

# Talking Points for the Top National Security Issues



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During their terms of office, elected officials will have to address a variety of international concerns and threats facing the U.S. Polling from early September, 2016 shows national security and terrorism is a top priority for voters.<sup>1</sup> Issues ranging from Russian aggression in Eastern Europe to civil unrest in the Middle East will top the national security challenges facing members of Congress. Policymakers must be prepared to answer the tough questions on the broad global issues facing the country. In this memo, we provide answers to and talking points on the most pressing questions likely to be asked on U.S. national security issues.

## #1: ISIS Strategy

**Q:** ISIS has built up its forces and gained ground in Iraq and Syria since 2014. What is the best strategy to defeat ISIS?

**A:** Americans are rightly concerned about ISIS and the awful things they do and stand for. But here is what Americans need to know: the U.S. has a tough and smart strategy to degrade and defeat ISIS. The Iraqi government has regained

the key cities of Ramadi, Sinjar, and Tikrit from the terrorists, and U.S. forces have killed or captured key ISIS leaders.

- The U.S. is leading a 66-nation coalition against ISIS through airstrikes and assisting local ground forces. Coalition forces are averaging 20 airstrikes per day against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, killing more than 45,000<sup>2</sup> ISIS fighters since strikes began in 2014.
- Going forward, the U.S. must lead the coalition in accelerating the air campaign and assisting Iraqi security forces and vetted Syrian opposition groups in pushing back ISIS on the ground.
- We can target and eliminate terrorist threats without getting dragged into a civil war. This is not our fight alone. Our Arab partners must also provide the resources to stabilize the region against terrorists.

Donald Trump has no coherent strategy to defeat ISIS. His reckless ideas flip-flop between inserting tens of thousands of U.S. ground troops in the war and allowing Russia to defeat ISIS and ensure U.S. security for us. This would leave our military without an exit strategy and leave American security in Russian hands. Trump wants to "bomb the hell" out of ISIS, without considering the humanitarian toll it would inflict on the region and the near-certain aftermath of greater ISIS recruitment and resentment from those who feel betrayed by U.S. actions.

## **#2: Homegrown Terrorism**

**Q:** Domestic terrorist attacks, like those in San Bernardino and Orlando, and more recent attempts in New York and New Jersey, have caused alarm about the threat ISIS plays influencing homegrown terrorists. What should be done to prevent future terrorist attacks in the U.S?

**A:** We're cutting off ISIS propaganda, preventing terrorist recruitment, and partnering with local leaders to safeguard communities. The U.S. will continue to do everything possible to seek out and stop homegrown terror in its tracks.

- Our number one priority is protecting Americans, and that means defending the homeland. State and local law enforcement agencies on the frontlines need better resources, training, and coordination to fight domestic terrorism.
- We need a strategy, working alongside social media companies, which prevents ISIS recruitment and blocks their online propaganda. We should also develop a local partnership strategy that brings together community leaders, law enforcement, and civil society to prevent homegrown terrorism in at-risk communities.
- We must remember that the numbers of Americans becoming influenced by ISIS ideology and traveling to Iraq and Syria are few— about 250 – especially compared to how many Europeans are joining ISIS—about 5,000.<sup>3</sup>

Donald Trump's reckless plan to ban Muslims from entering our country betrays U.S. principles, will not work, and doesn't address the threat of homegrown terrorism. His ideas are extreme at a time when we need to be smart. Muslims make up nearly one quarter of the global population. Banning them would tell more than a billion people that America is their enemy. It would play right into ISIS's messaging and potentially lead to radicalization. It would make it impossible to use diplomacy and work with important Muslim allies. His reckless ideas are against our principles, against our Constitution, alienates allies, and does nothing to address the homegrown terrorist threat.

### **#3: Terrorists Traveling to the U.S.**

**Q:** The terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels ignited fears in the U.S. that ISIS could use refugee status or the Visa Waiver Program to travel and carry out attacks here. What can we do to prevent terrorists from coming to the U.S.?

**A:** We can do this right and we can do this safely. Already, the U.S. thoroughly vets refugees entering the country. This includes a stringent 18-24 month vetting process. It's

important that Americans know our process is much more thorough than any in Europe. The U.S. recently made changes in the Visa Waiver Program to require certain dual citizens to apply for a visa and go through additional screening before being allowed to enter the country. We recognized the problem and addressed it—we got smart and formed a bipartisan solution.

