



June 28, 2017

Annual Conference Transcript

Presentation of the Andrew J. Bacevich Jr. Fellowship

Shawn Brimley, Executive Vice President and Director of Studies
Center for a New American Security

Harry Krejsa, Bacevich Fellow
Center for a New American Security

Begin Transcript

SHAWN BRIMLEY: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention. My name is Shawn Brimley. I'm the executive vice president here at CNAS. And, as you know, at CNAS we're very proud of the role that we play in promoting the careers of tomorrow's international and national security leaders rather. This mission for us is not an afterthought, but it's part of our institutional DNA. And the most prestigious opportunity we bestow on one of our young professionals every year is the Bacevich Fellowship. Let me tell you a little bit about it.

The Bacevich Fellowship was established in June, 2007, in memory of 1st Lieutenant Andrew J. Bacevich Jr. of Walpole, Massachusetts, who died from wounds suffered during combat operations as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was 27 years old. Lieutenant Bacevich served with the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division and was the son of Dr. Andrew Bacevich, a Vietnam veteran and prominent professor of international relations at Boston University.

As an officer, Lieutenant Bacevich followed in his father's footsteps by joining the U.S. Army. He was an outstanding soldier, who was brave, steadfast, and irrepressible. He had an unrealized dream to serve his country in a career of public service here in Washington.

Lieutenant Bacevich made the ultimate sacrifice for his country. This fellowship serves as a clear reminder that the national security – (audio break) – every day are not abstractions but rather have very real consequences. In Lieutenant Bacevich's name, the fellowship commemorates the sense of duty, honor and courage for which he and the other 6,918 U.S. military personnel who have fallen in Iraq and Afghanistan ought to be remembered.

Let me take a minute to introduce you to the 11th Bacevich fellow, Harry Krejsa, whose performance, professionalism and dedication to public service, we believe, well honors the

Bold.

Innovative.

Bipartisan.

memory of Lieutenant Bacevich. Harry came to CNAS in 2015 as a research associate in our Asia-Pacific Security Program after a promising start as a Fulbright fellow in Taiwan and a policy analyst on Capitol Hill. Most importantly, he grew up as a boy scout in rural Iowa and he is passionate about connecting the debate about America's role in the world with audiences in the heartland of our country. And I think his instinct is a very important one, as skepticism about the role the United States plays in a turbulent world is too often dismissed by the Washington elite rather than interpreted as an important indicator that we need to do more to shape and elevate the debate around U.S. foreign policy and be unafraid to confront conventional thinking and revisit first principles.

Dr. Andrew Bacevich Sr. couldn't be with us today as he usually is but he wanted me to convey the following statement from the family. "My family and I remain very grateful to CNAS for remembering my son in this way. I apologize for not being able to present in person as Harry begins his term as a Bacevich fellow. He becomes part of what has now become a (formidable ?) tradition: young people making a difference not only here at CNAS but in the policy world. To state the obvious, we need their ideas, their integrity and their wisdom now more than ever."

So in enduring recognition of Lieutenant Andrew Bacevich's exceptional commitment to the service of our country, it is my pleasure to introduce Harry Krejsa as the 11th Lt. Andrew Bacevich fellow for 2017-2018. Congratulations, Harry. (Applause.)

HARRY KREJSA: Thank you, Shawn, for those kind words. I am deeply humbled and honored to receive this fellowship. All who knew Lieutenant Bacevich speak of the wisdom that he possessed beyond his years, of his unflagging commitment to public service, and the example set by his character. This fellowship allows us to honor the young lieutenant's memory and his dream of a career national security policy. It also reminds us of the deep responsibility that comes with making that policy when it can have such real human cost.

CNAS was founded with a commitment to fostering the next generation of national security leaders and it established this fellowship almost as soon as the organization itself had come into existence. Honoring Lieutenant Bacevich's legacy and living up to the example of the 10 fellows who have held this title before me will be no easy task and I'm grateful to Michèle, Richard and Shawn for their confidence in me.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Patrick Cronin and Mira Rapp-Hooper for their critical mentorship and support, to my family for keeping me honest, to my indispensable teammate, Hannah, and to my CNAS peers and colleagues for making me a better analyst and teammate every day.

While I'm excited to take on this challenge, it happens at a time of significant turmoil in the foreign policy debate. The next generation of national security leaders, the kind that CNAS seeks to build, are likely to face more discordance over the role of American global leadership than at any time in recent memory. Since World War II, the world has become a much safer and

more prosperous place thanks to that American leadership, but the challenges that we face today are growing ever more complex.

It's not as easy to lump large portions of international policy under an umbrella of us versus the Soviets anymore. There are difficult choices and tradeoffs to be made with real strategic and economic consequence. And policymakers here in Washington are not necessarily as practiced at articulating those tradeoffs to a wider electorate. Foreign policy can at times be an esoteric pursuit where new perspectives are not always welcomed and public engagement does not always come easy.

The foreign policy discourse these last few years indeed suggests that that broad consensus that many of us thought governed America's role in the world may not as broad as we thought. National security leaders may need to become comfortable in negotiating American policy not only with foreign statesmen, but also with the men and women of all our various states.

As the next Bacevich fellow, I hope to channel the lieutenant's spirit of service as we confront this challenge head on. To the Bacevich family and to all of you here, I promise to do my utmost to live up to the example of this fellowship's namesake and to its already storied history. Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. BRIMLEY: Thank you, everyone for that. And congratulations to Harry.

End Transcript