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**REBUILDING AMERICAN DEFENSE:
A SPEECH BY GOVERNOR BOBBY JINDAL**

INTRODUCTION:

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REMARKS BY:

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DANIELLE PLETKA: Good morning everybody. Thank you for joining us here today. I'm Danielle Pletka. I'm the vice president for foreign and defense policy studies here at the American Enterprise Institute. We are very pleased and honored to welcome Governor Bobby Jindal here to the American Enterprise Institute to give a talk on rebuilding American defense.

Governor Jindal has an enormously impressive bio; so impressive in fact that I'm not going to go through all of it with you here today. Quickly, he's in his second term as governor of Louisiana. He represented Louisiana's 1st District in the House of Representatives with his freshman class president in the house. Well, the rest of his bio is available on our website, as will be the text of his talk here today.

After the governor speaks, he'll sit down for a chat with the co-director of AEI's Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies Tom Donnelly and take questions from the audience. Now, you all may ask why is the governor of Louisiana giving a talk on defense here at AEI.

Setting aside the American servicemen and women who are based in or are from Louisiana, I want to point to a larger reason. The world is falling apart, just in case you hadn't noticed. From Hong Kong to Crimea to the South China Sea to Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Iran, Mali, Somalia, Liberia, and I could go on here. This maelstrom of war, terror, death, and disease has implications for every American, not just for White House political strategists.

As we at AEI have been sounding the alarm on this issue for some time now, I'm delighted that this is an issue that more Americans are beginning to think about because the fallout from these crises, if they continue unmanaged, if we fail to lead, if we cannot afford to lead will affect everyone of us.

Over to you, Governor. (Applause.)

GOVERNOR BOBBY JINDAL (R-LA): Thank you all very much. Thank you, Dani, for that generous introduction. I do want to thank our host here at AEI. I also want to thank you for the terrific work you do, not only on the issue we're going to talk about today, but several other topics as well.

I want to recognize and thank Senator Jim Talent. He co-authored with me today the paper that we're releasing through America Next that goes into greater detail on the topic we'll be talking about today. Jim, thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your leadership on these very important issues.

As we draw to the close of the politically relevant portion of the Obama presidency – the years in which the president had the power to get anything done and the

interest in doing it – we’re at a point where we can assess the nation and the world that President Obama is leaving us.

Much of the recent media coverage of the Obama presidency has focused on the frustrations of the president with the political process. Time and again, he turns to the third person to explain the ineffectiveness of his leadership. It is always “they” who stand against his noble aims to help the people, “they” who botched “Obamacare,” “they” who underestimated the threats of ISIS. For this president, there’s always somebody else to blame.

For all that’s been written about President Obama’s negative impact on American businesses, I’ll give him this. No president has done so much for the straw men industry. (Laughter.) Every day he sets one on fire. Whatever you want to say about his golf game, this guy knows how to use a flamethrower. But I would argue that this blaming of the third person is actually wrong because for the most part we actually live in the America that President Obama wanted to create. We live in the country and the world that progressives wanted. Where we are didn’t happen by accident. It didn’t happen because President Obama was frustrated by the political process. It happened because, as Richard Weaver told us, ideas have consequences.

And what does an America governed under those ideas look like? On the domestic front, we are a nation faltering slowly through a lackluster recovery; one that has been marked by profits gathered by the powerful and well-connected, and stagnant wages and dimmed prospects for those of us who are not. It is a nation with effectively a cradle to grave welfare state, with a federal government that bribes the states with taxpayer dollars, borrowed from China that our kids will have to repay, to grow entitlement programs for childless able-bodied adults which trap them in a lifetime of disincentives for success.

It is a nation marked by exhaustion and discouragement and fear, where wealth and power are centralized in an immense and out-of-control federal government. It is a nation where the people feel they no longer have a voice, where the massive and cronyist administrative state seeks to control almost every aspect of our lives. It is a nation of backroom deals where regulators run the show and those who play ball get bailouts.

On the international front, things are arguably even worse. Here, President Obama’s ideas have had even less restriction, so the consequences are clearer. I’m hardly the first conservative to criticize President Obama for his lack of commitment to the idea of American exceptionalism. But it is a real critique, and I want to explain for a moment what it means.

When President Obama rejects American exceptionalism, what he is really doing is embracing the idea, long-held by progressives going back a century, that we are simply members of a global village, all of us sharing principles and cultures of equal merit. No country has principles that are better than another’s. There is no nation, no system of government or understanding of rights that is exceptional. I wish President Obama had

watched “The Incredibles,” because then he’d know that when everybody’s special, actually nobody is.

The danger of this idea is that it ignores the unique and distinct role the United States is called to play in the world because of her strength, her resources, and her historical commitment to freedom and human dignity. Ideas do have consequences. It is only when you conclude that we are all just citizens of the world, with ideas that are just as valuable as anybody else’s, that you would come to the conclusion that the United States should lead from behind, which really means, of course, not leading at all.

It would take too much of your valuable time for me to list a bill of particulars of all of the consequences of President Obama’s failure on the international stage. Today, we see a world in which the Obama administration has neglected or abandoned America’s longstanding allies. Our special relationship with Britain is gone, NATO is drifting, Eastern Europe is disaffected, and Israel has been purposefully alienated from the United States.

