MR. PETER HUESSY: I want to thank you for being here today, the fifth in our series of seminars on missile defense, proliferation, nuclear deterrence, arms control and defense policy.

MR. : I don’t think the mic is on.

MR. HUESSY: Thank you. Is it not on? Well hopefully you can hear me anyway.

This is our fourth in our series of seminars that ROA and NDIA and AFA are sponsoring. And we’re honored today to have Bob Joseph, who as you know is the senior scholar at the National Institute for Public Policy. He is a former professor of national security studies at NDU and head of the Center for Counterproliferation Research, which is now the WMD Center.

He was formerly with Carlton and Tufts University, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. And he was undersecretary for arms control and national security at the State Department, was on the National Security Council as special assistant to the president and senior director for proliferation strategy, counterproliferation and homeland defense. And he was on the U.S.-Russia Consultative Commission on Nuclear Testing, and on the Standing Consultative Commission on the ABM Treaty, and was principal deputy assistant for international security policy in the George H.W. Bush administration, and deputy assistant secretary for nuclear forces and arms control policy during the Reagan administration.

And he is here to speak to us about the issue that Fred Ikle raised in I think it was an article in 1961, in which he said, after you detect a violation of an arms control treaty, what do you do next? And I went on the web yesterday to get Bob’s bio and downloaded it from the first one that appeared, which I didn’t realize was from the Institute for Policy Studies. And next to his bio was about a four page testimonial to why Bob Joseph doesn’t favor arms control.

And I was thinking today of how some of our major arms control in the nuclear business occurred. We had the Osirik reactor in Iraq taken out by the Israelis, with the cooperation of a socialist president in France, Mr. Mitterand, whose agents put chips in the reactor in order to guide the weapons from the Israeli airplanes into the reactor. We had a Syrian reactor taken out by the Israelis.

We had Desert Storm, without which we would not have discovered that Saddam, according to the UN, the UNSCOM people, was within six months to a year of a nuclear weapon. And, of course, we had what Bob is most intimately involved with, the giving up by Libya of both its chemical and biological
programs, but also its nuclear program. And what’s interesting is that in the real world Bob wrote the
talking points for Mr. Quaddafi, who had asked, what do I need to say when I give these things up?

And it’s an interesting question of – Fran Townsend, who was a dinner speaker in this series,
going to Libya to finalize the agreement with Quaddafi and was taken by helicopter to the middle of the
desert. And the desert helicopter landed, the landing doors came down, and Quaddafi’s tent was out in
the distance with these lights around it and (players ?). And it was the middle of the night and the guy
at the helicopter, a colonel, pointed his fingers at the tent and said, go.

So she took her shoes off and in her stocking feet climbed over about three sand dunes and
about a quarter of a mile to his tent. And the first thing he said to her was, I do not want the Saddam
option.

(Laughter).

And that brings us to the remarks of Bob today. What do we do with non-cooperative
countries? Most of us think of two, North Korea and Iran. We also have countries such as Pakistan and
India and others who are not members of the NPT.

And this is the dilemma I think we faced in the post-Cold War era of countries in the former
Soviet Union, thanks to the extraordinary work of the George W. Bush administration, ‘41, the
extraordinary effort to take nuclear weapons out of Kazakhstan and Belarus, Ukraine. And, of course,
we had all those tactical nuclear weapons lying in Eastern Europe. And Bob is going to address that
issue as to how does one deal with this thorny dilemma of uncooperative states, the extent to which we
use diplomacy and the extent to which we use – or have the threat of – military force or sanctions or
other things that we might do?

I also want to thank our guests here, our corporate sponsors and our embassy guests and
members of the military, and remind you that General Kowalski from the Global Strike Command is
speaking tomorrow. And Frank Rose, from the department of State, is going to be speaking to us on
Friday. So with that, I want to thank Bob for coming here.

I also want to say a special thank you and welcome to my boss at the Air Force Association, Gen.
Mike Dunn, the retired president of the National Defense University where we first met; and also one of
my dear friends, John Rood who was Bob’s assistant at the White House. And also, as you know, John
use to work in the United States Senate. I want to thank you, John, for being here today.

So would you all give a very warm welcome to Ambassador John Joseph?

(Applause).

MR. JOHN JOSEPH: Good morning, Peter. Thank you for that very kind introduction. And thank
you for all of your efforts in organizing this long-standing and very successful breakfast series.
Over the years I’ve had the opportunity to work with many of you, and I can say it’s really terrific to see you here this morning. It’s also great to see some of the younger people in attendance, because as you know, you represent the next generation of leaders in the national security arena. And it is a real service, Peter, that you provide in exposing these up-and-coming leaders to a variety of thoughts, to diverse opinions, on national security issues.