- The U.S. has an incredibly robust vetting system for processing refugee applications. Refugees go through an 18 to 24 month screening process with several U.S. agencies, including the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, the State Department, the Defense Department and the Department of Homeland Security. Terrorists are highly unlikely to use the refugee system to enter the U.S.—it would take too long and the vigorous vetting system would prevent them from getting in.
- After the Paris attacks, Congress changed the Visa Waiver Program to close remaining gaps. These changes prevent travelers with dual citizenship from Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen, or travelers who have visited these countries in the last five years, from entering the U.S. without a visa and additional screening. This will ensure the Department of Homeland Security does a thorough investigation of these travelers who wish to enter the U.S. when they apply for a visa.
- The Department of Homeland Security and State Department must continue to be vigilant in screening all visa applicants to ensure potential terrorists do not enter our borders.

Donald Trump's mindless ban on Muslims entering the country is half-baked and reckless. Banning Muslims would tell 1.5 billion people that America is their enemy. It would potentially lead to radicalization and make the war on terror longer and harder to win. And, of course, it goes against every principle this nation was founded on.

## #4: Syria

**Q:** The Syrian civil war and arrival of various militia groups and proxy fighters has allowed the region to deteriorate even further into chaos. What does a peaceful resolution in Syria look like? Do you believe the U.S. should enforce a no-fly zone in Syria to advance coalition efforts against ISIS?

**A:** Neither ISIS nor Assad can be allowed to hold power in Syria. We have to be tough and smart in dealing with them. We must intensify existing U.S. efforts to defeat ISIS and pave the way for a political transition from Bashar al Assad. Progress on maintaining a cease-fire and starting peace talks has been shaky and fighting continues. If the peace process collapses, a no-fly zone over northern Syria will allow civilians to get access to humanitarian assistance and make space to resume a peaceful resolution.

- The U.S. should not become directly entangled in Syria's civil war, but there are ways it can help stabilize the country and destroy ISIS.
- The U.S. must accelerate its efforts to defeat ISIS, which is a threat to regional stability and U.S. national security, and support the UN-led peace talks to end the civil war. Assad has terrorized his own people and must transition out of power.
- If peace talks do not progress, creating safe corridors through a no-fly zone will provide innocent Syrians access to humanitarian assistance, while providing the international community the time and space needed to find a political solution. This could also potentially reduce the refugee flow into Europe and provide the U.S. leverage over Russia and Assad in ending the civil war during the peace process.

I oppose Donald Trump's reckless plan to let ISIS and Assad fight each other. He fundamentally misunderstands foreign policy, arguing he would "bomb the hell out of ISIS" <sup>4</sup> and that Russia would go after ISIS in Syria. Russia's withdrawal

from Syria shows it is interested only in propping up Assad, not attacking ISIS. The alternative from Donald Trump is ineffectual: indiscriminate bombing, sending U.S. ground troops into a civil war, and making no distinction between innocent civilians and combatants.

## **#5: Iraq**

**Q:** After the Obama administration withdrew troops from Iraq, the country spiraled into sectarian violence. Iraq was unable to defend its cities against ISIS, is still struggling to take back territory, and a large number of its citizens are protesting the government's policies. What can be done to stabilize Iraq?

**A:** The first step is leading coalition partners against ISIS with airstrikes and providing military assistance and training to Iraqi forces to take back territory from ISIS—which is what we are doing now. Going forward, the U.S. must increase security assistance, get the Iraqi government to form more inclusive policies, and help build Iraq's capacity to defend its borders.

- ISIS's hold on Iraqi territory shrank by 45%, with losses in Ramadi, Sinjar, and Tikrit, and they have not retaken any more land.
- U.S. and coalition forces have been training Iraqi military forces against ISIS since 2014. There are currently about 5,000 U.S. military advisers and special operation forces on the ground in Iraq, providing the necessary training to Iraqi forces to take back territory from ISIS, and mounting attacks on ISIS leaders.
- The Iraqi central government must maintain and encourage inclusive policies that don't alienate Iraqi Sunnis and Kurds. The U.S. has been providing Iraq with significant aid to boost their military forces and promote good governance. This assistance must increase to ensure Iraq doesn't fall along sectarian divides and has the capacity to secure its people going forward.

