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THE VIEW FROM LANGLEY

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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THE VIEW FROM LANGLEY

(5:15 p.m.)

MS. SEARS: Welcome. I'm Kay Sears, vice president of strategy and business development for Lockheed Martin Space Systems. And I'm here representing all 97,000 Lockheed Martin employees, we're part proud to be a sponsor for the second year of this great forum.

It's also my pleasure to introduce the next session, The View from Langley. Our speaker, the Honorable Mike Pompeo, is a remarkable public servant, leading the men and women of the Central Intelligence Agency during pressing and uncertain times. His extraordinary background span some of our country's greatest institutions. After graduating first in his class at West Point, serving with distinction in the United States Army, excelling at the Harvard Law School, and managing key components of the energy and aerospace industries, Director Pompeo returned to public service to skillfully represent Kansas fourth congressional district. Now he continues his storied career drawing upon a vast array of accomplishments to tackle the daunting and vital task we're excited to hear about tonight.

Our moderator this evening is a force in his own right. Bret Stephens is not only a Pulitzer Prize winning *New York Times* columnist, but he has been recognized for his outstanding contributions to the foreign policy dialogue for the better part of two decades, most notably as the deputy editorial page editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, a panelist on the *Journal Editorial Report* and the editor in chief of *The Jerusalem Post*.

I know we're all tremendously interested in what's to follow. So without further delay, Bret, I'll turn it over to you.

(Applause)

MR. STEPHENS: Thank you. Welcome all. We have lots of questions and so we're going to try to waste no time. And I hope, when I turn it over to the audience for questions of their own, they also don't waste any time by offering speeches in light -- in lieu of questions.

MR. POMPEO: That was that was very polite, Bret, very polite.

MR. STEPHENS: I try to be direct.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: So let's get right to it. I want to start with Syria, it's been in the news not just for years but in particular this last couple of days, I just want to ask you a general question. What in your -- who in your view is the enemy in Syria.

MR. POMPEO: Yeah, so I'll give you the intelligence perspective on that and it is not singular. So I suppose you start with the threat that America is most involved in today that is the defeat of ISIS, mostly in the north and along the east but of course they will come up in another flavor one fine day. The agency is, along with our great partners from DOD and foreign partners are working diligently to defeat ISIS in that particular region.

But today you have Iran extending its boundaries, extending its reach, now making an effort to cross the borders and link up from Iraq, a very dangerous threat to the United States. Just yesterday, one more time, we learned that Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terror, and they now have a significant foothold in Syria.

MR. STEPHENS: I'm glad you raised that because --

MR. POMPEO: I could go on, I am not done with the list of enemies in Syria.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: Well, go on then.

MR. POMPEO: Well, we certainly are trying to find places where we can work alongside the Russians, but we don't have the same set of interests there. And so from intelligence perspective we're staring at the places we can find to achieve American outcomes in Syria, the things in our country's best interest and not in theirs. When the decision was made to allow the Russians to enter into Syria now, coming on four years ago, fundamentally changed the landscape. And it's certainly been worse for the Syrian people.

MR. STEPHENS: So, what is the American interest in Syria other than the defeat of ISIS, which I assume will probably happen relatively soon, in the same way that it happened in Northern Iraq?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah, won't be soon enough. America's interests are larger than just Syria, right. So we have to think about Syria in the context of the greater Middle East, and it is providing the conditions so that we can have a more stable Middle East, to keep America safe, it is that straight forward.

MR. STEPHENS: Who are America's friends in Syria.

MR. POMPEO: Oh goodness, I don't -- we're working alongside lots of partners there, Gulf partners, the Brits, the French, we have lots of partners who are working alongside of us there.

MR. STEPHENS: Are the Kurds a friend?

MR. POMPEO: You know it's a complicated question, I'll leave the details and it's -- I don't think you can speak about the Kurds as an individual element in any event, it's much more complex, it's a pretty longish

answer, which I'm happy to spend time on. But suffice to say there are places we are definitely working alongside them and which they're going to help us achieve the outcome that America wants.

MR. STEPHENS: One of the criticisms of the Obama administration made by a lot of Republicans, especially in the last few years of his administration was that under his leadership America's enemies didn't fear us and our friends didn't trust us. And I want to touch on that last piece of the equation. You're probably constrained in what you can say but we have news reports amplified by a press statement from Senator McCain, who still seems very much in the fight, about -- concerning our support for moderate allies, moderate rebels fighting the Assad regime, and the withdrawal of that support. And I'm wondering what you can offer us in terms of why that support would have been withdrawn, and what I might -- I'm tempted to add, what would you have said about this, if you were still Congressman Pompeo and this was what the Obama administration was doing.

MR. POMPEO: I actually know exactly what I would have said then and you can read that, but I can't tell you what I would say today. What I'll say is this, we are prepared to work with anyone who is working towards the end state that America is trying to achieve there.

MR. STEPHENS: Does the end state include the end of the Assad regime?

MR. POMPEO: You'll have to leave that to the State Department. I think -- I think the last I saw Secretary Tillerson made very, very clear that Assad is not a stabilizing influence in Syria, that is difficult to imagine, and from an intelligence perspective not a policy perspective, I would add, it is difficult to imagine a stable Syria that still has Assad in power. He is a puppet of the Iranians and therefore it seems an unlikely situation where Assad will be sitting on the throne and America's interests will be well served.

MR. STEPHENS: Since you mentioned that, you know, something that's been talked about for a long time the extension of a Shiite crescent from -- across from Tehran to Beirut. Talk about two elements in that, number one the Israelis are very unhappy with the fact that -- with the fact of the ceasefires because they think that -- they fear that it's going to entrench Iranian power very close to their borders. And the Israelis have wanted a 40 kilometer buffer. And I wonder what effect do you think those sorts of ceasefires will have on Iran's reach?

