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TRANSCRIPT

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The End of Sanctuary: The Evolution of Homeland Defense

DATE

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FEATURING

Representative Jeff Crank (R-CO)
Member, House Armed Services Committee

Representative George Whitesides (D-CA)
Vice Ranking Member, Science, Space, and Technology Committee;
Member, House Armed Services Committee

Chief Cathy Lanier
Senior Vice President and Chief Security Officer,
National Football League

Lieutenant General Daniel L. Karbler, USA, (Ret.),
Former Commander,
U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command

CSIS EXPERTS

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Tom Karako: Well, good morning. Thanks, everybody, for coming out. I'm Tom Karako. I direct the Missile Defense Project here at CSIS. I'm a senior fellow in the Defense and Security Department. Welcome to the first panel of the GSF, Global Security Forum, this year.

As we approach our 250th anniversary there's few topics more important, of course, than the homeland. And every administration has a different way of formulating it, but the defense of the homeland is, and long has been, the top priority of our national security and defense strategies. Of course, as folks have said in many different ways as well, we have been able to think about the United States as a sanctuary. We have the benefit of our geography. It's a good geographic situation, all things considered. But we no longer have that that sanctuary, whether it be from aerial threats, from space, from cyber, or in just about any other – any other domain.

So we've got a great panel to kick us off this morning to talk about some fundamental questions. In the threat environment that we have today, how must homeland defense evolve? How do we strengthen national resilience? And what does that really mean exactly? How should strategic capabilities in the defense industrial base adapt to contend with the threats to the homeland?

So to kick things off, we've got – going down this direction – Congressman George Whitesides, from the 27th District of California. Congressman Jeff Crank, from the 5th District of Colorado. Cathy Lanier, senior vice president and chief security officer for the National Football League. We'll talk Dallas Cowboys in just a bit here. (Laughter.) And my friend Lieutenant General Dan Karbler, U.S. Army retired, former Space and Missile Defense Command CG, but more importantly an important senior advisor here with the CSIS Missile Defense Project, and the only person on stage with an IMDB page for his movie debuts. Which I'm sure we'll talk about here in just a bit. (Laughter.) So we're going to take audience questions. Please put those online. They'll come to me via this iPad. I've got plenty of questions for this panel, but if you all put yours in, it'll be – they'll probably appreciate it if you do.

So I think what we'll start off with is – well, let's start off with the threat. Always want to begin with the threat. And I might ask the members to kick us off and go down the row of how you think about and how you've seen the threat to the homeland changing over time. How we've seen things from Ukraine, from wars in the Middle East. And then we'll kind of go conversation after that. So, Representative Whitesides, you want to kick us off?

Representative George Whitesides (D-CA): Sure. Well, good morning, everyone. Nice to see you all. Thanks. And good to be at CSIS. I'm so grateful, partly because I recently recruited a member of the CSIS team, who's terrific, Hannah.

We live in an extraordinarily dangerous time, I think. And the proliferation of threats from new technologies is something that we're all grappling with. I think Jeff and I are the Armed Services Committee, and we're thinking a lot about how these things interplay between the international sphere and the homeland. You know, we think a lot about drones now. We think a lot about spider's web-type attacks for, you know, our stadiums or our other things. But we also think, at a local level, about our religious institutions and other places that have new types of threats.

I think a lot as well about the cyber and the cognitive domain, you know, the information war that we are sort of immersed in every day. And part of that is intentional actions from foreign actors or others, and some of it is just the corrosive impact of the technologies that are impacting our brains. Finally, I think I just couldn't – I represent a district that has a ton of wildfire challenges. And I think that the natural aspects of threats to the homeland, in a world where we have potentially over $100 billion a year in damage to California alone from wildfires, we need to be thinking about those types of threats as well because they are threats with very high probability and very high cost. And I think sometimes the investment-to-risk ratio is not properly set at a federal level.

Mr. Karako: Great. Representative Crank.

Representative Jeff Crank (R-CO): Well, yeah, thank you, again, for having us. Appreciate all that you do. And it's great to be part of this great panel. The threat has completely changed. I mean, if you think back to what it used to be, the threat to America was a military force fighting another military force. You mentioned wildfires. I mean, we now face the threat of that being an act of terror or an active threat to the United States.

And whether it – whether it is what used to be the traditional threat, or today, you know, drones, any kind of threat that's out there – you know, in my district, we run the GPS satellite system. It is all controlled out of out of Schriever, in my district. What would happen if that – there was an attack that shut that system down for a week? What would the effect be on the United States, on the world, on the world economy? So there's so many different asymmetrical threats today that didn't exist back then. And so to me, those are the challenges that America faces.

And it's always the softer targets, I think, that we have to worry about. We plan for things, and in many cases – we'll talk about that today – we're planning for – we always plan for big events. We always plan to protect those sorts of things, whether it's Super Bowl or other things. But that's generally not where attacks sometimes take place. They hit softer targets because we haven't prepared for those. So it's a gigantic threat that we have to address.

Mr. Karako: Cathy, can you tell us a little bit about how, from where you sit, the threat's changed?

Chief Cathy Lanier: Yeah. It's interesting, I spent 27 years as a police officer here in Washington. And on 9/11, I was a district commander here, running a large patrol district. And right after 9/11, I was tasked with creating the homeland security and counterterrorism capability for this city. And what I spent the next six years doing was building that capability. Those threats all still exist. Very different now. It has evolved. And now, 10 years with the NFL, watching how this evolution of the threat has really, really changed so dynamically, that distance is no longer protection, right? Our distance from our adversaries is no longer a sense of safety for us. And, as to the point of the other panel members, you know, the targets have changed quite significantly.