Donald Trump wants Iraq War III. He supports sending tens of thousands more U.S. ground troops to Iraq and putting our military in harm's way without an exit strategy. His reckless policies insult our Muslim allies who are fighting ISIS alongside the U.S. His flip-flopping between an isolationist foreign policy and committing to another ground war is dangerous.

## **#6: Libya**

**Q:** Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton advocated for intervention in Libya and now it's a mess. U.S. intervention in Libya has led to chaos, which caused the attack against the U.S. facility in Benghazi, killing four Americans, and now there are over 6,500 ISIS fighters based there. Was intervention necessary?

**A:** Let's be clear: the Libyan people rose up against a vicious dictator who tried to massacre his own people. We did not turn our backs on the Libyan people. The U.S. doesn't stand by and let evil leaders get away with that, but we have to be tough and smart about it.

- In 2011, the Libyan people joined the wave of popular uprisings in the Middle East, but dictator Muammar Qaddafi threatened to kill all opposed to him. To prevent this, the U.S. and NATO allies enforced a no-fly zone over Libya and attacked Qaddafi's military positions.
- The U.S. has started carrying out airstrikes to destroy ISIS training camps and prevent them from setting up a new base in Libya. ISIS cannot be allowed to jeopardize Libya's political unification process.
- The new Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) is showing promise in uniting previously warring factions. Once it's on a firm footing, the U.S. and coalition partners should train Libyan forces to take on what's left of ISIS in Libya and secure the country from internal and external threats.

Donald Trump continues to flip-flop on Libya. Now he says he wanted to leave Qaddafi in place, but in 2011 he favored intervening on humanitarian grounds.<sup>5</sup> His criticism of Secretary Clinton is baseless, and he has no coherent plan for Libya.

## **#7: Iran**

**Q:** The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) does not do enough to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. What can the U.S. do to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and threatening our regional partners? Why did the U.S. pay Iran ransom for American hostages?

**A:** We have to remain vigilant and hold Iran accountable for its destructive regional activities. The JCPOA is the best path forward to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. While imperfect, the deal extends Iran's breakout time of acquiring a nuclear weapon from two months to one year. For the next 25 years, Iran will undergo unprecedented and extensive monitoring and verification of the JCPOA and the U.S. will maintain its capability to re-impose sanctions or use a military option if Iran violates the agreement.

- Iran's repeated ballistic missile tests since the nuclear deal proves the deal was not an opening to an improved relationship with the West. The Obama administration imposed sanctions on Iran for its ballistic missile tests in January, but continued tests must not go unchecked. The UN Security Council must address this issue and hold Iran accountable for its hostile activities.
- Iran's destabilizing activities across the Middle East and ongoing support for terrorist proxies is unacceptable. Iran is still listed as a state sponsor of terrorism. The nuclear deal did not lift terrorism-related sanctions, so Iran will continue to be under extensive terrorism sanctions from the U.S.



- The Iran Nuclear Agreement isn't perfect, but it's going to keep Iran from getting a nuclear weapon for decades. The deal gives IAEA inspectors the more access into Iran's nuclear program than ever before, and the international community will know—and have the capacity to react quickly— if Iran tries to breakout and acquire a nuclear bomb.
- The U.S. owed Iran money from a 1970s dispute. An international tribunal was bound to rule in Iran's favor, likely making the U.S. pay billions in interest. Instead, the U.S. settled the dispute and paid only \$1.7 billion. Because Iran can't touch the U.S. financial system, the money was paid in foreign currency. The bottom line is that we got the better end of the deal, and we were able to use this leverage to make sure Americans came home.

Let's be clear: Trump's reckless calls to redo the Iran nuclear deal is the first step toward blundering into the next disastrous and expensive ground war in the region. The international community will not commit to more years of negotiating when they are satisfied with the deal as is and Trump would only play the spoiler. Breaking the deal would blind the U.S. to what Iran is doing, allowing it to acquire a nuclear weapon and threaten our allies, especially Israel.

## **#8: Guantanamo**

**Q:** The Obama administration sent Congress its plan to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. Should the U.S. close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp?

**A:** We should close Guantanamo Bay and prosecute detainees in federal courts, which are far more effective than the current process of trying detainees through military commissions. Detainees who are transferred to other countries or are released must not be able to rejoin the battlefield, and if they do, the U.S. will do everything possible to take them out.