The second point is, reports coming out that Iran is manufacturing with Hezbollah advanced missiles in Lebanon today. So can you talk about the Iranian Hezbollah piece and what the -- what's the strategy against it?

MR. POMPEO: So Hezbollah is but one example of the Iranians using proxy forces to achieve their outcomes, which is an expansionist capacity to control and be the kingpin in the Middle East, certainly Hezbollah; many of the Shia militias, although not all; their efforts in Yemen, their proxies in Iraq now firmly gaining power inside of Iraq, each of those present threats to the Gulf States, to Israel, and to America's interests. And this administration is going to have the task of unwinding what we found when we came in.

We are working diligently to get to the right place there. I will tell you that some of the actions that we have taken have let folks know that we are at least back working this problem in a way that wasn't the case six months ago.

MR. STEPHENS: What is Russia's interest in Syria? What's their end game?

MR. POMPEO: They love a warm water naval port and they love to stick it to America.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: And places where -- and I mean that -- I mean that -- I am sort of kidding but I think they find any place that they can make our lives more difficult, I think they find that something that's useful to them. And from an intelligence perspective, it's also clear that they have the intention of remaining there.

MR. STEPHENS: Do you have -- do you see any evidence that Russia has actually pursued a serious strategy against ISIS as opposed to more moderate rebels who we have supported or otherwise would tolerate?

MR. POMPEO: No.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: I guess I should carry, you said any evidence. Only the -- only the most minimal.

MR. STEPHENS: So the suggestion that has often been made in fact by the White House that Russia is a potential ally of ours in the fight against ISIS, at least so far, has not been borne out in their action?

MR. POMPEO: In Syria no, but I'll be very clear, I hope there's places we can do CT with the Russians. I'm working diligently on it. I've traveled. I've met with my counterparts. We have Americans that travel on Russian airplanes. We have American interests throughout the world. And if Russia has information that can help us fight the CT fight around the world, it's my duty, not only the right thing to do but to work with them. And I'm hopeful we can find places. We have -- we're -- they are Russians but we're -- but make no mistake about it, it would be the wrong thing to do, to turn our back on that obligation to get that information. To share information we have to help them take down these terror threats that present risk to America.

MR. STEPHENS: So how do you categorize Russia? Is Russia an enemy, adversary, frenemy or what of the United States?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah, it's complicated, yeah, right I mean the -- it is so fun to sit on stage and make easy answers, but in fact it's more complicated than that. We live in a world where the Russians have massive nuclear stockpile and are firmly entrenched in Syria. They have retaken Ukraine -- well, excuse me, they've retaken Crimea, they have a foothold in Southeast Ukraine. Those are facts on the ground. And America has an obligation to push back against that, not to allow that continued expansion that has taken place and to be serious in the way that we deal with them. And if we can do that by me working with someone who doesn't share my value set but works for the SVR I'll do it.

MR. STEPHENS: I want to stay in the Middle East a little bit more and talk about two -- two issues that are obviously on people's mind. Obviously, I want -- I'd like to ask you a little more about ISIS and what is the post Raqqa -- once we get there -- what is the post Raqqa strategy for dealing with it.

MR. POMPEO: So we've been working on this a lot longer than post Raqqa, we have been trying to figure out -- we ultimately, we the CIA, has known for a long time that ultimately we would be able to take the real estate back from them, mostly DOD partners doing the good work to retake that ground along with their liaison partners. It was inevitable that our team would be able to do that, and we are, and it's painstakingly slow.

And so we've been working hard and long to figure out what it is, how do we prevent a second coming of ISIS or the metastasization of ISIS into something different, and we're seeing it already, right. There are ISIS branches in a dozen places today. So it is not just these strongholds that are very much in the news in Syria and in Iraq. We're going to have to work to pressure that, to provide CT pressure in a way that CIA and DOD

know how to do, right, we broke the back of al Qaeda. We crushed them. We didn't do it just by taking out a handful of folks. We took down their entire network. And that's what we're going to do again.

MR. STEPHENS: So what are the some of the places that worry you most?

MR. POMPEO: So the places where they can get to Europe present the most discreet threat. That is places like ISIS in Libya, ISIS in Sinai. And certainly there are remnants of ISIS in Iraq and Syria places where they can get through Turkey and into Europe, and then ultimately make their way relatively easily into the United States.

MR. STEPHENS: And is there an effective counterterrorist strategy once you have ISIS cells really embedded in European society that then becomes more of a policing issue, how do you -- how do you deal with that kind of threat?

MR. POMPEO: It does. It becomes a law enforcement issue. And we work closely with our European law enforcement counterparts to help them. But those folks talk to people around the world. They engage in resupply, they are engaged in training, all kinds of networks that the Agency is very, very good at identifying. And we can help those European law enforcement agencies identify these cells and take them down. It's a tough challenge.

MR. STEPHENS: So is ISIS as dangerous without its territorial caliphate or with it?

MR. POMPEO: They're dangerous. I mean -- I prefer them not having a caliphate to the extent that there isn't pressure on terrorists to the extent they have the capacity to operate and communicate and build up their network, they present more risk to our homeland, so yeah, I think we're infinitely better off with them not having the real estate or any real estate.

