

TRANSCRIPT

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THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT AND MAY CONTAIN ERRORS. USERS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAPES OR NOTES OF THE SESSION IF ABSOLUTE VERIFICATION OF WORDING IS NEEDED.

Q: Welcome to Lieutenant General Robert J. Elder, Jr. He's the Commander of 8th Air Force. What's the other title?

A: The Joint Functional Component Commander for Global Strike, STRATCOM.

Q: That kind of rolls off the tongue, doesn't it? It's good to have you back.

A: Thank you. It's good to be here.

Q: The General was here about two years ago and we talked mostly about cyber. I presume this time we'll be talking mostly about bombers. That's kind of where I wanted to start out this morning. A long time ago, 1992, the Air Force put together SAC and TAC and got away from this "tactical airpower" and "strategic airpower," it was just indivisible airpower, seamless. Now it seems like the objective is to put the bombers back in a garrison, strategic mode to some extent without losing the expeditionary capability. Is that correct? If so, you've got to have lots of challenges doing that. Maybe you can tell us a little bit about that.

A: Sure. First of all, that's a great question to start with. It is correct that it was in 1992 when SAC was divested, basically. For the longest time I told people we put SAC and TAC together, but as we've been approaching how we deal with reinvigorating the nuclear enterprise while maintaining this capability to do our tactical or theater mission, what we realized is what really happened was we took Strategic Air Command and we actually divested it into three parts. So the indications and warning satellites went to Space Command; the tankers went to Mobility Command; and the bombers went to

what is now Air Combat Command. That was part of, as you pointed out, we're trying to get away from a concept that there was a strategic air force and a tactical air force, one to where you could go from tactical to strategic and it really didn't matter about the platform, which is still true today.

So the idea is that we organized functionally into this combat air forces, mobility air forces, and space so that if you're a Joint Functional Air Component Commander, for example, you can reach across this and do what you need to do to pull these together.

Of course as you also pointed out, we put a lot of emphasis on the ability to deploy anywhere in the world and to be able to do that. So actually it started working, it goes back to October of '86 with the Goldwater/Nichols Act. That's really one of the precursors to this. Then you had the fall of the Berlin Wall that enabled all these things to occur.

So if you think about what our integrating function has been though, it's been the JFACC, the Joint Functional Air Component Commander. So that works in a theater, but if you're going to integrate this for, to go back to what would have been the strategic mission, we didn't have that integrating concept back in place.

To complicate it a little bit more, back in 2002 when Strategic Command and Space Command were merged, that's the big things that happened, but in addition you recall there were all these other missions that were given to Strategic Command. Since 2002, Strategic Command's been working to try to figure out how to bring in all these missions. Of course General Cartwright went and set up these Joint Functional Component Commands which General Chilton has continued. But General Chilton has focused us on three lines of operation. The primary line of operation, the first line of operation is strategic deterrence. That's what I'm now vested to do in my hat. So even if it's called Joint Functional Component Commander, Global Strike, our primary focus is on strategic deterrence. And our Air Operations Center at 8th Air Force doesn't look like a normal air ops center. It is strictly focused on being this integrated function.

So the way we've done this is to leave the Air Force organized the way it is, but you realize that you need to have ways to integrate across those different functional capabilities to achieve what is now a strategic effect.

If I can go on one step further, what we've done at 8th Air Force as well is we've attempted to look at what you might call operational level effects, and one of the things that we noticed, we've done a number of seminars trying to build up our capability to do this, and one of the things we thought about was there were some huge lessons that we should have gained in the Air Force from what happened in Northern Watch and Southern Watch, with Bosnia, Kosovo, and then basically ending up with, we went into Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom, having to do with the use of airpower at what amounts to an operational level. And one of the problems we had as an Air Force, and this is my opinion, is that because we were looking at it from a tactical perspective it

was predominantly air forces involved in those.

So we got this idea in our mind that this was air forces that were doing this, when in fact the situation was that it was not air forces alone. Northern Watch and Southern Watch worked because this was airpower integrated with the political instrument of power, if you think about it. It turns out it was very successful, by the way. I went to talk to the Air Force Academy, I went to talk to Air Command and Staff College and the War College and I said it's actually surprising that as airmen we don't stand up and get really excited about the success of Southern Watch and Northern Watch because it was there to enforce a UN Security Council Resolution. There were two of them. One for the north was for the Kurds; the south was for the Shia; but the third one had to do with preventing Saddam Hussein from developing weapons of mass destruction so it was a pretty successful operation.