Given that it is election season, aka the funny season, it’s useful to begin with a disclaimer. In fact, it’s necessary for me to begin with a disclaimer. I do serve as a senior adviser to Governor Romney and a co-chair of the campaign’s counter-proliferation group.

But this morning I speak only for myself, not for the governor. Moreover, my remarks are not meant to be partisan. I did serve as a civil servant for over 25 years in both Democrat and Republican administrations, although I’m very quick to concede that I served at higher levels in Republican administrations.

(Laughter)

I also concede in advance that when I say it’s not about the politics, some of you are probably thinking of that well-known quote by H.L. Mehnken, “When they say it’s not about the money, it’s about the money.”

(Laughter).

But skepticism notwithstanding, the difference I will discuss are not reflective of differences in goals. Not surprisingly, and as it should be, there is substantial continuity in U.S. nonproliferation objectives across all administrations. And this is clearly seen, I think, in over 20 years of bipartisan support for cooperative threat reduction programs and nonproliferation assistance programs. And in this area, I believe that the Obama team is doing a good job promoting nuclear lockdown and raising the profile of prevention and material security through the nuclear summit process.

So I begin with the premise that we all seek to meet the threats to our national security from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, such as those from Iran and North Korea. My comments go to differences in policies and differences in world views that affect the achievement of those agreed goals. What I intend to do is provide you with a contrasting view on two central and reoccurring themes in the Obama administration’s approach to non- and counter-proliferation.

The first is an almost unshakeable faith in engagement with the regimes in Tehran and Pyongyang. The second is that leading the world toward nuclear zero will mobilize the global community to take more effective responses to isolate and punish countries that violate their commitments under the nuclear NonProliferation Treaty to forego nuclear weapons. My bottom line is that both of these themes have actually undermined our ability to stop proliferation, and in fact may produce the opposite effects of those intended, a more proliferated and more unstable and dangerous world.
Let’s start with Iran. The president recently stated that he inherited a U.S. policy in tatters. Those were his words. But the facts indicate that if that was an accurate description, things have only gotten worse.

Despite multiple claims that the sanctions are working, the scope and the pace of Iran’s nuclear program are expanding and accelerating. At the end of 2008, about 4,000 centrifuges were enriching uranium at Natanz. Three years later, the IAEA reports that Iran’s enrichment capacity at that plant has doubled to over 8,000 centrifuges.

Iran’s cumulative stocks of low enriched uranium have gone from about 1,000 kilograms in early 2009 to over 5,000 kilograms, or a five-fold increase. In addition, in 2010 at a formerly covert underground facility, Iran has been producing uranium enriched to 20 percent, which is of course much closer to weapons-grade material than previous production. As for weaponization, the past two IAEA reports have emphasized a disturbing and in some cases recent activities, that the agency’s inspectors on the ground believe are, in their words, “strong indicators of possible weapons development.”

These include work involving neutron initiators, triggering systems and implosion experiments. The administration can continue to claim that Iran halted its weapons work in 2003–2004, but it cannot deny the existence and evidence to the contrary. On this question the IAEA is far to the right of the administration. But hey, who is not to the right of this administration?

(Laughter).

I know, that was a cheap political shot. I take it back. I’m only trying to inject a little humor.

So what about policy? President Obama came to office promising an open hand to the mullahs in Tehran. In practice, this meant that for almost three years the administration opposed – actually opposed – the imposition of effective or meaningful sanctions on the regime in order not to discourage the prospects for talks.

But placing engagement at the center of our Iran policy not only failed to achieve the hoped for results, it has proven to be very costly. Iran’s leaders have played us like a fiddle. The on-again, off-again negotiations which continue today have only bought time for Tehran to continue its nuclear program. Once the administration shifted course in the face of what the IAEA director general called “alarming evidence,” it sought additional UN sanctions through the Security Council, as well as even tougher sanctions working with friends and allies outside the UN framework.

In other words, the Obama team reverted to the policies of its predecessor. It was the Bush administration that led the Security Council to adopt four resolutions against Iran demanding the complete cessation of enrichment and imposing sanctions. It was also the Bush administration that lay the groundwork for the department of Treasury measures that have proven much more effective in disrupting the Iranian economy.