MR. STEPHENS: Let me switch from ISIS to Iran, the administration just recertified the JCPOA the Iranian nuclear deal as we are obliged to do I guess every 90y days. That surprised me, and I understand from reports there was a vigorous debate in the White House between Trump, who was more -- President Trump, who was more skeptical and some of his advisors who were more determined to see the deal recertified. You, as a congressman, were one of the most outspoken members in opposing the agreement. And so -- in fact, you and Tom Cotton were responsible for unveiling or rather revealing secret, somewhat secret annexes to --

MR. POMPEO: I like that somewhat secret, yes.

MR. STEPHENS: Somewhat secret -- it depends on your definition of secret -- annexes that weren't publicly well known to the agreement. We now have reports from David Albright of the other ISIS, from Olli Heinonen, a former senior official in the IAEA that Iran continues to manufacture centrifuges for -- highly advanced centrifuges. It continues to stonewall IAEA requests for investigation of sites. It has once and perhaps twice exceeded the 130 metric ton cap on the production of heavy water. So on that basis why did you -- why did the administration choose to recertify the agreement?

MR. POMPEO: So I'll leave that discussion to State Department, who recertified but I'll talk to you -- I want talk to you about the -- about Iran, because you can't talk about the JCPOA the reason that I opposed it when I was a member of Congress wasn't that there might not be some marginal benefit in delaying Iran's nuclear program, it is potentially the case that you could achieve that, you could get increased monitoring, you could stop a few centrifuges from spinning, there might well be marginal benefits on Iran's nuclear that could be achieved by the agreement. In fact, you could go back and look, I said that when I was a member of Congress as well.

The challenge of the agreement is that it is short term. It doesn't avail of us -- avail us the capacity to really truly identify all the things that Iran might be up to, and then covers only such a narrow piece of the Iranian risk profile. And so that's what -- that's what the administration is focused on, we're working diligently to figure out how to push back against Iran not only in the nuclear arena but in all the other spaces as well. And I can't get into the details of our intelligence as it relates to what those distinguished scholars have written but I kind of think of Iranian compliance with the nuclear deal like a bad tenant. How many of you have had a bad tenant? You know they don't pay the rent, you call them and then they send a check, and it doesn't clear and they send another one. And then the next day there's this old tired sofa in the front yard and you tell them to take it away, and you know they drag it to the back. This is Iranian compliance today. Grudging, minimalist, temporary with no intention of really what the agreement was designed to do, it was designed to foster stability and have Iran become a reentrant to the Western world, and the agreement simply hasn't achieved that.

MR. STEPHENS: So what will? I mean...

MR. POMPEO: You know it's a good answer -- a good question rather. I would answer it this way, I'd answer it this way, I don't know. I don't know what will push them back, but I can tell you what won't. What won't is continuing -- continued appeasement, continued failure to acknowledge when they do things wrong, and forcing them into compliance, and sometimes yes that will require Americans taking risk. I'm confident this administration will ultimately be willing to do so. When we get our strategy in place I am confident you will see a fundamental shift. We've begun, right, that one of the first things the President did is to go build a coalition of the Gulf States and Israel to help find a platform which could uniformly push back against Iranian expansionism.

MR. STEPHENS: Since we're on the subject of proliferation one of the points that has been raised often but in an unconfirmed way is the extent of cooperation between Iran and North Korea.

MR. POMPEO: Uh-huh.

MR. STEPHENS: And one of the questions that I think many people have given how North Korea's nuclear program seemed at first to be, kind of this you know, incompetent -- scary but incompetent program. People talk about the seemingly very rapid advances that the program has achieved in the last two or three years. The launch of a -- submarine launched ballistic missile, is a significant technical achievement. Now it seems a missile that was able to fly for 37 minutes; increasing sophistication in terms of their uranium enrichment capacity and so on.

So I wanted to turn your attention to Pyongyang and the North. How do we think they've been able to make such surprising strides in such a short amount of time?

MR. POMPEO: I can't give you any specific -- I can't talk specifically about how they got from where they were to where we find them today, but other than to say they've had lots of willing partners, suppliers, engineers. Talented physicists who were able to come provide them ways that they could get up the learning curve faster than one might do if you just simply did it internally.

MR. STEPHENS: So given that this threat no longer seems to be one with a very long, you know, time span but it's become much more urgent; take us through a range of some of the options, beyond perhaps the most obvious ones, you know, sanctions, diplomacy, the possibility of preemption; is there option four, or option five. I mean what range of possibilities do you see.

MR. STEPHENS: The President when I am with him nearly every day rarely lets me escape the Oval Office

without a question about North Korea, it is at the front of his mind. To your point, previous administrations for 20 years have whistled past the graveyard, maybe that was okay, maybe they weren't as close as they are today, so maybe that was an acceptable policy response; the President doesn't believe it is today. So he has tasked us, the intelligence community to try and deliver answers, those answers will be delivered almost certainly alongside our partners at the Department of Defense, but deliver a range of options that can do what ultimately needs to be achieved.

It would be a great thing to denuclearize the peninsula to get those weapons off that but the thing that is most dangerous about it is the character who holds the control over them today. So from the administration's perspective, the most important thing we can do is separate those two, right separate capacity, and someone who might well have intent, and break those two apart. And I am confident the intelligence community will present a set -- a wide range of options for the President about how we might go about that.

MR. STEPHENS: Well, let me let me press you on that because you mentioned the character of Kim Jong-un. I mean you must have teams of people, sort of, looking at every piece of cheese he might eat --

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: And I guess a lot of cheese.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: And -- what kind of character is he? What can you tell us about him other than he's portly.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: So the great public debate is about whether he is rational or not, right, we use this word

from Western philosophy to try to describe someone who wouldn't know Western philosophy if it hit him in the head. And we've watched -- he'll respond, we've watched through many attempts, we've watched Kim Jong-un respond, right, he measures his responses, he's trying now to figure out how to work with the South Koreans to get us to back off, to get America to stop pressing just as hard as he is. You could certainly characterize that as a rational response to the threat that I think he perceives from the United States and from our allies. So in that sense he certainly has the capability of responding to what are in his best interest in his regime's best interest.

