nuclear weapons. So I was wondering if the Commission had identified some decisions or points at which this could have been avoided. The track that we're on here could have been avoided in some way.

Ms. Creedon: Someone needs to do a doctoral thesis on that, frankly.

When President Obama did his Prague speech there was a different view at the time. I mean it had followed from the approach to let's go to zero, it's the mountain with Nunn and Kissinger and [Inaudible] and all of them. And even President Obama said this is not in my lifetime. This is our goal. And he put in place a number of things to get us in that direction both from a reduction perspective, an employment guidance perspective, from a nonproliferation perspective. And in the context of the P5 there was a huge amount of effort to get everybody to go in that direction. And New Start was one of the big steps with the hope that there would be another, there would be another phase. That there would be the next phase that everybody talked about as total stockpile numbers.

At that point China was very much a lesser included case. So whatever the US had which completely managed China with what we had under New Start, under the deployed. And it never happened.

So my view of all this is the US wanted to go down this one road and China and Russia picked a different road, and we were hopeful that eventually we would converge and actually return to that path and they didn't, and they're still not.

You look at the rapidity with which China is exploiting its nuclear arsenals, they're going faster than anybody expected. And Russia is almost finished with the modernization of its traditional triad. But it's rapidly increasing its non-strategic.

So I think we tried really hard. The question is, what happened? Somewhere post-Prague speech until now, what happened? Why didn't that convergence happen? Why did we go in separate ways? Lots of different reasons I think for their own purposes, but that is what it is. We wanted this path and the rest of the world wanted another path.

Ms. Heinrichs: I would just say that I think we often over-estimate what we are able to affect. And Xi Jinping and Putin have made their own assessments and determinations based on their own perceived national interests, their own perceived threats. They've each independently decided to invest very significantly in their own nuclear weapons programs.

The China one is remarkable because from the Bush administration on, each administration did not consider Russia such a serious threat. I mean in the National Defense Strategies that probably talk about it, Russia was not a threat like the Soviet Union was and so we're sort of in a new error. Nuclear terrorism is really the threat that we're looking at when it comes to nuclear weapons. And China wasn't really even discussed in those terms publicly at all.

So it really was the last administration where you had Admiral Richard, former STRATCOM Commander, really try to ring the bell on this and say they're in the midst of a strategic breakout, and if you haven't received your briefing today, you're behind on what it is that they're doing.

I think it was not for lack of trying on the part of the United States to go down the list of numbers that each made independently. Different decisions.

Moderator: Steve Trimble, Aviation Week.

DWG: Thank you.

You mentioned the FOBS and MOBS test and the recommendation in the report is to somehow get China and Russia to agree to not pursue that. If that fails -- I know that's a hypothetical, but it's a reasonable one to ask -- what does deterrence look like for something like that?

Ms. Creedon: One of the things we really focused on is looking at a whole of government approach to deterrence. It is nuclear, obviously. That's always going to be the backbone, but it's also conventional. And one of the things that we spent a lot of time wrestling with was if you want to prevent a nuclear war, you have to prevent war from the outset. How do you prevent war from the outset? You also have to improve all your conventional forces as well as your diplomatic messaging.

So to counter that, we have to do a number of things. One, just improve our command and control. Understand how we assess what's in space and who it belongs to. So having the capability to say okay, we know that's you and if you do something we'll know that's you, and then understand what our response is to it.

So it's having deterrence writ large and really focusing on what the whole of government deterrence can be. Maybe it's sanctions. Maybe it's not sanctions. Maybe it's something else. I think sometimes we think well, it has to be deterrence in space and it doesn't have to be. It's deterrence.

DWG: So matching the capability is not something --

Ms. Creedon: Maybe. But maybe not. Maybe there's something else we can do that is different, that is more creative.

If I just want to sidetrack for a minute here, one of the things we also talked about is we have to figure out how to be more creative, more innovative, and then figure out how to get different companies, different creativity into the procurement mix at DoD from a material perspective. It takes too long to do

anything. General Hyten has talked about this ad nauseam. But making the DoD procurement system a little more friendly so that you can get smaller companies, more innovative companies into the mix. Those are all the things that we need to do to figure out how to balance or deter them.