- Only 61 detainees remain at Guantanamo. The annual cost to keep one prisoner at Guantanamo is more than \$7 million, compared to \$78,000 for a prisoner at a maximum security prison.<sup>6</sup>
- Indefinite detention at Guantanamo is not a sustainable policy and the Administration must work with Congress to develop safe means to close the facility and protect the homeland.
- Robert Hood, the former warden of the supermax security prison in Florence, Colorado, has said if the detainees were transferred to this facility from Guantanamo, they would be secure, stating, "From a former warden's point of view, it would be secure, they could be handled and there will be no impact on the community."<sup>7</sup>

Guantanamo Bay is a recruitment tool for terrorists and keeping it open will put Americans at risk, cost taxpayers money, and run counter to our values. Donald Trump's support for keeping Guantanamo open runs counter to humanitarian principles and U.S. national security interests.

## **#9: Afghanistan**

**Q:** The White House recently announced that 8,400 U.S. troops will remain in Afghanistan instead of dropping to 5,500 by the end of 2016. Should the U.S. withdraw troops from Afghanistan?

**A:** We have a number of troops remaining in Afghanistan at the advice of our military commanders who are certain that the security situation requires it. We're winding down the war, but we have to be smart about it and continue monitoring the security situation and listening to our military leaders.

- Taliban insurgents have been increasingly successful in their attacks and the security situation in Afghanistan has been worsening.

- In the last few months, U.S. military officials assessed the security in Afghanistan and recommended the U.S. keep 8,400 troops in the country.
- We must continue to closely observe the security situation in Afghanistan to ensure the country does not once again become a safe haven for terrorists to attack our homeland.

Donald Trump is ill-informed on U.S.-Afghanistan policy. He said he was in favor of the U.S. getting involved in Afghanistan because it's next to nuclear-armed Pakistan – not because Afghanistan is where Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda was able to plan and carry out 9/11 from. Further, his reckless calls to indiscriminately bomb ISIS will backfire. Our enemies aren't Muslim civilians, who despise ISIS, so it's insane to kill them. That will only turn them against our cause and potentially lead to radicalization, turning our friends into enemies. Our enemies are the terrorists, and we should focus on taking them out.

## **#10: Russia**

**Q:** Over the past few years, Russia has invaded Ukraine, propped up the regime of Bashar al Assad, hacked U.S. computer systems, and sought to undermine America's electoral process. How should the U.S. deal with an apparently emboldened Russia?

**A:** Russia is a major challenge. Russian President Vladimir Putin often relies on military force and covert influence campaigns to achieve his foreign policy objectives, and his authoritarian government can resist many forms of diplomatic and economic pressure. But Russia is an important international player in many global crises. We have to be tough with them in certain areas, like in Ukraine, while cooperating in other areas where there are mutual interests, like the Iran nuclear deal.

- To deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, we need to help Ukraine defend itself by sending more rotational U.S. forces to Europe and providing increased security assistance. The President's budget provides a tough and smart path forward in this area, quadrupling the funding for the European Reassurance Initiative.
- The U.S. must also maintain economic sanctions against Russia until it ceases support for Ukrainian separatists.
- In Syria, Russia is in the best position to convince Bashar al Assad to step down, opening a realistic path toward ending the civil war there and defeating ISIS permanently.
- The U.S. should impose targeted sanctions on and should prosecute Russian actors responsible for attacking U.S. computer systems. The U.S. should also classify electoral computer systems as "critical infrastructure" and devote more resources to defending them from cyberattacks.<sup>8</sup>
- Nuclear nonproliferation is an area of mutual interest for Russia and the U.S. Although cooperation has stalled in recent years, it will be necessary to secure nuclear stockpiles globally and limit the spread of nuclear weapons to other states and terrorist groups.

Donald Trump would let Russia fight ISIS and have a stronger influence in the Middle East at the expense of U.S. security. He is pro-Russia and pro-Putin, and we can't afford a president who thinks Putin will look out for American interests—especially when Russia is challenging our European allies. Trump wants to befriend a dictator who just sold weapons to Iran and supports Assad in Syria—a man who is responsible for massacring his own people. Trump's ideas are weak and dangerous for the U.S.