If you think about our homeland defense, 20 years ago we were thinking about protecting our government assets and protecting our homeland in a different way than today. Today it is protecting our transportation systems, protecting our houses of worship, our schools, our large gatherings. If you think about just one mass gathering attack, Super Bowl, we have 70(,000)-80,000 people, but we have a global stage – you know, a worldwide stage. The impact of a drone attack on a Super Bowl. Draft – every year in the draft, we're 750,000 people in one place. You know, in Green Bay, in Detroit, small towns. You know, the capabilities for us to have the level of defense that we need to have in those places.

So the threat has not only changed pretty dramatically with the threat from both cyber infrastructure and drones, but the capabilities. We're just not keeping pace, in my opinion, with – one, keeping pace with the technology. And then, keeping pace, two, with the policy.

Mr. Karako: General Karbler.

Lieutenant General Daniel L. Karbler (Ret.): Sure. To piggyback a little bit on what Cathy said, you know, geography no longer provides a sanctuary and, frankly, warning times have collapsed to almost zero. Trying to ascertain what the adversary's intent, we used to be able to think that we could – we could figure that out. But whether those threats emanate from outside our borders, back in the old days when we could watch maybe massive build ups take place and we could kind of prepare for that, but now those threats outside our borders can attack within minutes.

But also, the threats that emanate just within our borders, whether they're Operation Spiderweb-type drones, some deranged individual that wants to unleash some drones on a football stadium, or – I was just driving by the Mall today. And as I'm watching the fencing going up around the Mall, and I thought, if I'm an adversary, there's a kill zone right there in the Mall. And if I

want to fly a drone over that and aerial spray acid or something over top of that, just think about – just think about what kind of effect that's going to have.

I think that we will have a drone equivalent attack to 9/11. Now it might not be the scale in terms of bringing down buildings, but it will have this scale in terms of frightening the American public and altering our behavior. So the threats, way beyond just our traditional ICBMs coming in, but a lot of different – a lot of things that we have to take into account. And then what that threat is going to target, no longer is just going to be a city or critical infrastructure. It's going to be whatever the soft targets are that the adversary wants to take out.

Mr. Karako: Let me stay with you a second, General Karbler. How have you seen – you mentioned the drone threat in particular. And I think you're right, we will be attacked in the United States. Just a question of whether it happens before or after we get more capability in place, for instance. How rapidly have you seen that evolve over the course of your career? Of course, the drone threat to sporting events has changed dramatically over the past five years or so. But how have you seen recent events, in Ukraine and the Middle East, what does that tell you about how we ought to be thinking about things here at home?

Lt. Gen. Karbler: Yeah. So, as an air defender, we actually have always kind of seen the drone threat out there, but it just was never at the scale that it was before. I remember briefing that we needed to keep some Army short-range air defense capabilities on the books. And I was told, you air defenders want a Stinger gunner on every street corner. That was about 20 years ago. Yeah, we kind of probably did want a Stinger gunner on every street corner because of the volume of threats that we were going to face.

But now, as we see just the volume of drone use that's going on, whether it's – you know, especially in Ukraine. I was remarking about a photo that I saw of the fiber optic-controlled drones. And you see fiber optic strands across the battlefield within Ukraine. Looks like Spider Webs, you know, all the way across there, So there's no shortage of what the threat can throw at us right now. We have got to have the capacity to counter all those threats, whether it's high-powered microwave, whether it's kinetic capabilities, jamming. There's going to be no silver bullet to take those drone threats out. We've got to have just a whole host of capabilities.

The department did very well in standing up JTF 401 – or, JIATF-401, which is took over for the Joint Counter Small UAS Office, which is getting serious about being able to provide the best capability for our best counter-UAS, counter-drone capability.

Mr. Karako: Well, with this kind of point defense kind of a problem, you do – ask the Ukrainians – they want a drone defense on every corner. Talk to General Dunford. I've offered for years to put a Patriot battery or a counter drone on the roof of CSIS. Nobody's taking me up on it just yet, but I think I think it's a good idea. (Laughter.)

We talked about the homeland. But when we say the defense of the homeland, we heard places of worship, sporting events, but what is the scope and the scale of homeland defense? I mean, we're talking about everything from here to Guam, right? And so how do you think about the homeland? And where does it begin? It begins with our intel, seeing threats evolve overseas, multi-domain awareness, over-the-horizon capability. How do you all – from the armed services community, for instance – how do you think about what it is and where the homeland starts?

Rep. Crank: What are you looking at me for? (Laughter.) Well, yeah, I think that's a question that we have to answer, you know, where does it start? We have a unique situation in that we have a little bit of a different form of government too. We've talked – and we'll get into, I'm sure, talking about authorities and working with local communities and things like that. We have a different system of government than many countries around the world. We have to find a way to make that our strength. A lot of times we can use that to our advantage. I think they're being successful in Ukraine at countering some of the threats because they're pushing authorities down to units. They're making decisions there. We live in a country that does that. So we have to make sure that we're pushing some of those authorities down to local communities to be the eyes and ears, the sensors. We have sensors, you know, in local governments, local sheriffs, and police departments, and things like that.

But we have to confront this whole authority issue as well. And I know that is not really the answer of the question, is what is the homeland? I think the homeland is any territory that the United States considers critical to us. And I think that does include our territories.

Mr. Karako: Congress did pass, what was it, Safer Skies Act, to push some of those authorities down to state and local, for instance.

Rep. Crank: Yeah. And my point on that is we need to use to our advantage – I always think of the Pentagon when it comes to, like, acquisition authority. We're terrible when we – when we hold on to that, and we turn the Pentagon into the Soviet-style, you know, acquisition process. But we're really good when we push those authorities down and tell people to be inventive. And I think we need to do that here with authorities as well.