The myth that in 2008 the U.S. was diplomatically isolated, is just that. It is a self-serving and self-deluding myth. The loss of time under President Obama has had significant consequences. Here
the key point is that we squandered three critical years as a result of a policy that, using Samuel Johnson’s description of second marriages, “represented the triumph of hope over experience.”

If we had earlier subjected Iran to the type of sanctions we are not implementing, maybe, just maybe, it would have had greater effect. But today, although sanctions are causing economic pain, there is no evidence to suggest that the nuclear program is being slowed. We can only speculate what the leadership in Tehran is thinking. Will the sanctions lead to an actual acceleration of the program now that the end-goal is in sight, perhaps less than 12 months away, according to former CIA director Leon Panetta back in January?

Maybe the thought is simply to get it over with. Acquire a weapon or a weapons capability, accept the cost of sanctions, and wait for the sanctions to be lifted as the international community grows accustomed to the outcome, which it surely will. While we can only guess at the answers, it’s evident that engagement remains a central component of U.S.-Iran policy. While it is being talked about less openly, perhaps because of the ridicule it has engendered, how else can one read the willingness of the administration to resume the negotiations game, revived in the P-5 Plus 1 talks last month in Istanbul? The only agreement from those talks was to meet again.

While process is important, as John Rood knows, especially in the culture of the State department, it pales – it pales when one thinks about the continued spinning of Iran’s centrifuges. As Israeli’s prime minister has described it, Iran received yet another freebie. Moreover, this policy of hope continues to undercut the prospects for compelling Iran’s leaders to back away from its nuclear pursuit.

While the Obama administration has said that all options are on the table, it has been explicit that it does not way to threaten or to use force. Former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates stated that the use of force would be, in his word, “insane.” More recently, President Obama has sought to box in Israel from threatening or using force.

But the irony – the irony is that the best means to improve the prospects for a peaceful diplomatic settlement is to make it clear to Tehran that force is a credible option. There is no reason to believe that the regime would ever abandon the nuclear program, with one possible exception. And that is that it believed force would be used against it.

That was the case with Libya in 2003, and it’s the case with Iran today. Whether we have one or two years, we simply can’t be confident that an incremental policy of more of the same will be successful. In fact, one would have to conclude, based on our experience to date, that we will fail in our task if we don’t take an alternative path.

We are at a critical juncture and we are faced with very hard choices and huge risks. Because we’re now at this crossroads, I believe we must consider the benefits, costs and risks of using force; not an invasion or large-scale bombing of cities and industrial plants, but attacks to destroy the known facilities, or at least the main known facilities, of the program. No one wants to have to use force, but this is a challenge for which there are no easy or even good policy choices.
Of course, we can decide not to use force and stick with the current policy. But if we do, I think it is only honest that we acknowledge to ourselves the reality that we are accepting a nuclear-armed Iran. And this may be acceptable to some. And we are hearing from a number of quarters that instead of using force we need to adopt a policy of containment and deterrence of a nuclear-armed Iran; a policy that I would argue is fraught with risks.

For those who might be willing to use force, it would, as it should, be an act of last resort, and the costs could be substantial. Iran does have a number of avenues to strike back: ballistic missiles, the use of terrorism. Operating through its proxies in Afghanistan and elsewhere, it can create economic and political disruption and unrest. But there are limits to what Iran can do, particularly if we are willing to escalate further.

Moreover, the program likely would not be ended. As we saw after 1982 in the strike on Osirak, the program would likely simply go further underground. But the use of force would buy time: one year, perhaps up to three.

The key question is whether and how that time could be used strategically to change the political conditions in Iran? Some argue that if force is used all Iranians will rally around the regime as a nationalistic impulse. Others challenge that conventional wisdom, noting that the limited use of force would not alter the deep animosity, and in many cases the hatred of many if not most Iranians, toward the regime.

But here, again, we’re handicapped by the past failed policy of seeking accommodation with the mullahs. In 2009 the U.S. response to the opposition protests in the streets of Tehran and other Iranian cities was to sit on our hands; again, out of concern that active support would derail the prospects for engagement. Ultimately, it is only through the end of the rule of the mullahs that Iran will end its quest for nuclear weapons.

Turning very briefly to North Korea, in 2009 the Obama administration articulated a doctrine of strategic patience. While it appointed a part-time negotiator, it largely ignored the North Korea nuclear program. And Pyongyang’s response was very predictable.

It revealed a modern enrichment facility after years of denial. It conducted a nuclear test and multiple missile launches. And it escalated its provocations with armed attacks on South Korea, first sinking a South Korean naval vessel with over 40 killed, and then shelling a South Korean island.