Ms. Heinrichs: I would just say that was not something that obviously we put in the report in greater detail, but just speaking for myself. That's why we want them to stop testing the thing. It has the potential of being a decapitation weapon. So it presents a very serious deterrence problem. How do you respond to something that has a decapitation strike capability?

If we assessed, if the US government assessed, and if STRATCOM assessed that we could not get them to stop doing that, to stop testing this thing, and they're going to have this capability, and that the thing that would cause them to decide that it's no longer worth it for them to continue testing, was that we also had one and could also do the same thing. I think that would be something that some people would certainly welcome and would say yes, we have to have it.

It really comes down to what's actually going to affect the calculations of the Chinese. So far, they just tested the one and haven't since. So, but I think it's important that you get the international community, get allies and partners to all recognize how much of a problem this is and to create the norm. That would be a fruitful, I think, exercise, so that's what we're sort of encouraging people to go down that path to say that this is something that they're doing, that nobody else is doing, and they need to stop doing it. But I would not close the door on that capability for the United States if that is what is necessary to deter the Chinese.

Moderator: Michael Gordon, Wall Street Journal.

DWG: Your report discusses steps that go beyond the program of record to deal with the two-peer challenge, but even implementing the program of record may not be so easy.

What I wanted to ask is, Frank Kendall recently singled out the Sentinel program and said it was struggling, to use his phrase, in terms of I think cost and schedule. There have been concerns about the Columbia class.

What are the steps that might need to be taken to make sure that the US has an adequate number of warheads and capabilities should the program of record strategic modernization fall behind schedule? Are those steps being readied in case they're necessary? And in your discussion with the administration on your findings, what's been the response to them? More generally, also, compensatory steps should strategic modernization fall behind schedule.

Ms. Creedon: I think we have to be very practical, and right now pretty much everything is behind schedule and over budget. It's so -- I'm not the defender for the administration or previous administrations because this program of record, as you know, has actually been in place since about 2009. But it's really hard. We haven't done a new missile like this in 50 years. I know people talk about well, we did a Peacekeeper, but the Peacekeeper was just a missile. It wasn't the launch control facilities, it wasn't redoing all the silos. The same is true of the Columbia. We haven't done this in a very long time. The infrastructure at the National Nuclear Security Administration, same thing.

So most of the people who did it the last time aren't even around anymore. So finding the ability to do this again, recreating all of this has turned out to be a huge problem.

So one of the lessons learned is don't let these things die. Don't let these things atrophy. Keep at some level the industrial base alive. But to your point about the transition, we recognize that this is a huge problem. That this at least decade or more of transition is going to be a very dangerous period because the systems that we have are already very old, they're already past their lifetime. So there has to be a huge amount of focus and attention to just keep them going. Right now they're fine but they have to be kept going, so this is a bit of a message for Congress. Normally Congress in the run-up to a new system will stop funding the old system within a specific period of time. They can't do that on this. They just can't do that on this.

We actually have to keep those old systems fully funded. We have to continue to test them to the maximum extent possible. People have to continue to be trained until we actually start getting the new ones online. And even when we get them, that

handoff period is going to be a long time.

I know the Air Force wants to do one Sentinel a week. I think that's going to be very difficult, to put it mildly. But we really have to focus on keeping the old things alive. The only one I'm not worried about is the B-52.

DWG: If it's the case, as the Air Force says, and it can't be sustained too much longer, what are the specific steps that you've identified to maintain the force? Is it uploading? What are the particular things?

And when you've talked to the administration, you must have talked to them about your report. What's the feedback you've gotten on this problem, but more generally, or have you not gotten any feedback from them about your recommendations?

Ms. Creedon: They know this. They know very much this is a very difficult period of time, this transition. All the services are fully aware of this. The Navy has started to look at extending the life of specific hulls that haven't had as much use, if you will, on the submarine side. The Air Force is looking at how you keep the B-2 going for a little bit longer. The same is true with the services. How do we keep the Minuteman III functioning?

They did some years ago, maybe eight or ten years ago, they went through and tried to figure out how some of these could be staying for a little bit longer. So they're aware of it and the administration is very much aware of it, of the problem.

But Congress has got to fund it, and that's what I worry about most. I guess upload. Upload is one of them.