Rep. Whitesides: The only other thing I'd add is, is I think – you know, I think your, Jeff's, take on the homeland is a good one – Congressman Crank. The thing that I view our job as is to think holistically about probabilities and investment levels. There are almost an infinite amount of threats against the homeland. And they are proliferating in many different ways. And organizations tend to do the thing that they were set up to do. I like to joke that NASA keeps trying to go back to the moon, because NASA was built to go to the moon. And so it keeps going – trying to go back to the moon. Sorry if there are any NASA people here. (Laughter.) But it's reverted to form. Like, it's still trying to go back to the moon.

And so, you know, different parts of our homeland defense organization will keep trying to do the thing that they know best, while we have these new threats – whether it's, you know, I don't know, cyber or bio or cognitive decline or wildfires or whatever. And we in Congress, I think, have a responsibility –and the White House – to look at the overall threat picture and to see, are we making appropriate investments. And I think often we are not. And that is something that this community can help us with, I think. And one that Congress needs to step up to do, because, frankly, no one else is going to do it. Otherwise, these orgs are just going to keep doing what they – what they do.

Chief Lanier: Can I just add a little bit to the homeland defense? In my view, I think we need to stop looking at homeland defense as borders specifically. Anything that, if attacked, would change the American way of life, that is homeland defense. If someone takes down – intentionally takes down an airplane, someone intentionally attacks a college football stadium during a game and targets 70,000 Americans, right? This is homeland defense. It is no longer just borders that we have to think about. And pushing that defense model down. And we talked about this after 9/11, so this is not a new concept. Pushing those authorities down and engaging those communities to have that resilience. You look at what's happened in Ukraine and how resilient the people are there, what's happened in Israel and the Israeli people, how resilient they are there.

Pushing these authorities down, especially on the counter-UAS, which is now finally starting to happen, to have state and local authorities that can counter and mitigate these drone threats. We're far, far from where we need to be. But also having that resilience, because we can do everything right, and bad things are still going to happen. And we better be prepared for it, and be prepared to be resilient. And I think that's where that homeland defense really comes in, and that model of pushing things down to the local communities and state and local law enforcement.

Mr. Karako: Do we do we think that that has been done sufficiently with these recent initiatives? The first roundtable I ever attended at CSIS in 2014 – 2015, I

think it was, was on authorities to engage drones between DOD and FAA. I dare say, we're probably not there yet.

Chief Lanier: I've been on counter-drone working groups since 2014. Major League Baseball had a major drone incident back in 2014. You had a gyrocopter on the Mall. You know, these issues have been around since 2014. And we are just now getting the first authorities pushed out. They were pushed out initially through executive order, and now through legislation. There's been a handful of state and local law enforcement that have been trained to protect the FIFA World Cup sites, 11 sites around the U.S. But this is going to take a lot of time. This is again, it comes back to, are we keeping pace with the threats? The policy is lagging behind, and our keeping pace with the counter technology is lagging behind. We've got to get our act together here. We've got to be – you know, the chairman talked about this last night. We've got to get our act together and keep the policy moving so it keeps pace of that threat.

Mr. Karako: Yeah.

LT. Gen Karbler: We have to get left of consequence. Too often, the consequence happens, and then we go ahead and adjust our policy, or then we get serious about it. We've got to figure out how to get left of consequence with the authorities, with the policies, so we can put them in place and then practice them and find out – suss out where some of the problems might be within those authorities or within those policies. So let's focus on getting to the left of consequence and figuring that out, practice it, and put it – and then put it into practice.

Rep. Crank: And I would just say, aren't we – aren't we today where we were probably pre-9/11 with regard to this threat? I mean, we are probably very stove piped. You talked about, you know, the authorities and who has that. We're probably very stove piped in these things. And it oftentimes, sadly and tragically, it takes an attack for us to adjust. That happens in Ukraine right now. It takes an attack for them to say, OK, now we have to counter it this way, a lot of times. And I think that's just the nature of the threat.

Mr. Karako: You know, I think it was the 2019 movie "Angel Has Fallen," or something like that. The opening scene. I went to talk to the guy in charge of counter-drone efforts in the Pentagon. I said, what's the movie that depicts the drone threat most? He says, the opening scene of "Angel Has Fallen," where it's an attack on the president with – it was Spider Webs in film six years before Spider Web. But I take your point, Dan. I think it is going to happen, and we have to get there.

So we've actually got a question come in from – I do want to come back to the borders thing, since you mentioned it, Cathy. But we got a question coming

from Missy Ryan, with The Atlantic. Who says – this is a nice segue here – can you talk to us about the feasibility of the Trump administration's Golden Dome plan from a technical and industrial perspective? I might lead off with the members of Congress here first. How you're seeing, given the enormity of the aerial threats, the full spectrum of aerial threats, how is the Golden Dome initiative broadly being perceived on Capitol Hill? And then we can talk about kind of the feasibility issues as well.

Rep. Crank: I have a little bit of a unique perspective, I think, on it. I was a Hill staff member back in the nineties when the ballistic missile threat and countering that was coming of age. And at the time, we had people who said, that's crazy. This is a terrible idea. We're going to waste billions of dollars because there's no way you can shoot down a missile with another missile. Well, lo and behold, we do that. Thankfully, we did continue to invest in that technology. It's expensive. It's going to cost a lot of money to build systems that will do that. Every time we ask in a hearing the experts – and I consider the experts to be, you know, the commanders of Space Command and some of our military folks and people in industry – can this technically be done? The answer is always yes. We have to stretch. Maybe we don't have the capability today. But we can get there.

So these are things that I think is very important to invest in. We can't solely focus on the threat of drones, because – or, whatever the new threat is. We have to focus on that new threat, and we have to still remember that the world has changed quite a bit. Missiles have proliferated. The threat is much larger today than it was in the 1990s of missile attack on the United States or its assets around the world. In theater, we saw it in the Middle East. That's a threat. But what is the consequence? We talked about consequence. What's the consequence of one missile getting through and hitting the city of Los Angeles, or one of our major cities? The consequences are tremendous. It's bigger than 9/11 if that happens. So we have to counter that threat.