But there are times he does things that are completely unexplainable and to us it may well look irrational. But I am convinced that in some space he understands his core mission, which is to keep himself in power.

MR. STEPHENS: Well, you seem to be hinting at something interesting there in your earlier answer when you started talking about separating the person from the capacity. And I think there are real questions as to whether you can ever get rid of capacity since that's how North Korea stays in business that's why it's relevant. So, are you suggesting that then the alternative is some kind of regime change.

MR. POMPEO: You know, I think we can tackle every piece of that. So I think we can tackle capacity too. These weapon systems still need development, they need testing, they need people who are willing to work on these programs. To the extent we can convince China it's in its best interest to help us, convince Kim it's not in his best interest to move down that path, there are still many tools, right. It's a big long supply chain to build this stuff out. So there are lots of ways that one might think to narrow the capacity band as well. Because frankly, it's one thing for him to have one missile capable of landing in Denver, Colorado or even this beautiful place we find ourselves and it's another thing

for him to have an entire arsenal. And there are things we can do to keep that capability out of his hands. And as for the regime, I am hopeful we will find a way to separate that regime from this system.

MR. STEPHENS: Interesting answer.

MR. POMPEO: The North Korean people, I'm sure are lovely people and would love to see him go as well, as you might know they don't live a very good life there.

MR. STEPHENS: I've heard, yeah. I want to now switch to Russia. Obviously, on people's minds, we talked about this a little bit earlier. You've probably been asked this a million times before but everyone wants an answer, everyone in this room. Did Russia intervene in our election.

MR. POMPEO: I have been asked it a million times, it is true, yeah of course. And the one before that, and the one before that, they have been at this a hell of a long time. And I don't think they have any intention of backing off.

MR. STEPHENS: And with each iteration the intervention becomes more -- more sophisticated and effective. So what is the next iteration.

MR. POMPEO: I hearken back to something called the Gerasimov doctrine from the early 70s, he's now the head of the -- I'm a Cold War guy, forgive me if I mention Soviet Union. He's now the head of the Russian army and his idea was that you can win wars without firing a single shot or with firing very few shots in ways that are decidedly not militaristic, and that's what's happened. What changes is the costs; to effectuate change through cyber and through RT and Sputnik, their news outlets, and through other soft means; has just really been lowered, right. It used to be it was expensive to run an ad on a television station now you simply go online and propagate your message. And so they have they have found an effective tool, an easy way to go reach into our systems,

and into our culture to achieve the outcomes they are looking for.

MR. STEPHENS: Well one of the tools they seem to have found is one you spoke about at length in a speech a couple months ago, at CIS on WikiLeaks. Do you do you see Julian Assange and WikiLeaks as witting or unwitting partners, allies, or tools of Russian intelligence.

MR. POMPEO: First, now that you ask the question, I remember why I don't give speeches often.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: Look WikiLeaks will take down America any way they can and find any willing partner to achieve that end. So if they can work with the Chinese they're happy to do it. If they can work with the Iranians they'll be part and parcel, if they can work with young American students in our colleges and on campuses they're happy to work for them. I mean you can go -- you only need to go to WikiLeaks' Twitter account to see that every month they remind people that you can be an intern at the CIA and become a really dynamite whistleblower.

This is the nature of these non-state hostile intelligence services, I think our intelligence community has a lot of work to figure out how to respond to them, we have spent decades figuring out how to respond to nation state intelligence services that come after us. And so we have authorities and rules and processes that are focused on countries and regions. And we now need to make sure that we understand that some of the intelligence threats, some of the threat to America is coming from these folks who don't have constituents, who don't have people who live in their country but rather are free range chickens run around the world with resources to spare, and who don't intend well for the United States of America and are happy to use cyber or other means to achieve their ends.

MR. STEPHENS: On the basis of what you just said, how do you feel about the use of WikiLeaks material

by the media, by the news media, or for that matter by politicians?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah it's a difficult question given this fuzzy little First Amendment thing we've got going on here. And I'd say the -- and I love the First Amendment I'm all about it.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: I just want to make sure that's very clear, those of you in the back watching, I love the First Amendment.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: Look -- I'll tell you what tell you what brings -- your question brings to mind for me. We have an awful lot of folks who have decided that their constitutional duty includes releasing information that they promise that they wouldn't put any place else. And so in the first instance the responsibility for protecting that information sits right here with the Central Intelligence Agency, or the Department of Defense, or the National Security Administration. Our duty is to protect that information from anyone, whether that's WikiLeaks or an employee, or contractor, or the Russians, or the Chinese, or whomever it may be that's our duty. And then I hope others will figure out what the responsibility is to America, the hope they get it right.

We had we had a publication, you worked for it Bret that published the name of an undercover officer at the Central Intelligence Agency, I find that unconscionable.

(Applause)

MR. STEPHENS: You are talking about Phil Agee.

MR. POMPEO: Excuse me.

MR. STEPHENS: You are talking about Phil Agee.

MR. POMPEO: I don't know that name.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay, sorry.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: Well let me ask you on that since -- fair enough on the unconscionable score, so we had a presidential candidate last year who in audiences with 10, 15,000 would say, "I love WikiLeaks." Do you think that's damaging?

MR. POMPEO: I don't love WikiLeaks.