Ms. Heinrichs: All the Commissioners have recognized this potential bathtub, whatever you want to call it, but we don't -- we all want to make sure -- they're looking at the minimum of New Start. So some of us are already looking at okay, what happens in a post New Start and do we need to increase numbers? We're kind of looking at we need to at least be at the New Start levels, so how do we do that? That's what we talked about uploading and defense things that we could do more easily.

I would say on the administration -- I'm also not a defender of this administration, but things are really bad in the world

right now, and so I think we were kind of hoping six months ago that we would do the rollout for this and it would get a lot more attention. The first report like this since 2008-2009. A really bipartisan, really non-partisan consensus document that was pretty forwards leaning in saying this threat environment is deteriorating. It's really bad. We have two major nuclear powers that we're worried about potentially, simultaneously, moving against US interests in a way that creates a major problem for the US nuclear deterrent and our conventional forces.

And it really, I don't think, has gotten that much attention. But to Madelyn's point, they know how bad the problem is but also just -- I think there is, there are so many problems right now that there is an inability to focus on what I think is probably the biggest problem that the United States has to confront right now.

The cost -- I've gotten pushback from some administration officials worried about why didn't you, you know, you could have identified some things, some of the stuff just seems impossible. But then other things like -- one of the things that we say is an urgent problem is the theater problem in Asia, is that we're missing some -- I wouldn't use the word missing, but we need to have increased deterrent capability in that theater and I really, you know, people disagree on SLCM-N, but I really haven't gotten really pushback and disagreement on that point, that we do need something there. That we need to get something pretty urgently fielded as quickly as we can.

Ms. Creedon: And even emphasis on the conventional Prompt Global Strike.

Ms. Heinrichs: Yeah.

Ms. Creedon: Make that go faster.

Ms. Heinrichs: And the fact that if you want to rely less on nuclear weapons, which is what this country has tried to prioritize, you're going to have to increase conventional. There's no way around it. There's not a cheap sort of quick trick to solve this problem.

Moderator: As far as elevating the public discussion and intention that's why we're all here today with these great

correspondents.

That was the list of those that asked me in advance. Questions from the table? And identify yourself, sir.

DWG: Matt Beinart, Defense Daily.

What was the Commission's assessment on the command and control NC3 piece? And particularly the assessment of the level of intention on that piece. If the necessary number of [intentions] to ensure that, to support the [partner of record] understands. What was the assessment there?

Ms. Creedon: Obviously there's not much in the report about this mostly because you can't talk about this. Most everything on this goes classified pretty quickly. But clearly we recognized that this was a key element of the program of record, and that the modernization of command and control has to also proceed apace. And it is -- when we think about command and control, one of the other things that we wanted to make sure, it isn't just calling the bomber, right? It's the whole system. It's the early warning system, it's the intelligence system that supports not just material, the material warnings but also the intelligence warnings.

One of the things that we also recommended to the intelligence community is that they need to refocus attention on growing China capabilities, Russia capabilities. Everybody and their mother at one point was a Sovietologist. They don't exist anymore. So how do you re-grow that capability to do the analytics? Because we want to make sure that you understand what your adversary is doing, so that's a very important part of the overall discussion of command and control.

And bringing in the ability to have the President, to have decision time. So understanding who did what when, and making sure you know that as all part of the early warning, and then making sure that your command and control is not vulnerable to some sort of an initial attack, so that there's not some strategic advantage achieved by taking out satellite X, and so that you have redundant systems to maintain that positive control.

So the President is never in a situation of saying well I have to use these now because I may not be able to use them later

because I may not control them. So making sure all of these things are addressed.

DWG: A quick separate follow-up.

On the SLCM-N piece, my understanding is the report recommends [inaudible] something along those lines for that type of capability. Not specifically saying SLCM-N but as some of the feedback, has it been saying if we had had some clarity or some answer that might have helped [inaudible] the direction of the [inaudible] moving forward. Is that some of the feedback?

Ms. Creedon: Pages 48-49, there's a whole list of the capabilities that would be needed.

Ms. Heinrichs: We outline the characteristics of what we think a weapon system needs to have to be able to get at that particular need.

We tried as a Commission, we were very, very determined to have a consensus report. That was the way that it was going to be the most meaning, the most impactful. So we tried to stay away from very specific programmatic decisions that would harm that.