Then in Bosnia, airpower was not alone. It enabled the Bosnians and the Croatians to defeat the Serbians. Kosovo, you have a situation where you have basically a combination of diplomacy and economic instruments that were enabled by the use of the information instrument. In this case it sent to the business leaders, punctuated with airpower.

So we've tried to look at that. That's why I talk about these integrating functions. It's really important to understand that it's good to be organized functionally so you can adapt across, but if you try to work just within the stovepipe then you lose the effectiveness.

Q: Is that what you call the global deterrence force? That concept?

A: The global deterrence force is a way for us to deal with, one of the things when we started looking at this was we said what's the difference between a nuclear operation and a conventional operation?

Q: Besides the obvious. [Laughter].

A: Besides the obvious. Actually what's interesting is the big difference is that in a nuclear operation the big difference is that you don't want the weapon to go off. That's the biggest difference. The goal is not to use the weapon. When you're doing conventional operations you're actually looking for opportunities for those weapons to achieve an affect. So really it's not so much the nuclear op as a deterrence operation which the nuclear ops are, compared to a conventional operation.

So what we found was before Vietnam, in fact those that were in Strategic Air Command were accused of having this mindset that they were much too rigid in the way they thought and everything else, so part of what happened after Vietnam was to try to get us to think better about how to use airpower in this theater context, which we did pretty successfully.

With the end of the Cold War, that was going to be our primary thing we used the bombers for. The reason we have the global deterrence force is that we need to have, the global deterrence force is a wing activity and we focus the entire wing on doing these nuclear operations. One of the key things about a nuclear operation is that the focus is all about nuclear surety, basically. So we talk about the safety, security and reliability of the stockpile. Most of that what we call nuclear ops is actually done by people who don't wear a flight suit. So it's done by the maintenance people, it's done by the civil engineers, it's done by the security forces. There's only a small piece that's actually done by the operators. Whereas the conventional ops, the major piece is done by the air crew members supported by all these other people we talked about.

So what the GDF allows us to do is for a year-long period of time we have a wing that focuses almost exclusively on doing that mission. So what we've done is we've tried to make it almost like an on/off switch. When you're in what we now call TSP which is the Theater Security Posture, then you still maintain your nuclear requirements, as we call it, but you focus on doing the theater mission which is the conventional mission. Now we're concerned about how you integrate the bombers with other aircraft, primarily, and other capabilities.

When we go into the GDF, now the focus is on how do we demonstrate the capability and the reliability of the stockpile so that not only our competitors but also our friends, because a large piece of this is you want your allies to be assured that what you're doing is going to continue to protect them.

So it's like an on/off switch. You're in GDF. We want you to think like it's still the Cold War. When we put you into TSP we do a spin-up period, we get your mind recast, we want you to think about how you integrate with other forces.

Q: General, when Secretary Gates was asked about the decision to postpone the 2018 bomber at Maxwell last week he said before continuing with the program for a next generation manned bomber we should first assess the requirements and what other capabilities we might have for this mission, as well as the outcome of post START arms control negotiations.

The requirement for a 2018 bomber, though, came out of the previous QDR which was not too long after the START negotiations with Russia and the previous Nuclear Posture Review. So from the operator's perspective, what do you know that you need in a future bomber and what do you think still needs to be studied?

A: That is a good question. One of the interesting things about the current bomber force is that, for example the B-52, the airframe itself is old but we keep pumping in new avionics, new weapons, and we've been able to extend this thing for a long time. We continue to do that. So as an operator what we're looking for with the 2018 bomber was something that would be able to take the B-2 to a new level. Kind of like taking the 117 to

the F-22, not only is it stealthier, the F-22, that is, but the other thing is that it's easier to maintain so it's better to use. So from an operational standpoint that's what we were looking for.

It's also important to recognize in the statement that Secretary Gates made that he didn't say we weren't going to build this bomber. He said it was really more to postpone the decision to where we understand the START negotiations and some of the other ramifications.

So I don't know the full piece of this, but if you're going into a START negotiation one of the things that happens is that they have counting rules. This is if they use something like START. I suspect that one of the things that could be in play here, I don't know this for a fact, it makes sense to me, is that what you don't want to do is lock yourself in on an airplane until you know what the counting rule is going to be. Why would I launch a program this year that puts me in a bad position in terms of how I'm negotiating for what our START negotiations are going to look like.