Consider the consequences of just the past year. It has brought us the rise of ISIS and the capture of Mosul, Russia’s expansion and invasion in Crimea and Ukraine, new heights of crisis in the Middle East and Israel, genocide and destruction of religious minorities in Iraq, more Chinese aggression and conflict in the South China Sea, more bombing in Libya, more saber-rattling from North Korea, a dangerous trend of anti-Semitism, and a refugee crisis on our own border. For anyone with a degree of introspection, this would be a time to consider whether the ramifications of your ideas were leading the world to experience more chaos and less clarity. But that is not what President Obama has done.

He has not reconsidered whether his approach to leadership is perhaps a part of the reason that the world seems to be spinning off its axis. Instead, he once again views himself as a noble, deliberative thinker who takes his time and gets it right. Peter Baker recently wrote an interesting piece in the “New York Times” about a series of off-the-record dinners President Obama has held with foreign policy thinkers. Of course, as it always is in Washington, not even the president can really go off-the-record.

The attendees recalled the president sarcastically imitating his adversaries, saying, quote: “Oh, it’s a shame when you have a wan, diffident, professorial president with no foreign policy other than don’t do stupid things. I do not make apologies for being careful in these areas, even if it doesn’t make for good theater.”

Now, I don’t get invited much to this White House. I wasn’t at that dinner. But if I had been, I can tell you what I would have said when he rolled out that straw man and set it aflame. Respectfully, Mr. President, this isn’t about good theater. This is about life and death. This is about freedom and despotism, order and chaos. This is about the role of the United States of America as the leader of the free world. This is about nothing less than whether we will squander America’s ability to continue in that role, or whether we will

pass on to our children a nation that is secure, well-armed, and confident in its ability to sustain a just peace in the world.

As Walter Russell Mead wrote in response to that anecdote: “The real criticism of the president isn’t that his foreign policy is too deliberative, it is that his deliberations don’t seem to end with policies that, well, work.”

The truth is that none of us would care how long President Obama takes to make a decision if it were the right decision. As the great military strategist Colonel John Boyd once said, decisions without actions are pointless. Actions without decisions are reckless. Time and again, this president has managed to do both.

The problem with the smart diplomacy that was supposed to make everything better isn’t that it doesn’t make for good theater. It’s that it isn’t very smart. This isn’t about disliking how long it takes him to come up with an idea. It’s about the ideas and what follows from them. The Russian reset, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt, Iran, Libya, Europe, China, and the list goes on. In each of these areas, it’s not just that the president took too long to come up with an answer. It’s that the answer was wrong.

If only he’d had the help of a wise, steady hand – a policy expert in dealing with foreign affairs – he’d have come up with better answers, but instead he just had Hillary Clinton. How did we get to this point? Just ask the people who can be honest about what happened. Ask former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, who says that he and others advised the president to negotiate a status of forces agreement with Iraq that could’ve forestalled the rise of ISIS, but says the White House refused to lead. Ask former Ambassador to Iraq Christopher Hill, who says he was abandoned and ignored by Secretary Clinton. Or ask the outgoing chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Michael Flynn, who says the world today is more chaotic than any time since the 1930s.

Today, we are living with the consequences of the Obama-Clinton ideas when it comes to foreign, domestic, and defense policy. And those ideas have set America on a path that will create more chaos, more conflict, and more wars. Secretary Rumsfeld, Ambassador Bolton, and others understand that weakness is provocative. What we see time and again from this president is a projection of weakness.

Peace through strength costs infinitely less in American blood and treasure than does war precipitated by weakness. President Obama has misused the tools of soft power. He had to be dragged into imposing sanctions on Iran for its nuclear program. He’s yet to use the full force of sanctions or other soft power steps against Russia.

When the crowds were applauding him overseas at the beginning of his administration, he never effectively used America’s moral authority to challenge the human rights records of our adversaries. Now he’s no longer someone with the global stature to do so. Worse still, he leaves for the next president tools of hard power that have fallen into disrepair. Military strength should not be the primary means by which the United States executes its foreign policy, but it is the indispensable element that

underpins the other tools. Of all the mistakes President Obama has made, this strikes me as the most dangerous.

The same progressive motivations that led to foolish levels of disarmament in the 1930s are now once again leading us down the road toward a military that cannot do what we need it to do when we need to do it. It is all the more frustrating that we are pursuing this course at a time of multiplying threats, when the technology of asymmetric weaponry is spreading, and the ability of non-state actors to inflict terrible destruction on innocent citizens is only increasing.

Since the Cold War, we have seen the decay of our defense capabilities and a growing gap between missions and resources. In the wake of the humanitarian efforts and smaller conflicts of the 1990s, President George W. Bush understood the need to modernize the armed forces. He and others anticipated that in the absence of the existential threat of the Soviet Union, we would be able to invest heavily in leap-ahead technologies, yielding a smaller, leaner, and more lethal force.