(Applause)

MR. STEPHENS: Okay. In the speech you gave in Washington a couple months ago -- and I just want to press you on this -- you said, we have to recognize that we can no longer allow Assange and his colleagues the latitude to use free speech values against us. You didn't elaborate on that point in the speech but I'm just wondering what does that, to your mind, imply legislatively or operationally? I mean should we be enforcing the Espionage Act much more?

MR. POMPEO: Yes.

MR. STEPHENS: Should we be prosecuting journalists who disclose or use this information?

MR. POMPEO: You know there's an old aphorism that says that the law is entitled to every man's evidence and I'll leave it at that.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay. All right so back to the First Amendment.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: But as you also recognize part of the problem here is that Mr. Snowden a young woman who was just apprehended a few months ago, the reported leaking of something called Vault 7 of an arsenal of cyber -- cyber espionage, cyber security tools. All of this seems to suggest that our intelligence community, not just CIA but other branches of it have a kind of an insider threat problem.

MR. POMPEO: I agree.

MR. STEPHENS: And one point that I have often heard made is that, you know, during the Cold War you had a highly compartmentalized intelligence system precisely to deal with these sorts of problems. Do you feel that it became too open, too integrated that it needs to sort of revert back to Cold War compartmentalization and levels of scrutiny and secrecy.

MR. POMPEO: It's a good question. You should know one of the very first things I did when I became the CIA director was to put the person in charge of counterintelligence reporting directly to me. Was meant both to set a signal to the workforce that this was important and we weren't going to tolerate misbehavior and our organization was meant to send a signal to those around the world that we were watching. And we have to get our ducks in a row, part of that is getting this tension between the information sharing, which is critical, one of the critiques on 9/11 of course was that the intelligence committee did not share information that it had sufficiently timely and broadly enough, and then making sure just as few people who really need to know have that information.

The good news is today technology permits us to do that in a pretty sophisticated way to get it to the right places and to keep it out of the hands of folks that are authorized to have it by the nature of their clearance but who don't need to know that information. We're working inside my organization to make sure that we have that balance correct.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay. I want to go back to asking you about Russia, I mean the Russian method, you know, you pointed this -- I think it goes back to (inaudible) --

MR. POMPEO: You could probably put it back centuries, yes.

MR. STEPHENS: But you know the Russian approach is to use various asymmetries including asymmetry in the information environment. The fact that in the West we tolerate the Assanges so long as they're not raping people.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: And in Russia they obviously don't. But it's -- but one thing I've often wondered about is surely there are counter asymmetries that we can employ. And one of them that's been very effective has been of course the 2012 Magnitsky Act which seems to have gotten Vladimir Putin's attention, since I hear adoptions were the subject of a discussion with the President, it is usually code for the Magnitsky Act.

Talk to us about the Magnitsky Act, its effect on the Russians and what are some of the other tools that you might employ and not just be on the receiving end of intelligence blow-ups.

MR. POMPEO: I wish I could tell you about them. So there are many tools, right. We have -- sometimes when we go around the world and I get involved in discussions it looks like it's all, woe is America. I will tell you I come home every night and my wife says, "How was your day, what did you do?" And I can't tell her what I did, but I can tell them, my day was great because America is awesome and the people who work at the CIA are doing amazing things and I just can't always share them with you.

(Applause)

MR. POMPEO: You should know -- it is great, six months in, I'm still learning things, it's fantastic. Amazing things that have been done for 20 years, long before I was ever on scene at the Central Intelligence Agency investments that were made that are now delivering incredible results for America, against everyone, and I would argue against the Russians in particular.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay, well, take your word for that.

(Applause)

MR. STEPHENS: Let's -- let me skip back to terrorism for a second. I think you were many -- many of us on the political right were critical of what seemed like the retreat or the downsizing of some of the authorities that were available to law enforcement and to Central Intelligence in the wake of 9/11 and then were pared back during the Obama administration. One of them for instance was no more black, so-called black sites for interrogating detainees.

As a matter of sort of your broad view not what is actually happening -- I guess my question is, is the Army Field Manual enough, do we have the authorities you need to properly interrogate detainees who may have valuable or even life saving information?

MR. POMPEO: So today it's the law and if there's one thing we're very good at is making sure we understand the scope and breadth of what we're actually lawfully permitted to do and we endeavor every moment to stay inside those lines. I haven't had anybody present me yet with a situation where I didn't feel like the Army Field Manual was sufficient but what I said in my testimony before the Senate was the day that that happens I will come make the case to make sure that we're doing all the things we need to keep America safe. So as we're presented with situations or as we anticipate situations where the Army Field Manual may well not deliver against

what America needs, you can be sure I'll go back and advocate for it.

MR. STEPHENS: Given that we've moved sort of in the world of terrorism from a kind of a cell like structure of al Qaeda to a much more diffused, ideological structure, you know, sort of self activated, jihadis reading *Inspire Magazine* or whatever. Do we still obtain valuable information from talking to interrogating these guys or has that just diminished because the nature of the threat has been transformed?

MR. POMPEO: It is true to the extent -- I actually -- I don't buy the lone wolf story, never seen a wolf alone. They always know how to find the pack and where to find them. Someone's always helping each of these folks. And so networks still exists. But it is true, to the extent it is less centralized, more diffused just like effective corporations in America today that have decentralized and just like I'm working diligently to decentralize the Central Intelligence Agency so that we can be as nimble as our adversary. To the extent -- you do that you do get a multiplicative effect and the takedown of one element doesn't lead you as far into the network as it might if you had a highly centralized organization that's certainly true.

MR. STEPHENS: So if it ever had its day you might say that that period of talking to KSM in a manner of speaking is no longer relevant to the present threat.