So we listed what the characteristics would be. If you can come up with a weapon system that does all those things, that's not SLCM-N --

Ms. Creedon: Or some of them or part of. But we went into this. Rebecca's absolutely right. We went into this looking at our charge of strategic, right? Strategic policy, strategic thinking. So we decided early on that we are not picking winners and losers. We are not picking System X. We are looking at the capabilities, and that's why we have provided, if you will, dumped on the doorstep of the administration, if you will, a very large analytic responsibility. We identified the problem and they have to figure out, based on our guidance, what to do about it.

Ms. Heinrichs: The other thing I would say is that if you think about it, the things that we had to consider to come up with recommendations -- part of what we did was we discovered what we would like to know but we just couldn't drill on greater understanding or detail on. One of those things was also, Madelyn had mentioned, trying to understand both how Russian

leadership and Chinese leadership were even thinking, because part of the things that we foot-stomped in the report was we're not trying to rediscover the wheel on how to do deterrence. We reaffirmed how this country does deterrence. We hold at risk what the adversary values most. We list what those things are. But when it comes to China, we had all kinds of briefings to try to understand, to the extent we could as Commissioners, and not, I mean I'm not a China hand and I'm not a Russia hand. But try to understand what it was they've got. I mean China's really hard. The Russia problem's hard, and we need to know that better.

Think about, when Obama went through Russia reset we lost -- STRATCOM lost a lot of its Russia analysts. We moved away from really trying to think about that as a major power threat that wasn't what the country had assessed was the primary threat. So we're behind on the Russia problem, but we're in a better place on the Russia problem than we are with the China problem.

That's why some of the think tank piece that have come out right before our report and right after have made recommendations that the United States does targeting differently. That we don't hold at risk whether the adversary values their strategic or non-strategic, the actual regime, the societal control of the regime. Those are the things that we think about in terms of what we want to hold at risk and that's what's going to grow the number of our weapons.

We've had some people say why don't we only hold at risk their conventional forces. Or hold conventional forces for the second opportunistic power, but all of their forces for the first power that goes first, or another piece said why don't we go back to counter-CD targeting? I mean we as a Commission adamantly rejected that. We're not going to do that. We're not going to violate the laws of war. We're going to deterrence the way we have done deterrence.

I just want to say that that is also -- that was a challenge for us to get -- we couldn't get into greater degrees of specificity in terms of numbers because we're not doing targeting and we're also -- that is just something that we, the country, have got to get a better handle on.

What does the Chinese government value? Where are those targets? What are they? Then that's going to determine our

deterrent requirements.

Ms. Creedon: We were very clear. Six foundational, longstanding tenets of US nuclear strategy remain valid.

DWG: Meredith Roaten with Janes.

I wanted to ask about the first-ever National Defense Industrial Base report that the administration is going to release at some time before the end of the year, and I wanted to ask is there anything that the Commission was looking for specifically within that report? And how does this renewed focus on the defense industrial base kind of impact your assessment overall and in the work that the Commission does strategically?

Ms. Creedon: We focused a lot on the condition of the industrial base. Not only the industrial base, from a pure industry perspective, but also the industrial base from a government perspective. So the industrial base at the National Nuclear Security Administration, all the [live plants]. The science industrial base is better because that's what we focused on post CTBT, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The production infrastructure. There has been some work, but a huge amount of work remains to be done on that. The industrial base at DoD for maintaining all of the systems. Also at the supply chain which is also crucial. And making sure that not only are things done that can still be done, that we still have industry that can make these parts and pieces, but the quality of the parts and pieces is still good, and that they can be delivered on a timely basis.

The other piece of the executive branch industrial base are the shipyards. We know, that's been known for years, that the capacity on those shipyards is just not adequate across the board -- both the public and the private yards. So we focused a lot on that.

So I'm hoping that that report will cover all of this and how we're going to deal with it.

Ms. Heinrichs: The other reason it's going to be super important is because some of our recommendations, like more B-21s. We just kind of day more B-21s but don't say anything more than that, it might be literally impossible if there are certain things missing in our defense industrial base. So I don't know

what those things are, but we're going to have to look to see what is it that we need to be able to have another production line, if we need another production line, and then what are the issues in the supply chain that we need to resolve. There are a lot of things that we would like lots more of that might be impossible to do if we do not get the defense industrial base right. Even if we could come up with the workers and the workforce. So I think there needs to be a really serious study of what those needs are and where do we need to ramp up.