And the only way we do it is for America to dream big and do big things. And I think that's what Golden Dome is. I'm one of the co-chairs of the Golden Dome Caucus. I hope that we can, like we did in the nineties, eventually. In the nineties it was, oh, that's Star Wars. That's Ronald Reagan's crazy idea of Star Wars. We got past that and realized it's a real threat. We shouldn't politicize that threat. We should focus on it. And we did that. And we developed ballistic missile defense capabilities. We're at that same point now, where we have to get beyond the politics of it. I get it that some people don't like the fact that this president proposed Golden Dome. But let's get over that. Let's really look at the threat and see if it's something that we need to counter. And I think that we do.

Mr. Karako: Mr. Whitesides.

Rep. Whitesides: So Jeff and I are both of a certain age, where we both lived through a lot of this. You know, and I was chief of staff at NASA, and a lot – you know, I worked for Mike Griffin, for anybody who knows Mike Griffin. He was a senior person within the Star Wars, and other things. So my two comments on Golden Dome are the following. Number one, I'm not sure we know exactly what Golden Dome is yet. You know, like – each briefing I get, it's sort of – I think it's still evolving. Clearly, it's a real threat. And space-based intercept is hard, though. And it can clearly be done. I think the question is, what is the cost of it versus the risk?

And this is where I get into the same point, is, like, I think – my concern is, honestly, that we don't spend enough on drones versus ICBMs. That's, like, basically my main – my main point about Golden Dome, because I do think – at a personal level, I think the risk of a Spider Web, or a cruise missile, or something like that, is much greater than, you know, an errant one to – you know, some small number of ICBMs. That's my personal risk – my personal point.

But I do think that this gets into the point of, you know, the estimates of Golden Dome, are, who knows? You know, hundreds of billions to trillions of dollars. And that's where we have to be smart about spending, you know, the American taxpayer dollar, at a time when we're, you know, structurally – we're in a structural deficit of 20 to 30 percent of the federal, you know, outlays. You know, are we spending the money on the most important thing?

In a world where we are, you know, 100 percent guaranteed to have $80 to $150 billion of wildfire damage every single year, are we making the right investments? Is it smart to spend, you know, whatever, $200 billion a year on Golden Dome? Maybe it is. I don't know. But I think we need to be smart about trading these things off against each other and making smart technology decisions within those portfolios.

Mr. Karako: I'm going to staple together some CSIS Missile Defense Project reports. I think we can do it for a lot less than the big numbers that are being thrown around. But –

Rep. Whitesides: That's what they said the last time.

Mr. Karako: (Laughs.) Dan, Representative Whitesides just mentioned the wildfires thing. I wonder if you could speak to the whole-of-government possibilities and potential for leveraging perhaps non-DOD assets, maybe it's FAA assets. We've heard General Guetlein talk about this. There's a lot of sensors in the homeland that are already existent. NORAD. NORTHCOM has talked about this for a very long time, that part of the challenge is to put these things together, maybe to share information back and forth between wildfire

sensing and aerial surveillance, for instance. So thoughts on that to make this a tractable problem, for instance?

Lt. Gen. Karbler: Yeah, I know one of General Guetlein's big asks is access to data, access to all data. Part of that would be access to sensors – FAA radars, whatever sensors are available out there, to be able to stitch those together into a very, very comprehensive common operating picture that the operators at whatever level within the Golden Dome architecture can effect some sort of execution decision, or a decision maker can affect – can make the most informed decision.

But also a part of that is – before we start getting into all the just execution details – is being able to bring together just the planners for all those different capabilities across government, so they could plan on tasking sensors or plan on locating some of the different platforms that we need to have to provide the Golden Dome mission. That all has – we always just kind of jump right to the execution piece, without, again, let's back up a little bit first and figure out between federal, state, and local governments, how we going to – how we get the planners together to coordinate this?

You know, I would also offer that Golden Dome should not be viewed as the perfect shield over all of the nation. Instead, what we have to do is focus on what are those prioritized defended assets? What's going to take priority? We can't try to defend everything equally. We're going to have to make some hard decisions about what that prioritized defended asset list will look like, and then apply those Golden Dome resources to protect those assets.

Mr. Karako: Let me use that as a way to put it back to you, Cathy. The question from Missy was about Golden Dome, but General Karbler just highlighted there some of the other entities – federal, state, and local. I wonder if you might speak a little bit to that. Golden Dome specifically, they're snapping the chalk line on what are called Group Three UASes. And I'm guessing that from where you sit, you're primarily one and two, for instance. But how would you comment on the relationships with state and local, the entities that you deal with, and perhaps, hopefully, the prospect for that being energized with the Golden Domain initiative, broadly?

Chief Lanier: So I think the relationship aspect of it is really critical. From the private sector perspective, during all of our larger events, 272 regular season games a year, we have a temporary flight restriction that's in place. So when you talk about the drone threat, any time there's a drone encouraging during that time period they are violating federal law. So looking for that ability to have the authorities pushed down to state and locals there. Obviously critical for us that we have that authority outside of just one or two times a year, like during Super Bowl. But those relationships are critical.

So we work with not only state and local law enforcement at every regular season game, all 272 games, but also we have the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force who participate in all of our games. We have some CST members that work with us at our games that bring different technologies to help us counter some of those threats around those. So those relationships at that state and local level are critical.