MR. POMPEO: Yeah. But I have to want -- I want to make sure I understand the full scope of the places that the Agency can go today and make sure it's adequate to do our mission.

MR. STEPHENS: One of the points that you made in your speech is you said and this is the most important point you said as to deepen the trust between the intelligence community and the citizens we strive to protect. And I'm wondering how you go about doing that -- and if I may make this question a little more pointed, you

know, your predecessor Mr. Brennan took great umbrage at comments that the intelligence agency was behaving like a Gestapo, like Nazi Germany that the honor of the community you lead had been insulted. So -- and there's a lot of talk also about, sort of, the deep state and an intelligence community that sort of out to get our elected leaders and foil his -- foil their political plans. So how do you cultivate that trust and where does all this talk about the deep state fit in as far as you see it?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah my comments were -- I meant them, the ways your question, I think, gets to -- how do you as the director make sure that we continue to be entrusted with the incredible authority and power that you have vested in the Central Intelligence Agency as it is. I believe we deliver incredibly good value, my team is truly remarkable, unequalled in the world, and we have to make sure we don't lose that. We know that that is a license from the American people. And if we don't keep that, if we don't keep that license, if we don't honor it then we'll lose it, the American people will take it away from -- there is going to be a big decision at the end of the year on a provision called Section 702 that would reduce our capacity to collect foreign intelligence. I hope Congress will be reauthorize that through -- the people's representatives will reauthorize that.

I have spent a little bit of time these first six months thinking about how I do that, one of them is that you come to places like this, and you talk about what the CIA does, and what it doesn't do. And you reemphasize that we are an agency that is operating inside the boundaries trying our level best every day to collect foreign intelligence to keep us all safe. Those are the things you do and I -- I keep doing it.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay.

(Applause)

MR. POMPEO: It's a little -- Bret, to your point it is more difficult, I have already had to not

answer two questions from Bret that I would desperately love to answer.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: I'd like desperately to (inaudible) had answered.

MR. POMPEO: So it is tricky, in an organization that is predicated on a capacity to operate out of the public eye, I think it's still very important everywhere we can to share what our great people are doing.

MR. STEPHENS: I promised that we would give the audience some time to ask some questions and I guess I have to call on that guy -- I don't know what his name is but maybe you'd like to ask a question? Walter Isaacson.

MR. ISAACSON: Thank you. I was fascinated when you talked about a potential change in regime in North Korea as being part of the options that would be in our strategic interests. To what extent do you think the Chinese share or don't share that as an interest, and to what extent might you be able to work with them to get them to share it more?

MR. POMPEO: Unsurprisingly Walter a very good question. So they're worried about it, I mean it's not an unadulterated good for us either right, it's -- what's behind door number three. And so we need to be ever mindful of that. I wasn't suggesting that was something we were working today to make happen tomorrow but rather to find a way to separate this fellow, who day in and day out, talks about the destruction of the West through the use of a nuclear armed missile. And to the extent we can convince not only the Chinese but the Russians, the Japanese, the South Koreans that there is an outcome there that benefits each of them I think we increase the likelihood that we get that outcome.

It's -- in some sense that's not really an intelligence tasking but certainly understanding how those

other countries think about that risk falls to the intelligence community.

MR. STEPHENS: I think I see a question, is that Gordon back there? Do you want to just step forward so the cameras can see you Gordon Chang.

MR. CHANG: On July 4th, North Korea launched an ICBM, it was carried to the launch site on a transporter erector launcher that was sold to the North Koreans by China. Also North Korea has launched three solid fuel missiles starting in August 24th of last year. Those three missiles, a number of experts have said, resemble China's JL-1 submarine launched missile. And the question is, what can you talk to us about in terms of China's support for North Korea's ballistic missile program?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah, I can't really say much other than we -- China today, represents about 80 percent of the trade, hard currency trade with South Korea. And inevitably across a border like that will go things you wish that did not go across that border. And so I'm very hopeful that we can convince China that that's not in their best interest. And that in the meantime the intelligence community can continue to understand how that threat is posed and how we can interrupt its capacity to continue to build out its nuclear missile fleet.

MR. STEPHENS: There's a lady in the -- I think pink jacket, what's your name?

MS. WRIGHT: Robin Wright.

MR. STEPHENS: Robin. Sorry, Robin.

MR. POMPEO: It's not Bret's fault, you just really can't see that far, that's true.

MS. WRIGHT: Not to worry. I want to get back to Iran. You talked about regime change when you were in Congress, do you think that is a either realistic or viable option today given the fact that most of our allies

recognize Iran, are now doing business with Iran that, you know, in the elections recently more than 70 percent of the population turned out. And if you do believe it's a realistic or viable option, is it on the table today?

MR. POMPEO: So I keep getting held for things I said before I was in this job that's the darnest thing.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: So here's how -- from an intelligence perspective, here's how I think about that. It is the case that our European partners, for example France just did a deal with China and the National Iranian oil company a \$5 billion dollars deal with an entity that remains sanctioned by the United States of America, fascinating.

So that's a diplomatic challenge. From an intelligence perspective, it is true that 70 percent of the people, in an interesting election, voted for this fellow, Rouhani. But the folks with all the power aren't being voted on. The folks who are causing the mischief, Qassem Suleimani and his gang weren't elected. Those are the folks that we're deadly focused on making sure don't continue to maintain capacity and power. Yes it does, it answers your question in full. Yes, ma'am. That's all I got.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: That's the President and secretary of state who'll sort all that out. We're trying to help him understand what their opportunities are.

MR. STEPHENS: In the back, just give us your name and sorry if you're important and I don't know you.