But the September 11th attacks brought that modernization to a halt. Instead of a transformation of the force, we found ourselves in wars which our planners had assumed would never occur again, conflicts with large numbers of boots on the ground for long periods of time. The defense budget was increased substantially. But it's important to understand what that money didn't do. It did not rebuild the military as was needed. Instead, it was eaten up by the costs of the wars, by the greater maintenance needs of an aging inventory, higher operating costs, and higher personnel costs.

It is an illusion to think that after the war spending increases that we have seen over the past decade and more that we as a nation are better positioned when it comes to our national defense. In fact, the reverse is true. By the time President Obama had taken office, the American military was in an increasingly fragile condition. The Navy had fewer ships than at any time since before World War I. The Air Force inventory was smaller, and older, than at any time since the inception of the service. And while the size of the Army and the Marine Corps was increased in 2007 to support the surge in Iraq, over most of the war both services lacked the personnel they needed, forcing far too many units to serve multiple tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan and increasing the human cost borne by our war fighters.

In 2009, Secretary Gates identified \$400 billion in cost reductions beginning in 2009 and an additional \$78 billion if realized, beginning in fiscal year 2012. The effect was to cancel the remaining modernization programs, including the C-17 transport and the F-22 fighter, which will harm our military's capabilities for years to come.

The bipartisan National Defense Panel, created by Congress that same year, issued a unanimous report in the spring of 2010 in which it recommended heading in the opposite direction. They supported substantial additional funding for the military, primarily to increase the size of the Navy. They warned this: "The aging of the inventories and equipment used by the services, the decline in the size of the Navy,

escalating personnel entitlements, overhead and procurement costs, and the growing stress on the force means that a train wreck is coming in the areas of personnel, acquisition, and force structure.”

In the spring of 2011, Secretary Gates responded to these recommendations by offering a 10-year proposed budget with modest increases in funding. They didn’t go as far as the panel had recommended, but it was a step in their direction. But two months later, President Obama threw it all out. He announced his intention to reduce the Gates’ proposed budget, his own administration’s defense budget, by approximately \$40 billion per year.

The president essentially junked his own defense budget in a speech, pulled a new number for defense spending out of thin air. There wasn’t even an analysis of the impact of the new funding levels on the armed forces or American national security. The president’s proposal was codified in the 2011 Budget Control Act. That was followed by the sequestration law, which had the effect of cutting another half a trillion dollars from the defense budget over the next ten years.

Think about how ridiculous this is as an approach to governance. In the course of a year, the budget priorities produced by an analytical process and proposed by a highly respected secretary of defense was completely jettisoned in favor of an ad hoc and entirely politically driven budget reduction process. The consequences of this foolish nearly trillion-dollar cut over the coming decade are unacceptable. Under these cuts, America will not have a global Navy anymore. We will be almost 100 ships smaller than the Chinese navy. The Army and Air Force will shrink dramatically.

We have just seen the release of a second bipartisan panel report, which further documents the declining condition of the military. So to recap, in the past five years, Congress created two National Defense Panels to review the condition of the armed forces. Both panels were bipartisan. Both panel reports were unanimous in making the case for restoring the strength of our national defense. And yet the president has gone in the opposite direction.

You’ve all seen the footage of the Tomahawk missiles our Navy is firing at ISIS. Those Tomahawks are on track to be phased out under President Obama’s plan, even without a replacement ready. We’re supposed to buy just 100 next year and zero the year after that. “Investor’s Business Daily” did the math and found that in just one night, President Obama used up 47 percent of next year’s planned purchases. If we had to sustain that, we could only fire at that level for 85 days before we were out of missiles.

We must take steps to rebuild America’s military. At the very least, as we argue in the paper that America Next is releasing today, we must return to the 2011 budget proposed by Secretary Gates, the last time there was any real analysis or threat assessment undertaken to determine what ought to be spent. We must also take steps to shorten the design-and-build cycle for procurement. And we must engage in immediate reforms to support our force’s readiness.

As experts here at AEI and elsewhere have suggested, I share the belief we should set as a guideline spending approximately 4 percent of America's GDP on defense. The reality is that there is less need to use the military when it is feared and respected. The best approach to reducing the level of global risk would be to move decisively to rebuild the tools of military power.

This force should be used carefully, not to nation-build overseas, not as a police force or a Keynesian jobs program, but as a deterrent to our adversaries, and as a tool to eradicate threats to American lives and interests. By allowing global threats to fester in a leadership vacuum, by allowing our material to rust and decay, it only delays the day of reckoning when the United States will have to address these threats and increases the costs, in both time and treasure, of doing so.

Inaction in this regard will put America in an increasingly weaker position, put our fighting men and women at greater risk, and decrease our ability to respond to the very real and increased threats that President Obama is leaving behind.

Now, I'm a fiscal conservative. As Calvin Coolidge said, I want the people of America to be able to work less for the government and more for themselves. But within the arena of national defense, the need now is for more funding, not less. That funding must be smarter, not motivated by domestic political priorities, but by what real threats America faces around the world.

The same problems which cause wasteful domestic spending behavior can also motivate wasteful defense spending – the worst kind of waste, as it leaves our forces unprepared and ill-equipped for the missions we give them. That's why I support the bipartisan efforts of Senators Tom Coburn, Joe Manchin, and others to demand that the Pentagon provide what every other department and agency already does: an audit of its books.