When we go to the Super Bowl, it's a SEAR 1 event, so it's a top threat level event, just below NSSE. We bring 45 or more federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to bear on those large NSSEs or SEAR 1 events. But those relationships are critical year-round, and having those relationships and now building that capacity – which is what we're hoping this recent legislation will do – it's going to take time to build that capacity across 18,000 police departments, 18,000 agencies across the country.

I travel internationally for our international games. And I go places like Sao Paulo, Brazil, and they have state and local law enforcement that are using drone mitigation at stadiums on game day, and we don't have that authority here. So those are the things that are frustrating for us. But those relationships are critical. And I think you have to start at the bottom and start focusing more on those relationships with the private sector.

Most of your private-sector critical infrastructure in the United States today is the security teams are headed up by former FBI, former Department of State, former police chiefs like myself. We all have top-secret/SCI-level clearances. We have our own intelligence capacity. We are a first line of defense for the government to help combat this defense issue. And I don't think we're being taken advantage of like we should.

Mr. Karako: But in some ways it's about being able to have the authority. You can have all the great intel, but if you don't have the rules of engagement – and so let me go back to you, which is: Who owns these public-private partnerships? Who is going to be in charge? And do you see something emerging there so that that is not just theoretical but actionable?

Chief Lanier: So who owns the intelligence is a good question, because that is – that is a multilayered kind of system. You no longer have these tripwires, these warning signs. You know, the threats have changed so significantly there's no longer – as Dan pointed out earlier, there's no longer this long lead time to pick up these intelligence cues that you used to.

But in terms of the defense, who owns that, right now with the new legislation on the counter-drone side that is owned by the FBI. The FBI has got the responsibility to train those 18,000 state and local law enforcement agencies to have that counter-drone mitigation authority. So it's – in terms of the defense part of it, it is the FBI.

In terms of the intelligence, that is a much bigger question. I think a lot of that lies in the private sector.

Mr. Karako: Got you.

Any thoughts on sort of the seams – the gaps and seams between entities, whether it be – we heard about the El Paso, you know, FAA incident, for instance. From an Armed Services perspective or from kind of an SMD perspective, any thoughts on addressing those gaps and seams between these different entities?

Lt. Gen. Karbler: Well, I'll just share a real-world experience. So when I was the SMDC commander we wanted authority to bring down drones that were ingressing into Fort Greely, Alaska. Many times it's drone aficionados, but you just never know. There's enough of a threat up in Alaska, believe it or not, to be concerning.

One entity that pushed back against us, believe it or not, was not the FAA or the FCC; it was the DOJ. Now, why is that? Because they said: General, if you take a drone, you have just taken somebody's private property. And you're not allowed to do that, even though they were incurring – the incursions were into our restricted airspace, into the Fort Greely missile sites. So, you know, to try to bring all these entities together, I think that there's got to be some legislation that drives that. And we've got to get all the members of the National Security Council onboard to all agree that drones are a threat, we need to push the authorities down.

And I would also offer that in an – in an instance where we're operating drones or drone defense the person in charge should be the entity that has the most capability. Whoever has the preponderance of capability in that area should just be in charge. That's what we follow in military doctrine. We've followed it for a long time. We should probably look at applying that –

Chief Lanier: Unified command, same thing.

Lt. Gen. Karbler: Yeah.

Rep. Crank: I would say we're – as you talk about that, we're stovepiped in Congress, too, right, and that's our problem. Who would have – what committees of jurisdiction would have to do this, right?

Mr. Karako: Ah. Yes.

Rep. Crank: Homeland Security, Transportation, Armed Services, we all have a piece of that. We're stovepiped ourselves trying to figure this out. And I mean, maybe

you've seen folks working towards a solution. I haven't seen that in Congress. Have you on that – on that particular issue?

Rep. Whitesides: As a freshman – and we're both freshmen – I mean, you know, I view that as one of the biggest structural problems of Congress, is this jurisdictional, you know, problem. I don't have a solution, other than blowing up everything, you know. (Laughter.)

Mr. Karako: Well, you know, FAA, for instance – FAA is not under Armed Services Committee.

Rep. Crank: Right.

Mr. Karako: The Golden Dome executive order was not directed to the FAA. The FAA is in the process of replacing their ARSR-4 radars around the perimeter of the country. Boy, it would be nice if those ARSR-4 replacements had some not just air traffic control but threat classification capabilities at a higher bandwidth.

Rep. Crank: And Congress is built to protect its territory. These committees are built to protect their jurisdiction and their territories. And so we truly are – I mean, it is a 9/11 sort of situation where we are stovepiped and we're not – and we've got to solve that.

Mr. Karako: OK. Good.

Well, let's move to the – and by the way, there have been a ton of questions coming in. I am reading all of them, but there is a ton of questions that have come in and I'm doing my best to weave in the themes.

But I do want to get to the industrial capacity question that we've talked about, the – you know, at least the desirability of a counter drone on every corner. That's not possible, to your point, General Karbler, but nevertheless it's going to take a lot more capacity. Whether it's from Capitol Hill or, you know, Space and Missile Defense Command is going to have an enormous role here, and there's going to be a lot of acquisition going on here. But how do you all see the industrial capacity question that's getting so much attention these days with the Munitions Acceleration Council, with the desire to rapidly ramp up building stuff for replenishment, what's going on in the Middle East? How are you all thinking about the industrial capacity problem these days?

Rep. Crank: Was that to anybody specifically?

Mr. Karako: The whole – anybody, you know –

Rep. Whitesides: I think, I mean, obviously, HASC has been focused pretty hard on this. I think – to its credit, I think it's done a fair amount over the last two authorization bills. You know, the NDAAs have focused really hard on this.

I'm quite encouraged about the – you know, the entrepreneurial power of American innovators. And I think that if we can harness that in the right direction, both in small companies but also in big companies, you know, then we'll be in good shape.

