

TRANSCRIPT: Ralph Reed, President of Century Strategies warns of dangers of declining defense spending

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Frank, thank you so much. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to join everybody, if only by phone, this afternoon. Frank, I want to thank you and the Center for Security Policy. I want to thank Tony [UNCLEAR] Really, all the members of the coalition that have come together today in Washington. I will be relatively brief and just tell you that I think as the son of a career naval officer that served on an aircraft carrier in Vietnam, I was born on a Navy base, my sister was born on a Navy base, my brother was born on a Navy base, and my wife is the son of a career Army officer and did two tours of duty as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam.

So for me, this is not just a matter of policy. It's personal. I grew up with it at a time when, you know, those who gave their lives or put their lives at risk in a war that they were sent by their country to fight were not always honored and respected. I don't want to ever see that or the hollowing out of the military that happened after Vietnam. Never happen again. And I fear that if the cuts that are contemplated, the ones that have already been undertaken by this administration, in excess of three or four hundred billion dollars, that have been rejected. Six hundred billion [UNCLEAR] under a sequestration, under the so-called debt deal. Which, given the marker that the president laid down on Monday, and given the position that John Boehner and the House Republicans have taken, which is not to support a tax increase, I think if we sit here today, my friends, the sequestration is looming like a storm cloud. And I think the consequences will be devastating. The Navy has the smallest number of ships it has had since [UNCLEAR]. We all remember when Ronald Reagan blocked from a six hundred ship navy. It is now a shadow of its former strength. The Air Force has the smallest number of aircraft and bases since it was founded as a separate service in 1947. And the causes of our deficit, the cause of our debt is not the military.

Between 2010 and 2015, total defense spending will fall from about five percent to about three and a half percent of GDP. And whereas the military is a percentage of our federal budget with half our budget during World War Two, half of the—I'm sorry, ninety percent of the federal budget during World War Two, half of the federal budget during Vietnam, thirty percent of the federal budget when Ronald Reagan won the Cold War. It's now a fifth of the budget and falling. And you can't blame twenty percent of the federal budget for the largest deficit that has been racked up in US history. The real root of the problem, as everyone knows, is entitlement. And it's the runaway spending of entitlement. Let me just close, Frank, because I really don't want to go on too long, by saying that those of us who are either allies of or active in the Tea Party Movement and I've definitely got people who have called in from around the country, who are part of the Tea Party Movement who are joining us today, we believe in a smaller and limited government. But we don't

believe in a government that is incapable of executing the primary function that our founders intended for the federal government. Which was to secure the border and to provide for the common defense. That was laid out in the Federalist Papers by our founders as the primary purpose of establishing a national government. And if these cuts go through, if we allow the so-called debt deal sequestration to happen, I believe that will endanger our servicemen and women's ability to win the war on terror as they fight on the frontlines in places like Afghanistan and Iraq and, really, all over the world. It will make the modernization of critical weapons systems impossible. And it's critical that we fight this. So, Frank, I thank you for the opportunity and privilege to be with you. It's been a great honor to be a part of this coalition and I just want to thank you and everybody else for all they're doing. We need to make it impossible for the Congress and the president to hollow out our military in a time of war. Thank you.