Originally the bureaucrats there were supposed to be ready for an audit this year. Now they say they will be ready in 2017. If we are going to spend more taxpayer dollars on defense, we must also demand that these taxpayer dollars be spent wisely, that we know where the money goes and what it does, and we should know that now, not later. The defense of our country is too important to tolerate waste and irresponsible spending in this arena. But we should not think that waste means that overall cuts are justified. On the contrary, it means that we must spend what is needed based on the threats we face even as we fix our procurement process. To do any less would stretch us even more thin in the years to come.

I know politicians like to talk about waste and fraud, but waste and fraud alone will not make up the funding gap which prevents us from having the modernized force we need. So because I am a fiscal conservative, I believe that we need to shrink the costs of our government in other ways. In the debate over how to deal with ever-expanding entitlements, some of my fellow conservatives have pushed for plans with costly

subsidies as a method for replacing “Obamacare.” I believe that we need a health reform focused on the cost burden for the consumer and the taxpayer, so my health care plan would rely on reforms which lower costs and save taxpayers billions while fixing the existing inequity in the tax code.

As we seek to bolster our military force, we also need to be willing to use the economic weapons at our disposal. While we all understand the disincentive of losing the ability to trade with us, we have another powerful weapon at our disposal now, one which the rest of the world wants and needs: our energy supply. The energy resources America’s unleashed have enormous benefits for our economy and job creation, but they also represent a tool in our arsenal to help offset the ability of Russia and other nations to effectively blackmail our allies. As I’ve laid out in my energy plan, the more that government removes the barriers to a thriving energy sector, the more we’ll be able to balance against our adversaries without ever firing a shot.

It is no accident that the threats to America are now growing. They are growing because the Obama administration has repudiated all the operating principles of an effective global strategy by leading from behind, by abandoning our long-time allies, by failing to effectively use the tools of soft power, and by cutting the size and capabilities of our armed forces. They are growing because ideas have consequences, and we must be prepared to face them.

Without a strong defense, our allies will not trust our promises and our adversaries will not believe our threats. The most important task of our government is to defend our homeland from attack, to defend the freedom of access to the common areas of the world for our people to travel and trade, to preserve the stability and peace with a watchful eye on those who would do us harm.

All nations have vital interests. The difference between the United States and other great powers throughout history is that America defines her vital interests in a defensive and benign way. All America seeks is to live in peace, secure in our homeland, enjoying rights common to all nations in a world where, to the extent feasible, relations between nations are determined less by power and coercion than by agreed upon rules and a commitment to resolve disputes peacefully.

Carl von Clausewitz wrote, what is the object of defense? To preserve. To preserve is easier than to acquire. Preserving peace is difficult. The founders understood that peace is not an entitlement. It is not automatically bequeathed to future generations. It has to be won, in its own way, in each generation. And we must be willing to pay the price for peace.

We must undo the president’s harmful spending cuts, and ensure that our fighting men and women always have the tools they need to succeed. Just as important, we would also send a powerful message to both our allies and our enemies overseas that America will not shirk her leadership role in the world, and will remain actively engaged in promoting and defending her vital national interests.

In his epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul asked a question applicable to our country today. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” For far too long, our country has given that uncertain sound, hoping to avoid conflict, only to find that America’s enemies, sensing weakness, have taken the battle directly to us.

It is time for politicians once again to embrace the postwar consensus of the need for a strong national defense, having learned the lesson – the best way to avoid battle is to prepare for it.

Thank you all very much for allowing me to come speak to you all today.
(Applause.)

I like your socks. (Laughter.)

TOM DONNELLY: I’m noted for my hosiery.

GOV. JINDAL: There are worse things to be noted for.

MR. DONNELLY: Well. If you have to wear a blue suit, you might as well take a little risk. All right, are we ready to go?

Well, Governor, I would like to exercise the host prerogative and ask a couple of follow-on questions before we open it up to everybody else.

That was an extraordinarily strong and stark speech and I’d sort of like to pick our way through a couple of the issues, if I may. First of all, to talk about American leadership, second of all to sort of think about what a rebuilding of America’s military would look like. And then we have to talk a little bit about the politics of the issue. And I’d like to do this sort of by casting our minds ahead a couple of years from now.

You gave a very chilling assessment of where we are today, but it’s easy to see that things are in fact likely to be worse when the next president takes office, both in the international arena, if the budget cuts and withdrawal of our forces from various regions continue, and then, of course, in the context of what’s likely to be a hard fought election campaign.

So why don’t we start with the question of leadership and again, imagine where we’ll be in two years and ask ourselves what the task for a president might be in January 2017. Could be an ever steeper uphill climb than the one you’ve described in your speech.

GOV. JINDAL: I think you’re right. We’ll have two more years of this president’s dangerous policies – not just rhetoric, but policies. We’ll have two more years

of disengagement, America's disengagement from the world, two more years of America leading from behind.