I'm a big fan of innovative procurement mechanisms – so advance purchase commitments, you know, other forms of procurement authority that allow people to move faster, get outside of the traditional four-year cycles so that people who are on the frontlines like you guys have been talking about can directly procure what they think they need. That has been a key aspect of success in Ukraine, is that the folks on the frontlines can actually procure what they think works best, and then that makes that cycle move faster.

We have a sclerotic system that is not serving our country. HASC is trying to, like, whack at it, but it's a very entrenched system and it's going to take some time to renovate it.

Mr. Karako: Something's really helpful for contracts being let is appropriations. That would be helpful.

Rep. Whitesides: (Laughs.)

Rep. Crank: Yeah. Hey, I would just follow up on what George said. I think we have done a good job. I think the committee has done a good job over the last two cycles of really looking at acquisition reform and how we can make changes and allow people to innovate.

We are – you know, the free market system is our greatest advantage. It was our advantage, honestly, during World War II. It's our advantage today if we are allowed to use it. Sometimes the Pentagon bureaucracy beats the free market system out of the way and takes over and has this command-and-control type system. We can't allow that to happen. And I think that's what we've been able to do in acquisition reform in some areas. I think in the areas of space and cyber particularly, I think we've – we're doing better at allowing companies to innovate and do good things that will be good for our country.

Chief Lanier: I'm laughing because I was in government and now I'm in the private sector, and the change – the shift from identifying threats and technologies, and being able to counter those threats and technologies, is so much swifter – (laughs) – once you get into the private sector. I know that the challenge of the policy issue, having the policy keep pace, going through, you know, legislative changes – now when I see these threats and I need new things, I

can change the policy through a couple committees in a matter of days. I can go out and procure what I need in a matter of days, not weeks/months/years. And it's just such a dramatic difference from coming out of government.

Lt. Gen. Karbler: Tom, I'm encouraged. There's examples of industry getting their prototypes out into the field, troops using it, not afraid to fail, bring it back and fix it. We have to – we as the department have to be very careful against blackballing these industries that are going fast. And if it didn't work the very first time because it went very fast, OK, well, fail fast and get it back out. But whether it's, you know, supporting a proof of principle or proof of concept, getting those capabilities out there and then tied into that is – you know, everybody incurs a little bit of risk. The government's going to incur some risks that we're putting this not quite fully tested capability out in the hands of soldiers. Industry's taking some risks that they don't want government to just say, well, it didn't work, and you know, go to the back of the line. And I think – I think there's opportunity for private-public partnerships in this instance.

And I'll go back to my test background, is, you know, we should be partnering up on testing. Gone should be the days where industry does their testing; many of the tests that they run are going to be the same ones that DOT&E, or the government, tests; and then we throw it over the government, now you do the same test. We have got to bring the test community together to speed up those acquisition timelines, get a capability out to the – out to the soldiers quicker.

Rep. Whitesides: And you know, I totally agree. And you know, I would just add, like, what is happening in Ukraine now is, like, truly historic and absolutely at the bleeding edge of, you know, all these trends. And so we have done – at the HASC level we've asked the department to try to lean as far forward as possible to learn those lessons both in terms of industrial capacity creation but also just in terms of, like, the structure of how they're acquiring, how they're innovating. I mean, like, that is the – really, when we're talking about drone acquisition, that is – that is the world standard now. And if we do not take full advantage of that, then shame on us.

Lt. Gen. Karbler: And, Tom, one other – and you've said it, agreements aren't contracts either. So industry is going to take the step out there, but there has got to be somebody stroking a check so industry can now start producing at scale.

Mr. Karako: Indeed. Indeed.

I'm going to shift a little bit. I could – I could talk drones all day, but an interesting question has come in here. Someone from Tufts University asks: How do we deal with the threat of biological warfare or bioterrorism,

particularly with the rise of AI, right? I guess that could be – a bio substance could be delivered by drone or some other way. But this is, you know, the potential to be really catastrophic. How are you all thinking of that? Again, our scope here is homeland defense broadly.

Chief Lanier: After 9/11, that was a big topic. I mean, we spent a lot of time – we knew we had anthrax here in Washington, so we spent a lot of time training our frontline state and local law enforcement to be prepared for, detect, respond, and deal with those types of threats, so that there was a huge, huge push for about 10 years.

I think, with the new technologies and the evolving threat, I think some of that ground that we've gained has slipped backwards. But I do think that is a threat that needs to remain, you know, on everybody's radar. I think that's a big threat that we should be aware of. And with AI now, you –

Mr. Karako: Constructing new diseases.

Chief Lanier: – you can 3-D print – if you can 3-D print pharmaceuticals, your capabilities here is pretty scary.

Rep. Whitesides: We need to really think structurally about how these threats will be manufactured, you know, from a systematic architecture perspective, right? The information side will be – I don't know if democratized is the – proliferated is the right way to put it, you know, with these AI tools. So they're going to be able to – anybody is going to be able to ask these open-source models within a few years no matter what the protections are, you know, how to build a new toxin or neurotoxin or something like that. We're a part of a bill that essentially goes upstream, so the component pieces that you would need to then take that information and then turn that into an actual virus. I think we need to start putting more at least awareness into that supply chain and potentially more controls in that, because this is an area where, you know, you combine a drone with an aerosolized virus of some kind and that could have tremendously bad impacts for the country. So I think we need to think holistically about how those threats will be manufactured.

Mr. Karako: Yeah. Anybody else on bio? OK.

Well, Cathy, you earlier on mentioned, you know, the definition of a threat that disrupts our way of life, right? I might say non-nuclear strategic attack or something like that. I think that's a good segue to another question here that we've got, which is the flipside of that: What does meaningful national resilience look like from continuity of government to continuity of daily life? As General Karbler said, we are going to get attacked. And so, in anticipation

of that, what – for the panel, what does meaningful national resilience for the homeland look like?