(Laughter)

MR. OCTAVIS: Well, the name is Sam Octavis (phonetic), CTO of German TV (phonetic). Thank you very much Director Pompeo, to share your thoughts with us.

MR. POMPEO: Thank you.

MR. OCTAVIS: I was wondering what kind of interference, Russian interference, do you see in the German election process and does that include financial support, for example, to right wing populist movements within Germany and maybe also left wing populist movements?

MR. POMPEO: So I've seen the reporting on that too, I can't comment on the work that we have done, but I can tell you that we are working closely with our German partners to try to help them understand the threat to their elections and to their country.

MR. STEPHENS: I hope that's Andrea Mitchell (phonetic), I'm really blind, the lights are blinding.

MS. MITCHELL: Thank you. There's been a lot of criticism in the statements with the recertification of Iran about Iran's support for terror and its support for actions against the Assad regime and none about Russia's support for the Assad regime. And I'm wondering why isn't the administration more critical of what Russia is doing in Syria?

MR. POMPEO: I mean, you have to ask.

(Applause)

MR. POMPEO: I think I spoke earlier to the actions the intelligence what we know about Russian involvement there. Bret will remember this well, I expect. Back in August of 2013 I, along with Tom Cotton again, wrote an editorial that said that the previous President should have acted in Syria. And the previous President instead chose to invite the Russians in. And that was a major turning point that's not a political

statement it's a factual observation, it was a major turning point in the capacity of America to influence events in Syria.

And so today we find ourselves in the position where we're working to develop partners and those who are willing to work alongside us to get an outcome that's in the best interests of America.

MR. STEPHENS: Sorry.

MS. MITCHELL: True though that the Russians went into the air with no warning long 24 hours after the President had met with Vladimir Putin at the UN in September of 2015 and that gave them dominance in Syria.

MR. POMPEO: I don't -- it could be, I don't recall. That sounds right if you've got it -- it doesn't sound -- it is just with my recollection.

MR. STEPHENS: Can you just clarify, Barack Obama invited the Russians into Syria?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah, he had them come solve the chemical weapon problem.

MR. STEPHENS: That's what your referred.

MR. POMPEO: Yeah.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay. All right. Yes, is that Kim, I think.

MS. DOSHER: Kim Doshier (phonetic). Military commanders have described the fight against ISIS as a generational fight. But it sounds like you're describing it as a little bit faster to wrap up, do you think we can see them diminished in the next five years and do you really think that al Qaeda has -- you know their back has been broken and they're no longer a threat?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah Kim, I hope I didn't imply the latter nor that this was going to be simple and over in a couple of years, I didn't intend that at all. It is the case they are diminished, right. In the Middle East today ISIS is about 50 percent of the end strength that they were at just a short time ago. And their capacity to recruit today is less than it was at the peak. So there - - that -- that's a true statement. But the threat from terrorism, from radical Islamic terrorism is something we're going to be at for an awfully long time.

I tell my team at the agency all the time we need to be prepared to execute on this mission for an awfully long time, we need to be sustainable, we need to put our people in the right places so that they can continue to execute that in a way as it evolves and we need to be out in front of them anticipating what it will look like whether that's a year or 5 or 10 years from now.

And we actually spend a lot of time with our Special Forces partners working on how to do that effectively. Generational, yeah, perhaps, long time, we are going to at it for a while.

MR. STEPHENS: There's a silver-haired gentleman right here.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Richard Ben-Veniste a former member of the 9/11 Commission. Thank you for your comments here tonight. Am particularly gratified to hear your comments endorsing the findings of the IC in connection with the Russian meddling in our 2016 election.

My question is, how do you explain to your team at CIA the fact that the President of the United States, their Commander-in-Chief has refuted those findings, has cast them as fake news, and the pursuit of further information about that intrusion into our electoral process as a witch hunt?

(Applause)

MR. POMPEO: I'll speak from personal experience. It's all I can do. My team is fully engaged, my team understands the threat, my team understands that our task is to provide information not only to the Commander-in-Chief but to the secretary of defense, the secretary of state and policymakers across a broad spectrum. You should know, it is not unheard of for those policymakers to question the work that we do. You should equally know it is not unheard of that I question the work that my team does.

It's this -- there is this imbalance in the intelligence world, you don't always convince policymakers of the way you see things. Some of these are very close calls that one makes, right. And some of them are graded that is they're nuanced, it is not always the case that our answers are binary. And I think if you watch this administration's actions, I think if you watch this administration's actions with respect to Russia, it is no comparison in respect to how this administration has dealt with Russia and the previous one.

(Applause)

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Do you regard the IC report as a close call or as in the words of the report itself with high confidence.

MR. POMPEO: Yes, there were elements of that that were with high confidence from each of the various intelligence agencies and some that were not unanimous in that.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: They are not elected
(phonetic) in the report --

MR. POMPEO: Just look, this is the nineteenth time you all have asked. I'm happy to answer the twentieth time, it's quite easy. I am confident that the Russians meddled in this election as is the entire intelligence community, yes.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Yeah, okay.

MR. STEPHENS: There are two arms raised and whoever's arm is raised highest can stand up.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: And there are some people here that I want to get to as well.

MR. DUNLAP: Director, thank you very much. Charlie Dunlap from Duke Law School. You probably are aware of the atmosphere on a lot of campuses, what would you say to young people going into government, how would you -- I was in the military for 35 years, so you see all kinds of administrations. What is the best message to try to get the best and brightest to go into government at this point in time.