I think for the next administration, the first task will be to rebuild – and I want to emphasize – with a bipartisan post-Cold War consensus. I am a conservative Republican, but this shouldn't only be a Republican imperative. This is an American imperative to first rebuild that strategic consensus that understands America cannot lead from behind. America cannot disengage from the world. That America is the indispensable nation – to restore that belief in American exceptionalism. I truly believe this is the first president that I can remember – I certainly think – the first president that does not believe in American exceptionalism. So even for the budget changes and the defense buildup, I think there needs to be a change in our strategic positioning vis-à-vis our allies and our enemies, but it has to be backed up by the investments. A new strategy without the investments, without the investment in the military, will ring hollow.

I think that the new administration, supported hopefully by a bipartisan majority in the Congress, will take the steps to increase the investments in our military for things like readiness, for things like the modernization. Now, I say as a guideline we should get to 4 percent of GDP. I think it needs to be informed by threats analyses. I don't think that we simply give the Pentagon a blank check. But at the very least I think we can start by going back to the Secretary Gates baseline. It was the last time there was a comprehensive and a consistent threat analysis done with a realistic, not just a political, number to undergird the defense – the military establishments that Pentagon needs. We owe our men and women in uniform the tools, the readiness, the training they need to keep us safe.

One of the growing realizations – and hopefully this is a bipartisan realization – is our oceans don't keep us safe. We face asymmetrical threats. We face threats from transnational terrorist groups. We face threats from nations that can now threaten us through cyber warfare, through biological warfare. And therefore, we are going to have to have – we're going to have to have the commitment over the long term to deter and defeat these threats.

I do think the world is hungry for American leadership. I think that our allies are hungry for that leadership. It will take time to rebuild our credibility so that our enemies fear us and our allies trust us, but I think a new administration supported by a bipartisan majority in Congress can take some decisive steps fairly quickly to begin rebuilding that role. The reality is no other country can fill the vacuum we have now left on the world stage.

MR. DONNELLY: Just to push it one step further – I mean, the vacuum is really enormous in scope. A couple of years ago, nobody could imagine the peace of Europe being at risk. Nobody – people have underestimated – I mean, we talk about people underestimating ISIS's capability and willpower. We consistently underestimated China's ambitions and its capabilities. And then, to return to the Middle East, which has

not been a happy place, but even if we compare it to where we were in 2009, it's pretty easy to see that it's worse than it was then.

You may or the next president may inherit a war with ISIS that's incomplete and not heading in a positive direction. How do we – is it even possible to prioritize among these interests, or is it just simply necessary to take the steps that would get us back on the path to success at all places?

GOV. JINDAL: Well, look, I do think we need to take a comprehensive approach, but I would identify three challenges that I think are of particular concern and alarm. Short term, obviously, we are – and I know the president doesn't like to use these terms – we are in a war with ISIS. They've declared war on us. And whether he wants to call it that or not, that is a fighting conflict. We need to win that. We need to exterminate ISIS. This is not about containing them. It's not about spelling them. It's about hunting them down and killing them. Obviously, we've got to complete that effort.

And one of the things I say in my longer paper is that America must prepare our defense forces not just to be able to win wars, but to decisively win wars, to act as a deterrent against future conflict.

Secondly, the thing that concerns me the most – the greatest concern on the short-term to medium-term horizon, is the lessons that Iran must be taking from America's failure to lead these last few years. The world cannot accept a nuclear armed Iran. That is not only an existential threat to Israel and our other allies in the region, that's a threat to the United States as well. I worry. Almost a year ago now, the United States, we announced this reprieve with Iran. We've seen no meaningful follow through, no meaningful action since that time. They are only strengthening their abilities. They're only hastening the date to which they will become a nuclear power and the time for us to take decisive actions are running out. So the second concern I've got is, what are the lessons Iran is taking away from America's lack of decisiveness, America's weakness under this administration?

The third, and you mentioned this and I mention this also in the longer paper, I actually think the president's pivot towards Asia was at least the shell of a good policy. I think the president was right to announce our intentions. Unfortunately, it wasn't followed up by the actual resources to do anything about it. When you look at the growing strength of China, I think that is in the medium term the rising threat. You've got China now who wants to exercise more influence in its region. You've got many countries, including allies like South Korea and Japan, looking to American leadership. You've got countries that were not aligned, like India. And you've got other countries, even like Vietnam, that are looking to American leadership and willing to join with America, under America's leadership. But unfortunately, rhetoric's not good enough.

The president did a great job giving a speech about pivoting our attention and putting more resources there. Without the investment, without the actual resources to

follow it up, it's going to ring hollow. And those countries aren't going to follow unless we actually follow through.

You talked about Europe. An example of that is when you look at Russia going – so those are the three in terms of – if you had to prioritize, but I think they are all comprehensive. I do think this is a situation where if America is serious about investing in our military, if America is serious about backing up our rhetoric with those resources, you will see a safer world. And I think the opposite is true: The more we withdraw from the world, the more chaos there is going to be all over the world and unpredictable challenges as well.

You'd mentioned, I think this is very telling, Europe is no longer – you're right, it is hard to believe how quickly Europe has gone from where it was post-Cold War to where it is today. It's no coincidence that Putin is in the Crimea, that he is threatening Ukraine. I think if you look back to 2009, if you look back to the infamous reset with Russia, you look to the unilateral withdrawal of the interceptors, if you look to what happened, our treatment of Georgia and their desire to quickly join NATO, and he took note of this president's weakness.