Giving in to these provocations, the administration reached a short-lived (wheat day ?) agreement in February, bribing Pyongyang with 265,000 tons of food aid in return for resumption of negotiations and a freeze on North Korea’s visible nuclear programs, as well as an end to its nuclear and missile tests. So eager was the administration to get a deal, its’ negotiators failed even to get the North’s signature in writing. The charade quickly fell apart, as you all know, with the failed rocket launch, a testament to the fecklessness of engagement without pressure on these types of regimes.
Let me be very clear on this point. I’m not recommending that we don’t talk to these regimes. We need to talk. We need to engage. We need to negotiate with these regimes.

But we will only be successful if we apply pressure. That was, again, the case with Libya in 2003 when the Libyan leaders understood that their alternative would be much more – their alternative to giving up their nuclear program, would be much more costly to the regime than continuing it. And that is what’s missing from the Obama administration policies.

Let me quickly turn to the second central theme in the Obama administration policies that I believe is detrimental to our nonproliferation goals. This, I understand, was the topic of at least one speaker yesterday, and this is the promotion of the global zero vision and the return of traditional arms control as the centerpiece in U.S. nonproliferation policy. These are the same approaches that we observed in the 1970s and 1980s: negotiations on strategic arms with Moscow; pursuit of the CTBT, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; the FMCT, the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty; and an updated, even if somewhat more stylish version, of the Ban the Bomb movement of the 1960s.

While a nuclear free world may be a laudable vision, it doesn’t fit today’s circumstances and it doesn’t work to counter the real-world challenges that our nation faces, whether from state proliferators or from the threat of nuclear terrorism or potentially from future peer competitors. The argument, totally without supporting evidence, is that by reducing our nuclear forces or by ratifying CTBT or taking other such steps, the United States will rally the international community in support of nonproliferation and thereby increase support for sanctions against proliferators and help keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists. It’s all very neat. It’s all very logical, just like those three- or four-rail bank shots that you use to think about in your youth.

But just take 15 seconds, take five seconds. Think about how the international community has responded to the Iranian proliferation challenge. And I think you’ll have to conclude that the argument is totally without merit.

The fact that the U.S. has not tested since 1972 has not stopped others from moving forward and even testing their nukes. India, Pakistan, North Korea, and reportedly China and Russia, have all tested and are continuing to modernize their nuclear arsenals. They do so because they value nuclear weapons. The CTBT has nothing to do with their calculations, nor do the drastic reductions that the United States has taken in terms of our own nuclear forces since 1990.

This is the real world. It’s a world on which we need to base our policies and adjust our capabilities to ensure that we can deter and defend against threats to our country and to the security of our allies. The underlying problem, the real danger, is when our government pursues the aspiration in a way that produces the opposite effects of those intended.

Recall the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, a pact that coming after the tremendous carnage of the First World War, sought to outlaw offensive wars forever. And when Japan and when Germany signed up to the pact, our leaders saw this as evidence that the goal was being achieved. The flaw of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, like the flaw of the Wilsonian League of Nations, was not the vision. But as George
Kennan has argued, it was in the implementation, a combination of naivete and wishful thinking that increased the likelihood of war through bad policy; and a self deluding complacency that led to unilateral disarmament of the Western nations while the storms of war gathered.

So what are the dangers of the current policies that are being pursued as steps toward nuclear zero? What are the prices that we are paying and what are the likely outcomes? Before offering a brief response, I’d like to quote from a monograph that was just published by the RAND Corporation. The author is Therese Delpech, a colleague of many years who is widely respected across the spectrum of thought on nuclear nonproliferation issues.

In her work, entitled “Nuclear Deterrence in the 21st Century,” she notes, and I quote, “The 2010 NPR gives top priority to nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation. Then the goal of reducing the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in U.S. security strategy is asserted. Maintaining strategic deterrence is third on the list. The order is weird,” unquote.

But where does this weirdness come from? I would argue that it’s based on policies of unilateral disarmament founded on ideology, rather than on the realities and the dangers of the world as it exists today, all in the name of the president’s Prague vision. New START, perhaps the most overrated achievement of the Obama foreign policy, is exhibit A. Because the word unilateral is not politically acceptable if used as an adjective for disarmament for disarmament, the administration has gone to great lengths to portray the treaty as something that it is not.