Chief Lanier: I think – I think what that means is that we spend a lot of time preparing for confronting the threat, confronting and combating that threat, that defense mode, and we train and we exercise. This is across the board – the military, the federal government, the local government, through the private sector. We always train these scenarios, and we train all the way through the exercise until the threat stops, right, and then we all high-five and go home.

The harder part of those scenarios – I've managed three active shooters here in Washington, D.C. The harder part of those scenarios are what happens after the threat is stopped, after the threat has been defeated. That resilience piece is where your public-private partnerships are going to be so, so critical, because there are so many things that come along with resilience to recovery that are going to be nongovernmental assets. So having those relationships.

Mr. Karako: Can you unpack that a little bit? What do you mean by it gets harder afterwards? Unpack that.

Chief Lanier: So just think of – pick any kind of disaster. You know, if you are dealing with mass-casualty events, for example, once the event itself is over and you've got mass casualties, how are you going to provide for coordination of facilitating bringing families and resources in, coordination of maybe refrigeration for supplies? These are long-term events. Those are all assets that are there in the private sector. And if you have those relationships upfront, and you have built those exercises and training scenarios so that you are training through the very end of this consequence management – not just the crisis management, but the consequence management – having those private-sector partners come in and help you is really – you know, the Walmarts, the Targets, the – you know, the other large, you know, companies out there that can bring in assets, technology potentially. I think that's the – I think the lowball that we're missing.

Mr. Karako: Anybody else on that? Yeah.

Lt. Gen. Karbler: We can't surge resilience after a crisis. Resilience has to be built before the crisis. And I would offer that at the national level we can provide, you know, some top-level strategic warning in missile defense, military capabilities, intelligence. But I think that at the state and local level especially, that's where resilience is built, whether it's with governors or mayors, police, emergency managers. That, within – that's where you're really, really going to build that resiliency. It's got – it takes practice. It takes the public to appreciate the potential consequences that are out there. But again, I just – we can't surge resilience after the –

Chief Lanier: You have to build that infrastructure. You know, how are you going to have potable water? Where are you going to get your power and electricity from if there's a major attack? Those things have to be built in in advance. You can't –

Mr. Karako: Which includes supply chains, various –

Chief Lanier: Right. You can't pull it together after the crisis.

Mr. Karako: How's this being talked about on the Hill?

Rep. Crank: Well, I would add one thing there. You know, we live in a society in America that's so blessed and so prosperous, and we've had such a prolonged period of time that Americans have lived under that prosperity, that I think resilience and the question of resilience kind of starts with the psyche of the American people. And you know, to me you're more resilient if you grew up in Israel. You're probably more resilient if you grew up in Ukraine over the last few years than you are if you're an American who has a very nice cellphone plan, they're very comfortable, and you know, the things that they complain about are really things that the rest of the world wouldn't complain about. And so to me that's – (laughs) – probably one of our biggest challenges, is to prepare people for these kinds of terrible things like we saw on 9/11, the shock of a 9/11 and then being resilient enough to recover from that.

Mr. Karako: But that preparation needs to be done by whom? It needs to be done by our top national leadership, right? And that's – it's a bipartisan issue. But when we were shocked on 9/11, it was because, as the – as the report said, there was a failure of imagination. And so, you know, is the imagination existing now? Is the enormity of the threat being communicated by our leadership, the threat to the homeland being communicated? And if not, you know, what's – if Ukraine doesn't give us that strategic warning, if the last wars in the Middle East don't give us that, I don't know what it's going to take. But ultimately, this is a – this is a question of national leadership, ultimately, to educate the people in this, right?

Rep. Crank: And politicians don't want to talk about those things. It's easier to talk about the good things that you're giving to people and all the good things that we have in America, which we truly have so many. But I think it's a very difficult challenge for our country.

Lt. Gen. Karbler: Tom, you know, informed citizens, preparedness are part of that.

There's another part that is very – could be fractured very quickly, and that's trust in the institutions that the public are going to rely on. And now you talk about misinformation that could get out there. You already have a challenge

with trust in public institutions. But the – but the trust in the institutions is going to be a critical piece to whatever – you know, if we can absorb the shock, and react appropriately, and then react quicker than our adversary expected us to react. But the public institutions are going to – or, the institutions are going to be a major part of that, and the public has got to have trust in those institutions.

Chief Lanier: And that could all be undermined by – as a part of the attack as well, the misinformation and disinformation. We saw some of this with –

Mr. Karako: Surely.

Chief Lanier: – FEMA responses, right? We saw how misinformation and disinformation could really, you know, scuttle work that had been done to bring resilience into place. And just that lack of trust because of that misinformation campaign really, really hampered their efforts.

Rep. Crank: And we're seeing that right now with many of our adversaries using social media –

Chief Lanier: Yes.

Rep. Crank: – to stir hatred, to stir malcontent amongst Americans and make us fight more and more. And I think they will use that in an attack.

Mr. Karako: It's not a question of if or maybe, but of course it will be; that if there was a spider's web – if you were going to construct a spider's web type of attack on the United States, you would probably combine it with cyberattacks, with information operations, all of these things. That's just how a sophisticated adversary would conduct an attack on a very bad day against the United States.

So, OK, how do we prepare the public – businesses, private entities, communities? How do we – how do our political leadership, how should they go about helping to educate and prepare them?

Rep. Whitesides: Well, not exactly answering your question, but I do believe that the fundamental most important thing for homeland defense is the American people's ability to work together pragmatically to solve our biggest challenges. And that is atrophying and being corroded every day, and that is a real challenge as a – as a country, right? And so acknowledging not just the tactical issue that you just raised but the macro picture, which is that if we are to solve these huge problems that are coming down the road at us we have to as a people be able to talk to each other, to trust each other, to solve problems together; and the our ability to do that is being reduced not just by foreign actors but by the technologies of our world right now. And I am so

concerned that over the course of the next generation we're about to raise an entire generation of young people who grow up with an agent and an AI right next to them.