So I think, who am I to say what the Secretary of Defense thinks, it's a wise decision, but the point of not tying our hands for negotiations seems to make pretty good sense.

Q: The Air Force has said all along that the 2018 date is difficult but manageable. If you wait another two years to begin a program the difficult might become impossible. How important is 2018 as opposed to some other date to build a capability?

A: I think 2018 was an important date to put on the wall in terms of what they were looking at with looking at some modernization programs. Interestingly enough it doesn't have to do so much with the B-52s going out, but I believe it's really tied to when the ALCM is getting ready to go out of the inventory. So if you have this airplane, this would enable you to change the approach you have for some of your standoff weaponry.

So I think the part of that that allows you, and once again I'm not the program expert on that, but the B-52 itself is good until 2040. So 2018 is not tied to the airframe. That date does seem to be tied to some of the weapons that it carries.

Q: Do you think it's a good idea to let potential arms control considerations drive your force structure decisions rather than the other way around?

A: In this particular case since they're looking at doing this negotiation this year, and again I don't know for a fact. But since the Secretary brought this up, normally I would say you'd have your strategy and then your strategy drives your force structure. In this case the Russians are looking at a new bomber as well but they haven't declared what their new bomber's going to look like either. I definitely don't know why the Russians haven't explained theirs. But the counting rules for bombers in START are pretty onerous, quite frankly, to the point that in my own view one of the reasons that the bombers were reduced in terms of how they were used in the war plans was the way the

darn things were counted against the initial START. Now it's not as much of a problem with the Moscow or the SORT as they call it, because the operational deployed is actually slightly more reasonable approach. It actually counts the warheads as opposed to what the platforms are capable of carrying.

For example, the way a B-52 is counted, it's counted as carrying more weapons than we might even want to carry operationally. So it looks inefficient in the current negotiations. So from that standpoint, if the START negotiation is going to be five years off from now then I would say no, but if it's a matter of let's not lock ourselves in for six months, then it seems to make a little more sense.

Q: So if you've got this nuclear force that you have to ensure you can penetrate, to do that you have to have electronic warfare. Who in the world is in charge of electronic warfare now? Will you have two projects of EB-52 that have been derailed? The F-111 is long gone. Even the Navy's pulling its EA-6Bs out of AEFs with nothing to replace them.

So who's at the controls of electronic warfare and how do you get there?

A: I like electronic warfare, by the way. In fact earlier in my career I was involved in doing quite a bit of that. It's interesting that when we talk about electronic warfare that different people immediately get different ideas in their mind about what it means. So if I talk to a fighter pilot, when you say electronic warfare to him, he immediately thinks of electronic protection. The platforms you were talking about were what we typically refer to as either jamming or electronic attack platforms.

So the electronic warfare has these many facets and over a period of time there's been, certainly with the loss of the EF-111 for the Air Force, that was a decision made years back, that we would have the one platform for the Department of Defense and that was going to be the EA-6. It's done a good job for us.

The fact is that a lot of what we've been, there's been some pretty good use of electronic warfare obviously in terms of like OIF and we've seen it in some other contexts, but you're correct that with the legacy platforms that we have it's going to be important to find another way to provide that same electronic attack capability. The core component jammer was one they looked at for the B-52, that had some promise. We still have the EC-130s. The Navy's going with their Growler.

I believe the Air Force is looking at taking some different approaches that basically take advantage of the stealth that you'll have in the F-22 and the F-35 and trying to package the platforms. I personally don't have the exact technical information on how they plan on putting these things together, but the reality is that the capabilities on these platforms, I believe that one of the reasons that the Air Force has been less concerned about this has been their approach in terms of using stealth.

Q: Well, a B-52 is not stealth.

A: No, and that's why it's been being used as a standoff platform. Its approach has been not to defend on its electronic protection or to depend on electronic jamming.

One of the reasons that the B-52 turned out to be so effective in Kosovo and beyond was that our adversaries had tactical SAMs, but when the B-52s got the WCMD and then the JDAM and you could drop from high altitude, that gave us a capability to operate in what would have been contested airspace.

Q: That means you're betting everything on 19 [B-2s]. That doesn't seem to be a very big force structure to talk about penetrating. So how do you get beyond that?