## **#11: China**

**Q:** China is trying to challenge America all over the world, but especially in Asia. What should we do to stop China?

**A:** We need to make very clear to our allies and the rest of the world that there's a clear choice: our rules or China's rules. And our rules will ensure peace, growth, and independence for countries around the world. The U.S. will remain a steadfast supporter of those countries that stand up for democracy, fair competition, and diplomatic solutions to disputes. The U.S. must continue to push back against China's unfair or aggressive actions around the world:

- The U.S. has brought criminal charges against Chinese military units for cyber-espionage. China is thought to be behind attempts to hack U.S. companies for their intellectual property, and have made multiple attempts to gain access to U.S. government information.
- The U.S. is challenging China's attempts to expand their influence in the South China Seas by signing new basing agreements and stepping up U.S. Naval patrols to reassure our Asian allies we are there for them.
- The U.S. is leading a Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) to set global trade rules to counteract a free-for-all vision of trade where labor and environmental practices would lose out.

Donald Trump opposes the TPP and would allow China to write the rules of commerce in Asia. He's in favor of placing tariffs on goods from China, which would increase the price of goods to Americans and could result in a reckless trade war. He wrongly claims China's attempts to expand its presence in the South China Sea is because they don't respect the U.S. or our President.

## **#12: NATO**

**Q:** Russia continues to support and arm Ukrainian separatists in the country's eastern provinces, while Donald Trump has increasingly praised Russian President Vladimir Putin. What is the U.S. doing to help its NATO allies deter Russian aggression?

A: Donald Trump's stance on NATO is a threat to U.S. national security. From his veiled threat to not support a NATO ally that is attacked, to his campaigns' recent refusal to meet with the Ukrainian President, Donald Trump is attempting to unravel the strongest military alliance in history. But, the U.S. together with our European allies, have imposed harsh sanctions on Russia, strengthened Ukrainian defenses, and deployed U.S. military forces to Europe:

- U.S. and EU sanctions on Russia have punished the Russian economy, which shrank 3.8% last year. <sup>9</sup>
- The U.S. has given hundreds of millions of dollars to train Ukrainian soldiers and equip them with advanced technology. <sup>10</sup>
- The U.S. is rotating its best ground forces through the Baltic States and Poland, while the Pentagon is considering a permanent presence there. <sup>11</sup> The Air Force sent its most capable fighters to Germany and Romania, and the U.S. Army is moving hundreds of tanks and other armored vehicles into Eastern Europe. <sup>12</sup>
- The President's budget provides a tough and smart path forward in this area, quadrupling the funding for the European Reassurance Initiative.
- Donald Trump has said NATO is obsolete and he has sided with Putin at a moment when Russia is threatening some of our closest allies. He supports pulling back the U.S. presence from Europe in order to save money because he trusts Putin. But Putin is playing Trump for a fool. A weaker Europe and a stronger Putin-led Russia is bad for America.

## **#13: Surveillance**

Q: When it comes to surveillance and encryption, are you on the side of U.S. companies like Apple, or do you agree with government agencies like the FBI and NSA? Are you in favor of more privacy, or more security?

A: I reject the premise that it is an either-or matter, which feeds the adversarial tone that has dominated the debate, and which hurts everyone. Our number one goal should be to restore trust between government, companies, and the public.

- I support policies that can safeguard public safety, national security, data privacy, and data security.
- The government must identify and disrupt terrorists and criminals, and we should be able to do that without undermining the security of innocent individuals' data.
- Successful outcomes in the San Bernardino case and related cases in New York show that we can find solutions that satisfy all the interests in play.

## **#14: North Korea**

Q: How should the U.S. respond to North Korea's September 9th nuclear test—its fifth test?

A: North Korea is the most isolated and repressive regime on the planet. In light of North Korea's fifth nuclear test, we must work closely with all of North Korea's neighbors, including Japan, South Korea, and China to prevent aggressive North Korean military actions from undermining the stability and economy of the region.

- North Korea's fifth nuclear test is a blatant violation of UN Security Council resolutions and threatens regional stability.
- The U.S. must continue securing our allies in the region and counter North Korea's aggressive behavior.
- We should work with China to develop an appropriate response to North Korea's continued belligerent behavior, one that addresses the nuclear tests and sets the stage for denuclearization.

Donald Trump seeks to weaken U.S. leadership in the world and abandon our allies, like South Korea and Japan. He

supports the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region as a means to counter North Korea, which would further escalate tensions in the region and set a dangerous precedent.

## **#15: Border Security**

**Q:** The U.S. has done nothing to stop undocumented immigrants from pouring across the U.S. border every day. Donald Trump has proposed building a wall across the U.S. southern border. How do you propose to stop this problem?