Now, we still could secure Europe. We could still deter, I think, Russia if we were willing to put brigades in allied countries in Eastern Europe, if we're willing to work within that framework. But if we don't have the resources to do that, if we don't have the manpower, if we don't have the resources to effectively deter Russian aggression, I think Europe becomes more dangerous, less stable, rather than the other way. But it's not inevitable. The chaos we're seeing is not inevitable. It's the absolute predictable fruit from this administration's disengagement, weakness from trying to lead from behind.

MR. DONNELLY: You mentioned the gap between our strategic needs, our traditional posture in the world, and the resources available. That's another hole that we've dug that hasn't bottomed out yet, if I can extend the analogy. You mentioned cutting the C-17 and the F-22. That's just the tip of the iceberg.

Part of the problem is that there're very little or few modernization programs left to invest in. There's been a big enthusiasm for inventing new things, but the photon torpedoes haven't made it into the laboratory yet, let alone to the field. Can you imagine another sort of, you know, Reagan-like buildup being necessary in the next administration?

GOV. JINDAL: Absolutely. And I'd say two things. We absolutely are not saying – we're not calling for getting to 4 percent of GDP overnight. For example, if you do that in 2012 numbers, you'd be looking approximately an \$80 billion increase. I don't think the Pentagon's capable of spending that money well, even if we were to give them that money today. So I absolutely think that we're talking about ramping this up over the short term, over a number of years.

But we also – one of the things that we also call for is changing our procurement process. We've got to develop and deploy technology much more quickly. Our goal should be a seven-year window. Otherwise, even with the F-22, even with some of the modernization programs that have been suspended or even canceled, we've seen, by the time – it's taken us so long to develop and deploy technology, by the time it's deployed it's already obsolete. And so I am calling for more investment in the Pentagon, in our forces, in our technology, but also talking about changing the procurement process. So we cut down the bureaucracy within the Pentagon to get projects approved, so it doesn't go through 100 different meetings. We also need more accountability, so it's not dispersed through so many offices so that nobody has accountability.

I'm also calling for multi-sourcing components of programs and, again, speeding up that delivery and holding folks accountable for delivering on time, on budget. But I want to be very clear. There is waste and abuse and we have to root it out because that waste and abuse is leaving our forces less prepared and leaving our forces without the readiness, without the training, without the equipment they need. Waste and abuse is not enough and that shouldn't be an excuse for disinvestment in the Pentagon, in our military forces and defending our nation. But yes, let's root out the waste and abuse. Yes, let's shorten the procurement cycles, reform the acquisition process, but that's not an excuse for disinvesting in our military and leaving our men and women without the training, without the resources they need.

We absolutely, as we reform the procurement process, have to increase investment. And we do point to the Reagan buildup as an example, a successful example not only the buildup of military hardware, but also investment in our forces, but at the same time, also deploying the soft power tools available to an administration.

Under the Reagan administration, they did support the democracy, the freedom movements in Eastern European and other countries. And you saw – you saw great things happen not only for our national interests, but for world's stability and peace. You won the Cold War, famously, as Maggie Thatcher said, without every firing a shot. We absolutely – we had a hollowed out military post-Vietnam. Unfortunately, we've got a hollowed out military. We're getting a hollowed out military again thanks to this administration's neglect and disinvestment in our military.

MR. DONNELLY: My last question, I promise, and then we'll open it up. But since you're actually a practicing politician, I'd be remiss to let this moment go by.

We've been told, for the past six or seven years, that we as a nation are weary of war and under any circumstances that we would never ever deploy ground forces. I was struck last week by an NBC poll – not exactly, you know – take it for what it was – in that poll, the question framed was if recommended by the military, would you agree with the deployment of ground forces in the war against ISIS? Forty-five percent, total Americans, said yes. Sixty-three percent of Republicans said yes. And 66 percent of people who identified as Tea Party members said yes. Really, and – of course, 32 percent

of Democrats said yes. Do you think, at least within the conservative universe, the politics of these issues are shifting?

GOV. JINDAL: Three things. One, look, I don't think there's any American that ever wants to go war as a first choice. I don't think there's any American in either political movement or party, conservative, liberal, whatever you call yourself that wants to use ground troops as a first choice or the military as a first choice. And ironically enough, the point we make is that a stronger military – the best way to avoid wars is to prepare for it, is to have a stronger defense, have the tools, that peace through strength is better than war through weakness.

Secondly, however, I think it's very foolish for this president to unilaterally announce what we're not going to do. He seems inclined every time there's a challenge to go out of his way to tell people what we won't do, as opposed to telling them what we will do. So I thought it was very foolish to announce unilaterally to ISIS that we will not deploy ground troops. And he does this again and again. Nobody was arguing that we needed to lead with ground troops, but to take these options off the table unilaterally seems to me to be a very foolish way to deter our enemies and to win the peace.

The third point, to your question about the poll results, look, I think the American people have showed time and time again not just in our recent modern history, but decade after decade, through the Cold War, through two world wars, and challenge after challenge, the American people are willing and wanting to rise to the challenge when they trust their leadership, when they feel like that there is effective leadership that is leading us to protect our nation's vital interests.