A: You just answered, in the long term, realistically, that's where that 2018 bomber is going to--

Q: But the Russians have already inked a deal for SA-20s to go to Iran. They're not there yet but the deal is inked. Your A-2s--

A: I did read the newspaper article but given that the Russians are pretty savvy, so if they send SA-20s there that obviously is not a tactical SAM so you're not going to be able to operate a B-52 in that airspace. You'd have to use standoff. Or you're going to have to use some type of packaged forces as I was talking about earlier.

Q: But EA and EW still seems to be missing from the mix. How do you grapple with that? That's going to be as good a weapon as nuclear weapons.

A: The reality is that, my sense is that the Air Force, and a lot of this is still in AFRL, stuff like that, they're looking at a number of ways to do that electronic attack mission without having a dedicated platform. I believe that's the approach the Air Force has taken. Although I don't know that for fact because there's no program of record that I'm aware of to support that. But I do know that with the platforms we currently are developing or building, including JSF and F-22, the requirement for electronic attack is not nearly as high. But when you talk about bombers, which is really what you're asking about, the B-1 and the B-52 in particular are going to have difficulty operating in an environment with SA-20s. And the B-2, you're also correct, if it's going to be operating you're going to have to do something to mitigate the SA-20 threat.

Q: That something is still a big question mark. You can't really give us--

A: The way we typically do it is with force packaging, so you'd use a standoff weapon to go after the SA-20 or use a platform that can go in and get after it.

Q: Unmanned jammers, is that part of the answer?

A: That could be, but I'm not aware of that, though.

Q: General, in the past month [inaudible] of General Atomics has been flying third generation Predator, the Predator C, the Avenger. 400 knots. When you look at what's happened in unmanned aircraft in the last eight years over Afghanistan and Iraq, what's the likelihood of an unmanned next generation bomber?

A: I believe at some point you're going to see some unmanned bombers. Secretary Gates posed that as a possibility I believe when he was talking to the Air War College group.

There's a lot of capability, and certainly the big advantage you get with an unmanned aerial system is you don't have to worry about a friendly casualty from using that. I think before that happens, though, there's some technology, some big advantages that are going to have to come into play.

The first thing you have to realize is, as an airman I always have to remind people how important it is to have air superiority. In this case there's another problem you have to have. In the future you're going to have to have what we've been referring to as the cyber superiority. I'm not talking about network attack as much as I'm talking about we are not really having to deal with an adversary who's actively trying to jam our links.

Q: They don't have EW either.

A: That's right. They've got the same problem we have, I guess.

Q: The Georgians proved that, didn't they?

A: So the fact is that with the way that we're moving with intelligence systems and everything else, for this thing really to ultimately get to that point you're going to have to have an airplane that has the equivalent of a pilot, bringing on board in terms of the computational capabilities, to be able to react to change and to make decisions based on information that's available in a previously given direction. That's the strong point for putting a pilot into an aircraft today. There are a lot of things, if you go back to say an AOC or you go down to the ground force to get some information, that's typically for coordination. Ultimately [inaudible] may fall. The world may hold these pilots accountable for collateral damage and for fratricide.

Q: Doesn't all that apply to the Reaper and the Predator today?

A: It does, but the way that thing works is, now it goes back and you've got a pilot flying it and a sensor operator, they're now the ones that are responsible. So if you're dealing in a situation where you're operating with a lost link, then--

Q: You mean truly autonomous.

A: Truly autonomous. If you're dealing in a situation where you have a contested

electromagnetic environment, then you're going to have to, you're going to have to operate without those links. That's an issue you have to deal with. Even some of these ISR platforms that can operate autonomously, to be useful have to have the link to be able to send back the information. They can't really make assessments based on that and then try to find some other way to pass the information to you.

So while I'm a huge supporter of unmanned aerial systems for a variety of reasons, I think that for--I'm also a big proponent of a concept, I call this a "cyber" concept. It's really an operational concept. I say you always have to approach everything that you do from a mission assurance standpoint. When I talk to my fellow operators I say mission assurance is what you do when information assurance fails. So you have to expect that in a wartime situation that you're going to have losses of connectivity. We have all kinds of processes and procedures we use with pilots, for example, to deal with that. I think that eventually some day we'll be able to build that into these UASes and be able to operate without a pilot, but in a sense there will be the equivalent of a pilot that's in there in terms of having trained some type of artificial intelligence to be able to take that on. Because our adversaries, if we're dealing with a nation state adversary they're going to start going after our links because the links are so important to us.