MR. POMPEO: I will speak for the CIA. We're doing it. We are getting the best and brightest come in, and we have unbelievable people. I get a chance to see the pool candidate about once a month, the folks who are applying to come apply their craft whether it's a spy in the streets of Moscow or they want to be a physicist helping us figure out the trajectory of a North Korean missile system, we are getting some of the most talented people in America to come join us. And in spite of the fact that we pay them a fraction of what I know some of these young people can make. They do it because they have a deep belief in our Constitution and in our country, this agency made the transition from the previous administration away, was deeply apolitical. What did they do on the 21st of January, they went back to work.

They went back to work delivering for our most senior policymakers the information they need to make good decisions. And so when you get out of law school come apply, we would love to have you join the team.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: Is that is that you Bart? Bart Gellman of *The Washington Post*.

MR. GELLMAN: Hi, I was very interested in your first answer on Russia, forgive me for asking again, it was nine words. Bret asked you whether Russia intervened and you said yes, and the one before, and the one before. Are you are you making an argument that there was a comparable effort, with comparable impact in 2008, 2012 in terms of -- obviously there were no e-mail databases that were docs (phonetic) and lots of other differences. What commonalities do you see in those three elections?

MR. POMPEO: Yeah, I shouldn't -- I hope I didn't stop at 2008. You can go back to the '70s, my point was simply this, this threat is real, the United States government including the Central Intelligence Agency has to figure out a way to fight back against it, and defeat it, and we're intent upon doing that. Technology moves, right. Yeah, I mean it is the case as technology moves and the cost barrier decreases to have an impact, you absolutely have a threat that is different in kind. That is why you see non nation state actors doing this kind of thing they couldn't do it before. Right, if you were sitting in Kazakhstan 40 years ago, your ability to reach into the United States and have an impact was near zero. Today, it's possible. So yeah, the threat has certainly shifted and I expect by the time we hit the elections in 2018, in 2020 will likely shift it again. Our duty is to make sure we're prepared for that shift as well.

MR. STEPHENS: From the far right to the far left. Physically.

MS. NEUMANN: Thank you very much. Vanessa Neumann, Asymmetrica. I am a dual America and Venezuelan citizen. So here goes my question, because we're not covering anything about Western Hemisphere in this forum. Obviously Maduro in Venezuela regime change looks to be, we hope imminent or spiraling down until we either become Cuba in two weeks time or -- and die forever or there's a

change in 60 to 90 days. I'm interested in your open assessment on American interests in or threats from Venezuela and which of course has Russian, Iranian et cetera interests and -- for the region. Thank you, sir.

MR. POMPEO: So I appreciate the question. At any time you have a country as large and with the economic capacity of a country like Venezuela, America has a deep interest in making sure that it is stable, as democratic as possible. And so, we're working hard to do that, I am always careful when we talk about South and Central America and the CIA, there's a lot of stories.

(Laughter)

MR. POMPEO: So I want to be careful with what I say but suffice to say, we are very hopeful that there can be a transition in Venezuela and we the CIA is doing its best to understand the dynamic there, so that we can communicate to our State Department and to others. The Colombians, I was just down in Mexico City and in Bogota a week before last talking about this very issue trying to help them understand the things they might do so that they can get a better outcome for their part of the world and our part of the world.

MR. STEPHENS: Okay, I think we have time for maybe one more question and there's a -- why don't we make it a two part, if the two of you quickly ask questions then the director will offer you succinct answers.

MS. FELTON-PILGER: Thank you, my name is Maggie Felton-Pilger (phonetic), I am one of the scholars for the program and thank you again for being here tonight.

MR. POMPEO: Yes ma'am, thank you.

MS. FELTON-PILGER: The gentleman about two questions ago asked about including the best and brightest at the agency and in the IC generally. There are a number of former directors here tonight who have made a real commitment to diversity inclusion and I'm speaking

specifically about women in national security and I'm wondering what you see your role in -- at the agency and in the IC generally in including more women in national security.

MR. STEPHENS: And just in the interest of time if you can just ask yours briefly. Shout.

SPEAKER: -- that they believe, Hezbollah was the A team of international terrorism, al Qaeda the B team. So I'm going to ask you to update that, what is the CIA's view? Is Hezbollah still the A team of international terror al Qaeda and ISIS the B team? And does Hezbollah, do you believe, represent a threat to the American homeland.

MR. POMPEO: So I'll answer the last question, yes, Hezbollah absolutely presents a threat to the American homeland, whether they're the A or the B team they are a serious threat, they have the enormous benefit today of having a state sponsor, which gives them a ton of freedom and a whole lot of money. And so Hezbollah is certainly a very serious threat, not only to Israel but to the United States of America. And you know al Qaeda, to Kim's question earlier, we broke their back but it's, as my basketball coach once said, it's never over, I have every intention to see them once again try to regain power on the battlefield in lots of places around the world.

As for women at the CIA bring them on. I ran a small business for 15 years in Wichita, Kansas. I ran a CNC lathe mills, It was a blue collar factory, and I wanted the best person standing in front of that CNC lathe at that CNC mill doing the programming, I didn't really care much what gender they were if they could figure out how to help our company be successful and I feel the same way here at the Central Intelligence Agency. My deputy, who I brought on board, Gina, is a fantastic amazing human being and an awesome spy and I am -- and I am thrilled.

We do have a special task because of the global nature of what we do, we need people who speak Farsi and

Swahili and we need people from Appalachia, people who have -- bring different cultural perspectives, we need every bit of that at our agency and I hope we can find the most talented among all of you so that we can achieve our mission.

MR. STEPHENS: Thank you very much. And Director I would like to thank you for being as candid as possible.

MR. POMPEO: Thank you. Thank you, Bret.

(Applause)

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