It is formally a bilateral treaty that formally does lower the allowable accountable levels of deployed offensive strategic systems for both the United States and Russia. But if one looks more closely, only the United States reduces under the treaty. Today, Russia relies more heavily on nuclear weapons for its defense than ever before, as stated in its doctrine. It also sees its relationship with the United States in adversarial terms, and its leaders say so.

Moscow has stated that its warhead and launcher levels will actually go up under the treaty. In fact, the treaty limits are now described by Russian leaders as setting a new goal for the expansion of Russian forces. So much for the White House fact sheet that suggests that Russian forces will be reduced by a third. It’s simply not true.

As for our negotiating position, and I find this most indicative of a mindset, Russian experts have stated that U.S. officials didn’t even seek reductions in Russian forces. We didn’t even ask Russia to reduce in the negotiations. By definition, a treaty under which only one party reduces, is unilateral disarmament.

Other aspects of the treaty, such as the change in the bomber counting rule that permits the parties the right to go above the deployed warhead level of the Treaty of Moscow, could further aggravate the unilateral character of New START, particularly if Russia takes advantage of the rule and we do not. And past experience would certainly suggest that this is the probably outcome. The abandonment of the funding commitments to modernize our nuclear weapons infrastructure,
commitments that were made to secure the necessary votes for New START ratification, further underlines the damage done to our nuclear deterrent by self-inflicted wounds.

If New START is exhibit A, exhibit B is the unilateral policy of no new capabilities. While our weapons labs and designers are precluded by our policy from even thinking about enhancements to increase the effectiveness of our nuclear forces, no other country is similarly restricted. Russia and China and other nuclear weapons states are all doing just the opposite. Their investments are made to increase the effectiveness of their new and expanding weapons. And I must admit that to me, that just makes a whole lot more sense.

Exhibit C is clearly seen in the strategic defense arena. To secure New START the Obama administration abandoned the third site in Europe, alienating our allies and eliminating a capability that would have contributed to the missile defense of the American homeland. While the administration has touted the success of reset with Russia as a dividend for cancelling the third site, that policy is in total shambles. I say this not just because of Moscow’s consistent efforts to undercut any effective action against Iran or Syria, or Putin’s comments that the United States is Russia’s number one threat.

Perhaps the most vivid demonstration of this policy failure is the statement made just last week by General Makarov, the chief of the General Staff. As I think you’re probably all aware, he publicly threatened the pre-emptive destruction of NATO’s missile defense sites in Central Europe. The press reports are inconsistent, some indicating the attack would be conducted before the sites become operational, others saying that the attack would be made early in a crisis.

But in either case, the general is upping the ante and signaling that Moscow will not compromise. This is further evidence of a growing gulf in our relationship, one that I believe will likely be exacerbated by Putin’s policies and nationalistic chauvinism. It’s as though Russia senses weakness and sees an opportunity to exploit it.

Beyond the fallacy of reset, the administration has opted to eliminate every strategic defense program that it inherited from its predecessor that was intended to provide capabilities against future long-range missile threats. MKV, KEI, ABL and the two-stage ground-based interceptor hedge, all have been cancelled or put into the deep freeze. For the current threat, the number of ground-based interceptors has been reduced dramatically. The only thing we are apparently going to do is dig more holes in Alaska for which we have no interceptors.

And as for the Obama administration’s SM-3 IIB interceptor, the Defense Science Board has judged it technically infeasible and the Democrats in the Senate have killed any meaningful funding, making it clearly the SM-3 not IIB.

(Moans/Laughter).

I know. Nice try, anyway. Let’s talk about this in November.

This elimination of strategic defense capabilities, and the president’s off-mic comments in Seoul to then-President Medvedev that the United States will be more flexible on missile defense after the
election, must be seen in the broader ideological context of the anti-nuclear agenda of the administration. Unlike in Libya and Syria and elsewhere where the administration is leading from behind, in the pursuit of a nuclear free world it’s leading from the front. The problem is no one else is following. And the consequences are likely, in my view, to be more proliferation, more instability, as the U.S. is challenged by both adversaries and friends alike for a lack of capability and a lack of resolve.

Thank you. I appreciate your attention and look forward to your comments and questions.

(Applause).

MR.  : Bob, did you read the Foreign Affairs piece in the recent edition? If not, I won’t ask a question on it. It basically said – the author whose name I don’t remember – basically said that the ability of nations that are trying to achieve a nuclear weapon, it’s much harder than anybody in the intelligence community predicted, usually because authoritarian regimes leaders stick their fingers into the pie and kind of mess it up. And they cite Saddam’s sons and other examples of that.