And this also gets back to the money issue. When people push back and say what were the costs, it's like some of our recommendations aren't even going to be something that's an increase in the defense budget necessarily, but do have to do with our manufacturing and workforce.

Ms. Creedon: This is a long -- the other, to go back to Thom's original question. This is a long game report. We have to think long term on all of these things.

I think early on the production per year of the B-21, I may have this wrong, but I think it's like seven-ish a year. We're not going to get more until you get to a 100. We're a long way away of even getting more, but it's planning. Doing the planning now. Making those decisions now so that if you need more, when you need more, you can actually do more. Or you can do different. But if you don't put in place some things now, there won't be the opportunity to make decisions down the road if you need them. So it's very much of a long game.

Ms. Heinrichs: We focus a lot on that, on really emphasizing if we couldn't all agree on specifics and numbers and different things, we could all agree that we should be as a country in the business of opening doors for decision-makers in the next several years. So are there things that we can be doing now?

We certainly don't want to be missing something or not looking at something or not taking the initiative to fix certain bottlenecks in supply chains, for instance, so that we have the option in three years or five years to as fast as we can ramp up production where possible.

I am a little bit more optimistic. Our support for Ukraine's defense against Russia has demonstrated that we can increase production rates, even when we thought things were really dire

in some instances, we were still able to do it and so it hasn't been all a bad news story about what we're able to do. But now that we have had this exercise, and learning that we do have all these shortcomings, now is the time to be addressing those and not waiting until it's a worse problem.

DWG: Mike Brest with the Washington Examiner.

Just to touch on what you mentioned a little bit, Rebecca, what lessons have you or the committee learned, whether it's from the conflict in Russia or what we've seen in the Middle East? Whether that's being prepared for an unexpected conflict or in terms of where we're lacking.

Ms. Heinrichs: I guess I would just say a couple of things. We need to be able to produce weapons quickly, at scale. At the scale that we need. And so that clearly is something that we've learned from our support for Ukraine. Even though some of it -- I mean we've been able to do it and I think we still can and should continue to do it, so that would be one lesson. We're still on a peacetime footing in terms of our defense industrial base, our ability to be able to produce the necessary weapons. So that would be the first one.

Another one I guess more on sort of not partisan but politically. There's a lot of education that needs to happen for the American people to get behind what I think we're going to need to do. I mean you would think whenever we say look, that our help for Ukraine has increased production rates in all these various states throughout the Midwest and the South, and the answer has not been oh good, we should keep doing that then. It's still sort of this well maybe we should be doing something different with our time, money and effort.

So I think there's a lot of education that needs to happen to be able to mobilize the country, to be able to do what we need to do.

The other thing I would just say that became very clear throughout the work on the Commission, is there is a lot of untapped collaboration and resources within our allies that we have got to be able to do that. Whether it's technology sharing, what can they produce that we need? Can they help us with the refueling mission with the bomber? I'm very excited about what the B-21 can do, but are there things that allies can

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help with refueling, or can Australia base some? That would really help with some of our issues. It would complicate the adversary's calculations in a way that would be really fruitful.

And I think allies want to contribute more and there's lots of opportunities here. So I think there is just loads of opportunity to better utilize our allies.

DWG: Bryant Harris of Defense News.

I wanted to follow up on the industrial base piece of it. Even in the best case scenario, one of your recommendations, for instance, is opening up a third shipyard. I think even then you have a lot of workforce issues and stuff. Regardless of what happens, it seems like China will inevitably be able to out-produce us for pretty much everything. So how do you work around that, is basically my question.

Ms. Creedon: Again, if we don't start, we're never going to get there. So we have to start.

We made this recommendation for a third shipyard because we know right now that we need more conventional capability in the Asia Pacific and we also know that right now it's going to be very hard for the Navy to produce the Virginia class, even on the schedule that they want to. They pretty much said they can't do this.