I think there is overwhelming bipartisan support to defend our nation, our vital interests. And again, I think you'll see that whether it's against ISIS or any other threat we face as a country. I am a conservative Republican. I've said this before. But this should be a bipartisan consensus. It was a bipartisan consensus post-World War II, throughout the Cold War, and it should be so again. There should be a bipartisan consensus.

My hope is that there are responsible leaders in both parties, in the Congress, as well as across the country that will stand up and say, this is vital to protecting America's interests here and abroad to securing the homeland.

You know, our federal government is now doing many things our founding fathers never intended. And when the government tries to do everything, it doesn't do its core responsibilities well. The first and most important responsibility of our federal government is to secure the homeland, to secure our nation. It's in the Constitution. The one thing the federal government is actually ordered to do, the one thing that Congress is actually told it must do is to secure our country.

We're living now at a time where – and this is remarkable. We're now living at a time where the government is spending a record share of our economy in the last few

years; at the same time, we are spending a record low amount actually defending our country post-World War II for the last seven years. Now, think about that. We're spending more of our economy on the government; at the same time we're spending less to defend our country. I think the American people understand we have got – the federal government has got its priorities backwards.

Whatever you think about the role, size or scope of government, the first and most important responsibility of government is to actually defend our country. And, by the way, it is more effective and it is better for us to do so ahead of time not only in terms of blood and treasure, but in terms of the danger and threats to our country than to try to lead from behind and lead through weakness.

MR. DONNELLY: Okay. We've got about 10 minutes for questions. I'm going to begin – Dov Zakheim caught my eye first. And I know he will observe the AEI rules of waiting for the microphone, announcing his name for the transcript, and putting his statement in the form of a question. So Dov Zakheim.

Q: This isn't a statement.

GOV. JINDAL: Tough question then.

Q: Okay. Dov Zakheim, spelled, Z-A-K-H-E-I-M, okay? The elephant in the room when you talk about spending more on defense – and it wasn't something I had to face when I was in charge of the defense budget in the early 2000s – is the sequester. And, in fact, Leon Panetta, who's really a straight shooter, complains that when he argued against the sequester, he had nobody to back him up. Presumably, if there's a change in a couple of years, we will fight to get rid of the sequester. Do you see any possibility of doing that before the next two years are up?

GOV. JINDAL: I think we should absolutely do everything we can. Obviously, a lot will depend on the November elections. I'm hopeful that Harry Reid will be retired as majority leader and I'm hopeful that Nancy Pelosi will not be returning as speaker.

But I absolutely agree with the premise of your question that the sequestration when it comes to defense cuts were an absolutely mistake. Added on top of President Obama's own reductions to the Secretary Gates' baseline, then you added the impact of sequestration on defense, you've got nearly \$1 trillion reduction to what was the last responsible assessment of what the Pentagon actually needed. And Secretary Gates didn't propose – I would argue he didn't go far enough in his proposal, but I am saying that was the last time there was a reasonable threat analysis.

It's just remarkable to me that the president would – in the space of a speech simply throw out his own secretary's work and pick an arbitrary number, a political number. And then, on top of that, Congress would impose arbitrary reductions on top of those arbitrary reductions.

I think it was a mistake for Republicans to accept sequestration cuts in defense. I think that we – I think we do need to allow the cuts in the other portion of the federal budget, to continue – we need to continue to shrink government, in my view. When it comes to defense, I think these sequestration cuts in defense were a mistake.

I think if they were honest, even the administration would admit that they played a bad game of chicken with the nation's defense and we all lost because they put what they thought and knew to be bad policy on the table for political reasons. And I think that was – I think it's irresponsible to play with – when you think that it's the men and women in uniform who will suffer first and suffer the most, they're the ones who are now going to be tasked with missions without the resources. It is simply irresponsible to send them on missions without the tools they need to successfully complete those missions. So absolutely we need to do undo the sequestration impacts within the defense, within the Pentagon portion of the federal budget.

MR. DONNELLY: All right. I'm going to identify the young woman hidden behind –

Q: Thank you very much. Thank you for your terrific, targeted speech, Governor Jindal.

GOV. JINDAL: Thank you.

Q: Elizabeth Sinclair (sp), regular citizen. Millions of Americans, many of whom were worried about Obama's MO from the start, believe President Obama's effectively waging soft war against the United States itself. Should we be lucky enough to survive two more years of these clear and daily dangers, what arsenal tools do concerned if not terrified Americans have?

GOV. JINDAL: I'm sorry. Which tools?

Q: What kind of arsenal tools?

GOV. JINDAL: Sure. Look, a couple of things. One, I think that I would encourage everybody that's concerned to be active this November. We can't wait two years. We need to start taking our government back and we can do that best right now through these elections right ahead of us.

I will say this – I've been a vocal and persistent critic of this administration's policies on a number of areas. I've called for the repeal and replacement of "Obamacare." I'm suing the federal Department of Education over Common Core as a breach of the 10th Amendment of the Constitution. I called the Eric Holder lawsuit against our school choice program hypocritical, cynical, and immoral. I called for Eric Holder to be removed from office over "Fast and Furious," and I could go on. The point is I'm not a fan of this administration. (Laughter.) There's a reason I don't get invited to the Obama White House for dinner.