**A:** Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric is un-American. The U.S. is a nation founded by immigrants who continue to help make America the greatest country in the world. Trump's xenophobic rants alienate our allies and embolden our adversaries. Moreover, his proposal to build a wall and make Mexico pay for it is naïve and ignores the facts about what we've done to dramatically enhance border security:

- In the last ten years, the Customs and Border Protection budget has increased by 75%.
- The number of agents at the border has doubled to more than 18,000, and illegal border crossings have been cut in half since 2008.<sup>13</sup>
- Donald Trump's ridiculous idea to build a wall and make Mexico pay for it -- which they have said they will not do -- will not solve the underlying problem. He fails to understand the Obama administration has already taken action and successfully reduced the number of illegal border crossings. Still, the U.S. should increase efforts to bolster law enforcement in Central America. This includes adequately funding programs like the State Department's Regional Security Initiative that promote increased policing and judicial capacity.

## **#16: Cyber**

**Q:** Experts worry that U.S. critical infrastructure is vulnerable to a cyberattack that could cripple major cities and possibly



cause serious injury or death. How can we better protect against these threats?

**A:** Addressing cyber security as a national security matter requires a whole-of-government approach combining our nation's full technological, economic, diplomatic, and military power:

- Technologically, we need to improve the federal government's ability to hire sorely needed computer specialists by exempting certain cyber positions from the federal pay scale and offering more work flexibility.
- Economically, we should sanction foreign individuals known to have perpetrated cyberattacks against the U.S. government, freezing their assets and preventing banks that serve such individuals from doing business with U.S. banks.
- Judicially, we should indict and prosecute hackers who attack U.S. computer systems and steal sensitive data.
- Diplomatically, the U.S. should continue current efforts to develop international norms governing what kind of activities are acceptable in cyberspace, as well as building closer cyber cooperation with close allies.
- The U.S. should partner with the private sector, including major technology companies, to facilitate early detection and response to cyberattacks.

## **#17: Defense Spending**

**Q:** Cuts in the defense budget made by the Obama administration have made the U.S. vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Budget cuts have gutted the military and put our nation in harm's way. Do you support cutting the defense budget?

**A:** What defense cuts are you talking about? The President is proposing bigger defense budgets than President Reagan did. This talk about a weak military is an absolute myth. We have,

by leaps and bounds, the ablest, and most sophisticated military in the world.

- My #1 priority is keeping the American people safe. Because of that, I fully support the military's request for a 50% increase in funding for the fight to defeat ISIS. We have to use every tool at our disposal to defeat ISIS and keep Americans safe. That's why, in addition to the military, I'll fight for more funding for counterterrorism programs at the Department of Homeland Security, State Department, and the FBI.
- The debate over national security budgets should not be about how much we spend, it should be about having what's needed to keep us safe. We should be investing in the tools our troops need and use to address threats like ISIS, not wasting money on Cold War-era systems we don't use.
- Sequestration is a disaster. While Congress has used band-aids to lessen the pain to the military, I would fight to eliminate sequestration altogether, and give our military the financial resources and certainty they need to keep protecting the nation.

First, Donald Trump is wrong about our military and the defense budget. Second, Republican sequestration efforts are the biggest danger to our military's budget. Third, Donald Trump's reckless idea to build the military with less money is a fallacy. In a time of unprecedented threats ranging from ISIS, to North Korea, to Russian aggression in Ukraine, now is not the time to be cutting our defense budget.

## **#18: Terrorism in Europe**

**Q:** Europe is grappling with a security crisis unlike ever before. What can be done to prevent terrorist attacks in Europe?

**A:** Turkey has to do more to close off its border with Syria and prevent terrorists from moving in and out of Europe. The U.S. has already established information-sharing and passenger database-sharing agreements with international partners to

screen potential terrorists trying to reach the U.S. Europe must implement similar mechanisms to know if potential terrorists are traveling within its borders.

- Turkey has made significant strides in closing its border and preventing the movement of terrorists into and out of Europe from ISIS' stronghold in Syria. But Turkey must do more, including deploying additional troops, to fully secure its border, continuing its efforts to stop the movement of terrorists in and out of Syria, and sharing information with European counterparts about the movement of potential terrorists.
- After years of debate, the European Parliament finally passed a plan this year to allow European governments to share and analyze passenger information. This is a significant step forward in monitoring the movements of foreign terrorist fighters, but European governments must start implementing the plan quickly.
- Intelligence-sharing between European countries also remains a major gap when it comes to tracking terrorist movements. Increased cooperation is needed to help prevent attacks. U.S. counterterrorism officials have years of experience and can aid in facilitating this cooperation.