So there are a number of things that you have to really figure out now, how to just expand the capacity for the near term and then look at the capacity for the long term. A third shipyard would be a potential capacity for the long term, but it isn't just the floor space, it's also people. We know after all of our briefings, that just the workforce -- and it is engineers and it's physicists and it's, but it's also everybody else. It's all the crafts, it's the skilled technicians, it's electricians, it's concrete, it's rebar, it's everything.

One of -- just as a little example, the uranium processing facility that NNSA is building in Tennessee, it's behind schedule. And one of the many things that came up was they had assumed that a skilled electrician could do this much work. Right? In this much time. What they found is that didn't happen. This much work got done in this much time. It's just lacking all of the skilled crafts that we used to have.

This is, again, one of these government wide. This is bigger than NNSA. This is bigger than DoD. How do we get crafts back into the mix again? How do you get skills training back in? It takes a couple of years to get a journeyman electrician up and running. So start this now. Think about how to do this.

Again, these are the decisions that need to be made now so that you can actually do things in the future. Then you do another line, maybe, at an existing plant.

Ms. Heinrichs: That was great. The other thing we discussed when it comes to workforce, it's not even just about recruiting the specific people to train them up. A lot of these places where we need them to go for the things that we're talking about in the Commission, they're kind of in the middle of nowhere. So you have to -- you also need the associated sort of lifestyle necessities for families. That was not a small thing that we -- if you're going to recruit people to come out and do these things that we need them to do, you need to make sure that there are schools there for their kids to go to that aren't an hour and a half away to drive.

So there are second and third order issues that we simply have to take that it takes a national focus over many years to be able to do this. This should be build back better for the defense industrial base. I've got all kinds of ideas.

Ms. Creedon: We did not take this on, this is just a personal view. But when there were more unions, unions were very good at training their workforce. This is another thing that would be great, if we had more unions that could take on the training of their workforce.

DWG: I want to pivot just a little bit to the --

Moderator: We all know you, but if you can introduce yourself.

DWG: Sorry. Lauren Williams, Defense One.

I wanted to get a little bit into the tech side. There was significant mention of cyberspace, electronic warfare, especially as Russia, China, North Korea, their capabilities increased, therefore increase in [inaudible]. Can you talk about the Commission's assessment on the US' readiness to

compete there? And the necessary changes that might need to be made.

Ms. Creedon: We did spend a fair amount of time talking about new capabilities and new technologies and where we might have advantage. We also talked a lot about how we maintain what we have and then how we don't lose things in the future. And the mix of what it takes.

So it's education, it's support for innovation. But it's kind of what I said earlier. We were not the Procurement Commission. There's a whole other commission, the PPBE Commission that's looking at all of that.

Moderator: And they'll be rolling out their report in this group in March, so stand by.

Ms. Creedon: But we also recognize that the DoD procurement system needs some rework. It's not a surprise. The PPBE Interim report said the same thing. I think Bill LaPlante has said it. Frank Kendall said it when he was there. Will Roper talked about it when he was there. This is not new. But we have to figure out how to get more innovation into the DoD system.

We'll never catch up if it's going to take ten years to do anything. We just can't do that. We have to figure out how to do this better. So that was a big focus.

I think we recognize that umpty-some years ago the defense research, engineering, they sort of led all of that. We kind of led the US. That's not true anymore. Industry is really where most of the innovation is now.

That's not to say that all the fabulous work that happens in the NNSA labs, at DARPA, that's great. But it needs to be funded and it also needs to be supported long-term. That includes all of the science-based stockpiled stewardship work at the NNSA. All of that has to be funded because science is really important as are the export control. We have to deal with ITAR. It comes back to what Rebecca was saying, we've [inaudible] our allies. We have to figure out how we can partner with our allies more.

There's a whole bill that's been introduced in Congress to deal with some of the ITAR and other constraints. Just to implement

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AUKUS. So I think we have to be really careful and really serious about how we can improve our ability to collaborate, cooperate, do joint development, with allies as well. So I think that's all part of the innovation.

Ms. Heinrichs: On the electronic warfare piece, we do, I was trying to see what's in here versus where we have it elsewhere.

We do discuss it. I think that, what I want to say about this - I mean, one of the things that we've been trying to help and I've been arguing for for Ukraine is to get more, larger capable drones in the field that have electronic warfare capabilities on them too.