But I will say this, and I've been very, very specific in my concerns about the threats facing our country and I believe those to be true. I'm still an optimist about the future of our country. I still believe in my bones that this is still the greatest country in the history of the world. And despite the challenges we have seen under this administration, I think it's still within our reach for this generation to renew those principles of freedom.

I don't think it's inevitable that America remains the greatest country. I don't think it's somehow etched in our DNA or there's something magical – I think it's wonderful we're blessed with resources in the oceans and all these other great things, but that doesn't make us inevitably great.

I think the founding fathers got it right when they trusted us with freedom in the founding documents and put it into not only our political DNA, but into our culture. I think our 40th president was right though that every generation has to choose for itself to renew our principles of freedom. I think this is our generation's turn in time, so I think it is up to us.

So I would – as a word of encouragement, I'm frustrated. I think the world is a more chaotic place. To your litany of regions, there's not one point in the world you can point to and say it's become safer or better since this administration took office.

And, remember, this was an administration – I remember the oceans were supposed to be healed. I remember we were supposed to reset relations. The world was going to love us. He went and gave a speech in Cairo that was going to solve everything and instead the world has become a much more chaotic, much more dangerous place.

But I don't want the American people to become so frustrated or despondent to think that, well, our best days are behind us. I don't think that's true. I think this is a great country. I think it's still within our grasp to renew those principles of freedom. I think we've got work to do on the world stage.

I'd also say we've got work to do here at home. And to me, that talks about restoring the American dream to remind folks through our policies and through our rhetoric the American dream is not about government dependence, not about redistribution, it's not about taking from others. It's about equality of opportunity and not outcomes. And that's another speech for another day.

But I think one of the most dangerous things this president has done at home has been to try to redefine the American dream. And I think we've got great work to do there restoring the American dream here at home. But the good news is I think it's still doable. My parents came to this country nearly 50 years ago in search of the American dream. I think that dream is still possible for their grandchildren, but I think we've got work to do to ensure that it remains possible for their children and all of our children and grandchildren.

MR. DONNELLY: I'm going to go to the back of the room. The gentleman who's been standing up needs to be rewarded for his endurance, if nothing else.

Q: Mitch Muncy with the Hamilton Society. Is it imaginable that we will have the resources to reach and maintain 4 percent GDP investment in defense without some pretty uncomfortable reform of entitlements?

GOV. JINDAL: A couple of things – one, first half of your question, we absolutely have the resources because, to my mind, we've got to fund defense first. In my mind, you fund defense first with the commitment, the resources it takes. And, again, the guideline is 4 percent. It's based on a strategic analysis. That doesn't mean it's an automatic 4 percent on autopilot. It needs to be informed. But if we're consistently underinvesting over a period of time, that should be a warning flag. But we need to put aside those resources first. That's the federal government's first responsibility. Then we decide what else we can afford to do as a country because our first – our federal government's first and most important obligation is to defend our country.

To the second half of your question, I think we've got to reform our entitlement programs separate and apart from what we have to do in the defense. The reality is the entitlement programs are not sustainable on their current trajectory. What did this president do when he came into office? He simply added another entitlement program to the ones we already have where we can't already afford to do what we had promised we were going to do today. And I think to maintain the promise of our entitlement programs, specifically Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, for future generations, to keep the promise, we do have to reform and strengthen and improve those programs.

Through America Next, we shared a program on health care reform that specifically talks about some of the things that we can do in Medicare and Medicaid in particular. So absolutely we need to reform those entitlement programs, but that's even separate and above and beyond what has to be done in defense. That's simply to make sure we can maintain the promises we've made and to make sure we strengthen and improve those programs for future generations. That's simple math.

You listen to the non-partisan actuaries of those programs, especially Medicare and Social Security, and they'll tell you those programs, especially when you look at the Medicare Part A trust fund just as one example, we'll run out of resources before we finish paying for the health care benefits to the Baby-Boomers and others that are entering that program. So absolutely we need to reform the entitlement programs.

I was the ED on the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare back in the '90s and there was a bipartisan proposal supported by Republicans and Democrats including groups like the DLC and the "Wall Street Journal" and the AMA behind a concept – a version of premium supports.

So I think it's possible to do it in a bipartisan way to reform those programs, to strengthen them for future generations. So absolutely, yes, we need to reform those

programs, but that's true regardless of whether people agree with me or not about the need to invest in defense.

MR. DONNELLY: Oh, my goodness. All the time has gone. I'm very sorry about that because this was a very important conversation, Governor. And I think it will be our job to try to get you an invite to the White House so you can give the commander-in-chief some advice that he very dearly needs.

GOV. JINDAL: Apparently it's not that hard to get in there. (Laughter.)

MR. DONNELLY: Yeah, right. (Laughter.) Only if you're carrying a weapon I think. But failing that, our doors here are always open to you. So thanks for joining us and thanks everybody for – (Applause)

GOV. JINDAL: Thank you to the people at AEI. Thank you all very much for having me.

(END)