Donald Trump's foreign policy vision is reckless and self-centered. He would weaken American leadership in leaving Europe to Russia's influence and the spread of terrorism from ISIS. His response to terrorism abroad is to shut American borders and isolate the U.S. from the rest of the world. There are smart and tough ways to do this, but Donald Trump only resorts to reckless and rushed reactions.

## **#19: Yemen**

**Q:** The Yemen civil war and intervention by Saudi Arabia and Iran has exacerbated an already-dreadful humanitarian crisis. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and now ISIS also pose a threat to the U.S. from Yemen. What should be done in

Yemen? Why is the U.S. aiding Saudi Arabia's intervention when they've been responsible for so many civilian deaths?

**A:** The U.S. continues counterterrorism operations against AQAP in Yemen and is supporting diplomatic efforts to bring the Houthi rebels and government together for a peaceful resolution in Yemen. The U.S. provides Saudi Arabia logistical and intelligence support in their operations against the rebels, but Saudi Arabia must do more to prevent civilian casualties.

- The U.S. has carried out airstrikes against AQAP targets in Yemen since 2009. The U.S. must continue counterterrorism operations against both AQAP and ISIS in Yemen while supporting a peaceful resolution to the civil war.
- Saudi Arabia is a major U.S.-ally and contributes to the fight against terrorists, including ISIS. Indiscriminate bombing is unacceptable and if the humanitarian crisis is exacerbated by Saudi Arabia's inability to limit civilian deaths, the U.S. must reconsider aiding the Saudis' effort in Yemen.
- A ceasefire was reached in April, but faltered in recent months. U.S. negotiators are in the process of establishing a new ceasefire between the groups so that peace talks can resume.

Donald Trump's reckless policies would isolate the U.S. His call for withdrawing support to countries around the world would allow terrorist groups, like AQAP, to grow in power. A stable Yemen is in our national security interest and ending our counterterrorism operations there or abandoning a diplomatic solution would jeopardize the safety of Americans and our regional allies.

## **#20: Nuclear Asia**

**Q:** Donald Trump has said that, if elected president, he would support allowing Japan and South Korea to develop nuclear weapons. Do you agree?

A: No. Donald Trump wants to undermine the most important national security interest we have: preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. This is a tough and smart policy the U.S. has been implementing in earnest since President Obama first came into office.

- North Korea recently tested its fifth nuclear bomb, threatening our allies in the region, and Donald Trump thinks the best response is to spread the use of nuclear weapons. The more nuclear weapons there are, the more likely it is that someone—including possibly a terrorist—will use one. This is why U.S. policy for decades has been to reduce global stockpiles of nuclear material.
- A South Korean or Japanese nuclear program would give Iran and other countries a perfect argument for why they should be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon, leading to a potential nuclear arms race.
- In the face of North Korea's fifth nuclear test, Senate Republicans have threatened to cut essential nuclear detection and verification funding for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization Preparatory Commission, undermining our national security.<sup>14</sup>

## **# 21: Bowe Bergdahl Release**

Q: Do you support President's Obama's decision to trade five senior Taliban leaders for Bowe Bergdahl, who is now standing trial for desertion? What would you say to the families of the soldiers who died searching for Bergdahl?

A: The U.S. will do whatever it takes to rescue the men and women who serve our country. This commitment is not only our moral duty, but also a critical component of an all-volunteer force.

- We had to get Bergdahl back to know what happened to him. To have left him behind just because some people claimed he deserted, without knowing the truth, would have been the same as condemning any criminal without a trial.

- As President Obama said, “The U.S. has always had a pretty sacred rule, and that is: we don’t leave our men or women in uniform behind.”<sup>15</sup>

Donald Trump shows a complete lack of respect for U.S. military servicemen and women. He’s said Senator John McCain—a former Navy pilot who was tortured in Vietnam—isn’t a war hero because he was captured. Trump’s statements are a grave disservice to the brave men and women who fight for our country and he is not fit to be commander-in-chief.

## END NOTES

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