So I think one of the lessons that we've learned here is when we're talking about these major power threats, Russia and China, this is going to be an integral part of how the United States deals with this problem.

To your question, how do we feel like on the state of readiness on it, I would just say we need to be really investing more in this and understanding that this is going to be a serious part of how China conducts a military operation, that they're using electronic warfare.

That was another one of the things that we continued as a Commission to try to say what are the emerging technologies that we know about and what can we say about them in any way that's helpful to show that we know about it, we need to invest in it and incorporate it, and we do the same thing for AI. We know that this is important, but how much can you say about this other than B-21 is going to be sort of the weapon system that's going to use that and we should be able to leverage that. But it's hard to measure and quantify how we are versus them.

Ms. Creedon: Additive manufacturing. Capabilities from space.

Ms. Heinrichs: I did want to mention, I was actually very surprised this did not get more controversial attention.

DWG: You can thank Hamas for that.

Ms. Heinrichs: Yeah.

We also made the recommendation that we have to further adapt

our integrated air and missile defense, and in particular the reason that we talked about -- of the homeland -- to take away the incentive or the temptation that both China and Russia specifically might have for the coercive threat against the US homeland. What do I mean by that? We talked quite a bit about this. The threat that we're most worried about is really what Russia's tried to do in Ukraine. It's a theater conventional war that has strategic consequences in which nuclear brinksmanship is being used to prevent the United States and our allies from coming to the aid too much to that ally.

So what are the different things that an adversary like a Russia might do to continue to escalate, to get the United States to back down? And obviously there's the low yield nuclear threat in theater, really concerned about that.

Another one would be, would they be tempted -- and NORTHCOM has talked about this a lot. Would they, are they holding at risk, can Russia, would Russia consider attacking the United States homeland, our mainland in such a way to paralyze us rather than enrage us? So it's not a massive attack but it's one, two, three on particular infrastructure or something else that would cause the American people to say what? For Lithuania? For Taiwan?

And of course we want the answer to be one, we want to prevent that from happening. We want to take that away. That's business one. But two, yes. That our commitment to our allies, and the stakes are so high that the United States would seek to get the adversary to back down and to end this war on the lowest levels of violence possible. So you want to take away that vulnerability so it's not a temptation. They don't have that coercive effect over the United States.

So we do make the recommendation that as soon as technically feasible, that we would deploy an additional kind of defenses against this particular coercive threat. A lot of analysis needs to go into what that might be, what those things are that we'd like to defend as a priority, but that this is just a further adaptation to how the United States thinks about integrated air and missile defense.

Ms. Creedon: And what we mean by this is sort of point defense. Really protecting the critical infrastructure. So even current systems that we have like Patriot or THAAD could be more greatly

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utilized in the US to protect some of these critical infrastructures as well as the longer term research --

DWG: How many such infrastructure sites would have to be protected?

Ms. Creedon: Again, now we've deposited an analytic task at the Department of Defense.

But what are those things that are really important to us? We have one sub base on the East Coast, one sub base on the West Coast. We have one B-2 bomber base. Of course it's in the middle, it's harder to get. But look at our coastal things. What are those coastal things that we might want to protect from a coercive attack?

Some of this is cruise missile defense, but it's also deterrence. If you have the ability to prevent one of these attacks then the cost of doing something is not going to be acceptable by an adversary. So if they can't succeed, that's deterrence. It's just thinking about these things in somewhat different ways. I'm not talking about, this is not more NGIs, this is not the philosophy of stopping Russian ICBMs. IT's not that at all. These are mostly conventional things that might dissuade the US from participating in something.

DWG: Who wants the Patriot system in his backyard?

Ms. Heinrichs: Don't we all?

Ms. Creedon: Maybe Iron Dome is better.

Ms. Heinrichs: And we didn't say point defense, to be clear. We definitely left it open. We talked about utilizing the space domain as well. What we want to do is we're talking about the scoped coercive threat. Clearly we've had some briefings on why this would be a wise thing to do and got the whole Commission to come to consensus on this. So we think it's doable and a lot of -- the roll-out too for [IDA] is, a lot of our confidence on some of these emerging, on what we might be able to do and utilize emerging technologies, is happening in the commercial space. So we're looking at oh, my goodness, look what Starlink can do, for instance. That's interesting. Are there other applications? So this is just one Commissioner's perspective on this but the point of it is, that we're not in a place where we

want to be on that particular point. NORTHCOM continues to say Russia still poses an acute threat to the US homeland and in part that's what it's talking about.