We have already seen – some of you have probably seen this research where the long – decades-, if not centuries-long improvement in human intelligence has – the knee – we've reached the knee in the curve of that. And so, you know, that's the fundamental foundation of how we solve all of these problems. And if we do not as leadership of this country or as a community of people who care about homeland security realize that that foundation is cracking, you know, then we won't be able to address any of these challenges.

Mr. Karako: Well, I'm curious, anybody else on the how would one go about doing that? But you know, when I was growing up we'd take a cross-country road trip with a Rand McNally atlas, and now I can't get across Washington D.C. without a GPS.

Rep. Crank: And you can't find a Rand McNally atlas anymore, either. (Laughter.)

Mr. Karako: That's true. That's true. But, look, the reason I say that is the education begins between the ears. The preparation for resilience begins between the ears, in a sense, if those ears hear it from the – from leadership.

Well, look, there's been a lot of great questions that have come in. I do want to get one more on resilience before we get to our closeout thing here. And that is – and I'm going to direct this to you, Representative Whitesides – how are extreme weather events impacting America's homeland resilience? This is from Travis. You mentioned wildfires. Other folks may have, whether it be hurricanes or what have you, thoughts on that.

Rep. Whitesides: Last January, in 2025, we had an extreme weather event where we had sustained 80-mile-an-hour winds blowing for about 12 hours over Los Angeles. And the impact of that was the greatest wildfire disaster, probably, in American history. We lost over 15,000 homes; 200,000 people were displaced from their homes. We lost 30 lives. And the estimates of damage range from 50 (billion dollars) to $250 billion. And so we in Los Angeles know firsthand the extreme nature of weather events. And you know, whether you look at hurricanes, whether you look at tornadoes, whether you look at – all of these things are going to get worse as global warming and the climate changes over time.

And so, you know, as we think about these aspects of homeland security, you know, the probability of those events continuing at roughly the same average curve increasing in severity over time is roughly a hundred percent, right, certainly over, like, a blended-year average. Like, that is just going to keep happening. And you know, so that was a horrible impact for California, but

it's just going to keep happening. And so we have to adjust our resource allocation, in my opinion.

I'm so excited about the work that Jeff and I are doing to solve some aspects of the wildfire crisis. We're working on the sensing layer, which a lot of which is based in Colorado, but we're looking at defense applications that could be reapplied in a dual-use way to rapidly suppress fires. So I think that the idea that we can take these amazing technologies that we've developed in the military side to apply to the civil side and potentially reduce these hundred-billion-dollar damages that are occurring every single year is something that's really exciting, and I'm really grateful for the partnership that I've had with Congressman Crank.

Rep. Crank: Yeah. Yeah, we've done – wildfire particularly affects our communities in a big way, and you know, we've worked on FireGuard together a bit. I have the Fire Weather Development Act. And it's hopefully getting rid of some of the stovepiping and the red tape and the bureaucracy that gets some of that information down to local agencies as well. So big challenge.

Yesterday we had a wildfire just outside my district that started – I think it started about maybe 200 acres, and you know, 70- to 80-mile-an-hour winds blew it into 23,000 acres by the end of the day, so, you know.

Mr. Karako: All right.

Well, first of all, I want to thank everybody who's put in the questions. There's been a ton of them that have come in. I've been trying to weave it in. Don't be mad at me if I didn't get to yours. There's just been an enormous number of them.

Rep. Whitesides: They're all mad at you.

Mr. Karako: Yeah, I know. I know. (Laughter.)

Let me – let's close it out by going back down the panel here. And I want to – you know, this is the theme of this Global Security Forum this year, but America at 250. And so why don't we start with you, General Karbler, and work our way down here: What foundations of American power and statecraft have made the United States the most secure and prosperous, and which now need renewal? Big picture. Easy questions for the end. (Laughter.)

Gen. Karbler: We probably viewed homeland defense as a wall, and now we have to view homeland defense as a network.

Mr. Karako: Very good.

Chief Lanier: I think we need to remember how to work together to get things done. I think that's what's been lost. I think that we were able to come together and make significant change post-9/11. I think we need to figure out how to do that again. That's what's holding us back.

Rep. Crank: I would say making sure that we use American innovation, and we've talked about that – acquisition reform, allowing the private sector in America to innovate to help solve America's problems. If we do that, we'll survive.

Rep. Whitesides: America was founded on, you know, inspiring ideas that were new at the time 250 years ago. I think that, you know, we need to rededicate ourselves to core principles like the rule of law and also try to think about, you know, how we will keep the American experiment fresh again.

I just read an amazing book by Jill Lepore on, basically, the amendment process of this great country, you know, and our country was meant to be a changing experiment, you know. And so we need to somehow get back to that flexibility, I think, of amendment so that we can, you know, appropriately address the challenges of the future.

Mr. Karako: And I know Lapore's stuff. It's very good. But you used the word "rededicate," and I can't help – I can't help myself. This is the 250th birthday. We date it back, our birthday, not to 1787 with the Constitution; we date it back to 1776. And it was 1776 that that Lincoln dated our birthday back to in the Gettysburg Address. It's the proposition of the Declaration of Independence that is – that is our real birthday. So this is – this is fantastic.

Folks, this has been very instructive, very thoughtful. We're going to set up for the whole rest of the day here. We have a lot of other speakers. We are going to take a quick 15-minute break for the next panel. But I would just ask – again, thanks to everybody for tuning in, and I would ask everybody to please join me in thanking the panelists for this great discussion. (Applause.)

(END.)