It basically pointed to Iran and said in 1990 we thought they’d have a weapon in ’95. In ’95, 2005, and then a sliding timescale there. Any reaction to my short summary?

MR. JOSEPH: Well, I haven’t read it. I look forward to reading it. It sounds like an interesting piece.

MR.  : It’s a waste of time.

(Laughter).

MR. JOSEPH: Thanks for the warning. Look, we have been all over the map in terms of our intelligence assessments of nuclear weapons capabilities, whether of nuclear weapons states or of proliferating states. We were caught off guard by India’s nuclear test, as you know, twice: in the ‘70s and then in the ‘90s. We have been, I think, surprised in a number of cases.

North Korea does seem to have mastered not just the separation of plutonium, the reprocessing, but enrichment as well, even though we know less about its enrichment capability. But we do know that it has conducted two tests. And a week ago, 10 days ago, our government was on alert waiting for yet another nuclear test.

So regimes like North Korea and Iran can, certainly, master the technology. I have no doubt that the Iranians can, and I think all assessments are – including the assessment made by then-CIA Director Panetta – they can do it. They can do it. It’ll take them about one year from the time they make the decision to do it.

Now we’re not very good about knowing when that decision is made. So, that was January. Let’s say they made a decision in January. It’s only a matter of months away. We just don’t know. We just don’t know.
I did not, in the Libya case, which I know a little bit more about – in fact I got into the details on that. As far as I could tell, there wasn’t any sort of involvement such as you refer to as Saddam’s sons in Iraq. There was a lot of corruption. There was a lot of siphoning off of funds for the program.

But in terms of actually getting involved in the implementation, I didn’t see any of that. That was largely due to the fact that Libya was contracting out to the A.Q. Khan network for that expertise and for the sensitive materials, which is another path that I think we need to be concerned about. Is there another A.Q. Khan network out there?

I’m not so confident that there isn’t, particularly given the fact that those who participated in the network, at least the vast majority of those who were in the network, simply paid no price for it. So they made a lot of money and there was no penalty. And that doesn’t serve as a deterrent to others.

MS. : Mr. Ambassador, I have to ask you. We’ve had this discussion. As you know, I’m a strong SM-3 IIB supporter. I work for Lockheed Martin, in full disclosure here. We’re one of the three companies competing for the (award ?). We think it would be missing link in the missile defense chain.

We’ve never had a sea-based ICBM killer, though that’s what it would be intended to do, to defend (the continent ?). In terms of analyzing U.S.-Russian relations, what do you think would be the impact of the U.S. walking away from the sites in Europe and making Poland a two-time loser? How do you think the Russians would view such an action by the U.S.?

MR. JOSEPH: Well, just like when we walked away from the third site, they were happy. And the next day, they made more demands. I mean, that’s what the Russians are going to do.

And guess what’s next? Well, it’s probably our mobile missile defense capabilities, including Aegis. I’m a huge Aegis fan. I mean, don’t get me wrong.

I just think that this is about politics. This is about politics with this administration. It’s not about capabilities. In terms of capabilities we’ve seen what happened to the programs: Lockheed programs, Raytheon programs, Northrop programs, Boeing programs. I mean, this is about politics and this is about a mindset.

I could go on. It’s not just these two themes that I think guide the work of this and the thought of this administration. This administration, I believe, doesn’t believe in defending the U.S. homeland. It doesn’t believe in it because it’s not necessary.

Iran, Iran would be crazy to attack us because we would destroy them. Sound familiar? North Korea would be crazy to attack us because we would destroy them. This is all about mutual assured destruction, at least assured destruction in that case.

I mean, this is a bad idea that guided Democrats and Republicans for 30 years under the ABM Treaty. Okay? That mindset is still very much present and I believe it resides in this administration. Don’t look at what they say, because defending the United States is number one –I think after there was
political intervention which moved it from number four to number one, if I remember correctly. But, you know, look at what they do.

And I think the SM-3 2B is – okay, well we’ll have that capability later. We’ll have that capability in 2018, now 2020 or 2022. I just don’t buy it. But I’m all for Aegis.

MR. : As are many of the rest of us. In full discloser, I work for Bechtel. But as you well know, I spent a good portion of my career on the Hill working for both the Clinton and Bush administrations in the department of Energy, and have watched the evolution of the debate over the use of nuclear weapons and the assurance of our capability in our stockpile stewardship programs, our capability in the nuclear arena for quite some time.

And I guess I would like to provide just a slightly different perspective and ask for your views on this. I know it’s the silly season. I recognize that, and we are all faced with trying to deal with these things on a political basis.