Moderator: We're at the two-minute mark. I always like to reserve the last word for our speakers. Any final thoughts or admonitions or comments?

Ms. Creedon: I would just say I think one of the reasons why this report really is interesting and I hope impactful, notwithstanding our horrible timing on the roll-out, five days after Hamas invaded Israel. But what we have done I think is we have brought a lot of information together in one spot. I think that is as valuable as anything else.

We have a very detailed discussion of the threat which I don't think is often well understood. And a lot of our recommendations are not original. More tankers has been a recommendation that any number of different folks have made over commissions and many many years, but our one big benefit here is bringing this all together and really having this large strategic look, because we are in a very new situation. We are, as we talked about earlier, we're in a situation that we didn't plan for, we didn't want, and we're not prepared for.

So how do we do a bit of an about face and figure out how we prepare for the future? At the same time not losing sight of how we think about arms control, how we think about strategic stability, how we think about confidence-building measures. We have to be more creative on that. And not losing also the focus on nonproliferation. So making sure that we still have all the programs available to us to prevent proliferation, both vertical and horizontal in the future. But our big contribution right now is I think we brought it all together in one place.

Ms. Heinrichs: To add to that, it's remarkable that the 12 of us came up with a consensus document and we keep saying that because we want people to really understand that. But it really is. I think that that in and of itself -- it's really important with how divided the country is right now on the US role in the world and what our priorities should be and how do we spend money and how do we make investments? The 12 of us were able to come up with -- I think one of the most interesting sections of the report is the stakes section where we outline, even before we get to the threat, what is on the line? What are the stakes?

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So that I think is a helpful way. It was really important, Senator Kyl if he were here he would say we have to write this in a way that members of Congress can go and explain it to their districts, and explain it back home. I think we did that.

So coming up with a bipartisan consensus can be done on the things that are of biggest importance, so I think that's one of the biggest takeaways from the report. And also that we really did try to convey a sense of urgency. That although a lot of these things might not come to fruition for years to come, we do have to work with a national sense of purpose and commitment to get started on a lot of these major things so that we do have these options the next three to five years.

Moderator: To our guest speakers, thank you for a thoughtful and thought-provoking conversation.

To the correspondents, thanks for your presence and great questions.

And to the Elliott School grad students, good luck with your futures, thank you for joining us.

Ms. Creedon: Can I make one comment to the Elliott School graduate students?

Moderator: Sure.

Ms. Creedon: Break/break. This has nothing to do with the Commission.

I am also in a different hat, a very part-time research professor at GW, and I have a grant that we thought was going away. It's come back. And it's to fund the Nuclear Security Working Group. What this does is it places folks in congressional offices that have some interest on things nuclear. It can be from nuclear power, weapons, nonproliferation, it runs the whole scope.

The fellows that we place either have to have master's degree or graduates, but what I need right now is, because this whole thing is being reconstituted, I am looking for an Elliott School graduate student to work part-time in my program. So if any of you have any interest or know of anybody that has an interest, would you just reach out to Thom? Sorry, I'm going to enlist

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him too in this effort.

Moderator: Of course. And I won't even take my usual 15 percent. [Laughter].

DWG: Two chairs for nuclear war.

Ms. Heinrichs: Preventing it.

Ms. Creedon: Seriously, if you know of anybody, I need a very part-time graduate student to help get this back up and functioning.

Moderator: If I could just sort of use the power of the chair to foot-stomp one point about the lack of attention to Russia as a threat, Andy Hone at RAND and I did some research on it. The day the Berlin Wall fell 50 percent of the intelligence budget was on the Soviet Union. By the time Russia invaded Ukraine, the first time in 2014, that 50 percent had dropped to 15 percent of the budget. On the day the Berlin Wall fell, there were 12,000 analysts looking only at the Soviet Union. By the time Putin invaded Ukraine the first time, 2014, that had dropped to below 3,000.

Thank you all for coming today.

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