But it was the 20th anniversary of the Reykjavik Summit that brought together some of the nation’s most prestigious individuals: Kissinger and former Secretary Perry and Nunn, together to talk about President Reagan’s vision, which was the abolition of nuclear weapons. And why was that the case? I think that there was a concern that the debate over nuclear policy during the decade had driven people so far into the silos that they couldn’t find common ground.

There was not a basis for moving forward in a way that was – and I certainly saw it working in the department of Energy. The devolution of the capability of the department and its laboratories was, to a large extent, due to the fact that there was no consensus in that area. And so when I did have the opportunity to be on the Hill we worked very hard to try to find a way to stimulate a bipartisan approach.

Ellen Tauscher, having pulled together this idea of a bipartisan commission, which I think you may have had some input into; and with Perry and Schlesinger putting that together; I wonder – and, of course, out of that came a nuclear posture review that while there may be some challenges, there was at least a substantial amount of consensus on. The issue we face is, are we going to go back into the silos and have this fight? And then activities like, what are we going to do with plutonium, becomes an issue where it’s so politicized that people can’t make progress.

And right now we’re debating over plutonium policy today in the House Armed Services Committee and there’s not going to be a lot of value in the conversation on either side of the question. So anyway, I just suggest -- what’s the solution? How do we figure out a way to find a consensus that the nation can support going forward in this area?

MR. JOSEPH: Well I think even after the Strategic Posture Commission concluded – and I think in their conclusions revealed a tremendous amount of consensus. I think there was consensus on just about every issue other than CTBT. But after that we had, of course, the debate over New START and
the ratification vote in the Senate, which was contingent on the terms in the resolution of ratification, as you know.

Modernization was a major component of that deal, and funding for modernization. The administration has backed away from its commitments. Now there have been many in the Senate who have also sort of encouraged backing away saying, oh well, it’s a different fiscal environment than it was last year. We didn’t see it coming.

Well if you believe that, god bless you. It’s that sort of undermining of consensus that I see going on. And I think it is because of an anti-nuclear agenda, in part; and also on the missile defense side, and ABM Treaty mindset.

MR. BAKER SPRING: Baker Spring from the Heritage Foundation. Obviously the next policy shoe to drop is the Nuclear Posture Review’s study, whether it’s, according to press reports, very dramatic reductions moving beyond where we are now. The question I have is it seems to me the most important element to be included in that study has to do with the question of our nuclear targeting policies and the capabilities that go along with that. Would you care to speculate about where you think that report may go and where it should go regarding nuclear targeting?

MR. JOSEPH: Yeah, well all I know is what I’ve read in the various press reports, and there haven’t been a lot of press leaks. I think there was an AP report that said that there were three different levels, I may have these number wrong, but: 1100-1200 range; 700-800; and the lowest was 300-400. Well again, we all know how that game is played in Washington.

You don’t go to 300-400 because that would be terribly irresponsible, so you take the middle option. We’ll see. I mean, we’ll see what comes out of that.

But again, it’s not going to be based, I think, on any real assessment of requirements. It’s going to be based on numbers. I mean, that’s how we do arms control. We do arms control by the numbers.

And every time we have an arms control agreement the arms control community says we’ve got to go lower. That’s just the way this is done. It’s been done that way for a good number of years.

I wrote a piece earlier, a couple of months ago, in the National Review called “Second to One: The Loss of Nuclear Parity.” We are now, in my view, second to Russia. Not if you just look at so-called strategic, okay -- even though the Russians have said that they are determined to come up to our level. But there are thousands, as most of you know, of so-called non-strategic – whatever that is.

I just have a real problem with the concept of a non-strategic nuclear weapon. Imagine a short-range or a medium-range nuclear weapon going off in Poland. Do you think the Poles might think that was strategic, or would we given our Article V commitments under NATO?

These are all strategic. And so we’re once again sort of trapped in this framework from the Cold War that we created to facilitate the arms control process. I just don’t believe that the Russians are going to be interested in yet another agreement.
But here’s where that unilateral impulse comes. We’re going to lead by example. We will lead by example and go lower. And again, no one is going to follow. Maybe the Brits, maybe the French will take some token cuts, but they’re already very far down, particularly the British.

But what about those countries that represent a threat to us? And what are we saying to our allies? What are we doing in terms of the credibility of our extended deterrent commitments? I think we’re undercutting that.

And again, I come at this from a proliferation perspective. And I think a strong nuclear capability — unmatched -- by the United States, is the most essential nonproliferation tool that we have. Because if we are questioned by our friends and allies, whether it’s about our capability or about our resolve, they very well may have to, in their own calculation, pursue their own nuclear capability.

And that is not a prospect that I think would be acceptable. It is something that we can influence. There’s a lot we can’t influence in the proliferation context, a lot we can’t.

North Korea, how are you going to influence them? I think we need a strategy to deal with North Korea, but our influence is limited. The same with Iran. But with our friends, we can influence that part of the calculus.

And that goes to another issue, and I was hoping somebody would as the question. Now that the time is up I can ask my own question.

(Laughter).

So what would you do about this? What would you do about all of this? You can criticize the Obama administration’s mindset, but what would you do about it?

I would take you back to 2001 when we addressed that question. John Rood and others came together. We addressed that question. And what we said we needed to do was develop a comprehensive strategy for dealing with these threats.

I mentioned at the outset of my prepared remarks that the Obama administration is doing a relatively good job on prevention. They’re doing a lot on prevention. There’s a bipartisan consensus on that. And that’s an important part.

But that’s only one part of a comprehensive strategy. We need to be able to protect against proliferation. We need to have the capabilities that dissuade proliferators in the first instance, and that deter and defend them in the second.

We need to have a strong missile defense. We need to have a strong nuclear capability. We need to have conventional superiority and the ability to engage in regions of vital interest.

So we need not just prevention, but we need protection and we also need response, because we’re not going to be 100 percent successful in prevention. We know that. It doesn’t mean you should reduce your efforts. In fact, you should redouble your efforts to prevent.
But we’re not going to be 100 percent successful. We know that from real world experience. And we’re not going to be 100 percent successful on protection. So you also need response.

You need a broad national and international strategy to deal with this very complex and very dangerous threat. And it just doesn’t exist today. We have an emphasis on prevention and we have measures that are being taken that I believe undercut the prospects for the success which we all seek, and that is to stop proliferation.

MR. HUESSY: Bob, I have one question. One of the themes of a number of recent articles is that the Iranians or the North Koreans aren’t crazy enough to just wake up one day and launch a rocket at New York. But what’s missing is, what if they want to use these weapons surreptitiously, where there is not an ability to attribute to them? In particular, could you address that issue?

In one area in particular is the use of a nuclear weapon in an EMP type attack which could be from – as Larry Welch said, the thing that worries him most about that is from the ocean, where you wouldn’t know who it is. And we have not taken those measures to protect our grid or other parts of our infrastructure against an EMP-type attack.

MR. JOSEPH: Well first, in terms of the first part of your question, will North Korea strike the United States or will Iran strike the United States or another proliferator? That’s not what this is about. I mean, if you frame the question in those terms I think you’re misunderstanding the calculus that these regimes make.

This is not about first-strike, second-strike. This is not about Cold War deterrence. That’s not what this is about.

These countries aren’t seeking to establish parity with the United States or hundreds or thousands of weapons. That’s not what they want. They want a limited capability to hold a small number – 4, 5, 6, I don’t know, I don’t have any insight into their planning – but a small number of our cities hostage.

If they can do that, then the whole calculus sort of changes in their region. If we’re vulnerable to that type of intimidation, that type of blackmail, are we going to come to the rescue or to the assistance of those countries with which we have security commitments? Will we do that?

Are we willing to risk that? I mean, you have to think about it from the perspective of these regimes and how they think about it. Deterrence becomes very unstable at that point, very unstable.

In terms of surreptitious, yeah, they could. That’s why I have been a big sort of advocate of attribution and forensics for a long, long time. Again, it’s just not about prevention. You’ve got to have all of these other capabilities.

One very important capability is forensics and the ability to attribute. And that can help. It’s certainly not a silver bullet, but it can help in terms of deterrence. Would an Iran or a North Korea risk that? Maybe, I don’t know.
In terms of EMP, when I think of EMP – and frankly I don’t usually think about North Korea or Iran, even though I need to think more about that – I think a lot about China. Would China be willing to do that? And remember, if we go to 300 or 400 China might be tempted to come up to our levels. But I don’t see China right now, even though they’re expanding and they’re modernizing their nuclear capability, they’re not trying to achieve parity with the United States, at least not currently.

But would they use EMP? Would they use EMP in the context of anti-access or area denial? I don’t know. Do you think they’d be very tempted to do it?

MR. HUESSY: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

(Applause).

MR. JOSEPH: Thank you all.