Q: I wonder if you could talk broadly about the cyber issue and the Air Force role, and in particular I'm curious on your thoughts on what offensive operations in terms of what the Air Force and other military services should train people to train cyber operators in that--if they should train them in that realm.

A: I used to be heavily into the cyber business. I'm now a highly interested spectator. Of course we do have--

Q: But you do have some expertise.

A: We do it at Strategic Command as well. So realistically, when we talk about offensive cyber operations I remind people that if you were talking about offensive air operations there's interdiction, there's close air support, and there's strategic attack. What we get involved with really depends on the adversary and what we're trying to do.

So just like I've tried to parse what you do with electronic warfare, I think the role that we end up playing when we're looking at these offensive cyber operations really needs to be put into this context of it's not always going to be the equivalent of a strategic attack. I think that's what people think of today when they look at it.

From my standpoint, though, I think that cyber's important to every airman, in fact every member of the armed services. I take it a step further. It should be anyone that touches a computer, and that's mainly just understanding the concept of defense. That's where I put all my emphasis, quite frankly, because you can't really start trying to put in a really good offense until you can defend yourself. Whenever you throw a punch they're going to throw a punch back. We as a nation, forget about the services, but our approach

to this thing has been to take a security approach rather than a defense approach.

What I mean by that is that we're content to put up some type of a barrier or a wall around what we think is our network and then we're counting on that wall to protect us. We don't deal with the fact that there might be someone already inside the wall that can be a threat to us.

If you're worried about that say in a city or whatever, you have police forces and stuff and you have neighborhood watches and you don't let your kids go out and play at night without being supervised. That's being defensive instead of just security. I think that's the mindset that we need to take as a nation as we approach the cyber, is a big focus on not just expecting our walls that we've set up to be the protection, but to really start thinking about how you defend yourself in cyberspace.

It turns out, by the way, that a lot of this is really common sense. But we don't know enough about cyberspace to understand how common sense it is. I mean you wouldn't drive your car into Washington, DC here, as good as the police department is, and leave the windows down with the key in there and then walk away and expect to see the car when you came back. You shouldn't do the same thing in terms of what you do with your systems.

The one other thing I'd point out on this is there's a huge focus in terms of we think about this in terms of data loss or data gain and the reality is that the big concern that the banks have and that we should have is an adversary manipulating the data. The worst part of that is unless you put some things in place you might not know the data's been manipulated. So you have to have some checks and balances. That's how you would notice--the same way you notice that someone is playing with the books, you have a ledger and a journal. You need to have ways that you can tell that someone's been tampering with your data.

A good business model for that are the banks. They've done a lot of work in that area to do that.

Q: Following up on that, I don't know if you saw the report today, but the breach in the F-35 security. I don't know if that indicates, you said we need to rethink it. Does the whole system need to be revamped? Are we on shaky ground?

A: I read the report. I don't have any specifics, but if I can apply what I talked about there, when you have something like the F-35 that has suppliers, I don't know how many, it has a lot. Probably hundreds of suppliers. They all have to be networked together. So you have to have ways to be able to share this information. The only time you share information, then you run the risk quite frankly when you share the information that you might share it with someone that you don't want to be able to share that information with.

So when that kind of situation is going to occur, we tend to think that we put these things in place that we think are going to protect us. We're depending on firewalls and everything else. The fact is that just like we tell people any time you prepare an email you ought to think there's a chance that someone's going to read that email that you don't want to read it. When you're doing things, whether at home or in this case, things that you want to do in terms of protecting this thing to make it difficult to be exploited. It's one thing for someone to get inside your system. It's another thing for them to be able to do something with it.

So you know, using that same analogy, we know there are criminals out on the street but there's a lot of things you do to keep the criminal from actually taking advantage of you, if you will. And those kinds of mindsets need to be taken in terms of not only what you do in the industry, but what you do at home.

So I'm talking about, for example, hardly anybody uses it, but the Windows Vista, for example, if you're using Windows, it has all kinds of encryption capabilities. Most of the things you do you can take advantage, to cut yourself off from the network except when you want to be on. The typical criminal, they're going to play with your networks off hours. There are all kinds of things that you could do that would be typical. You may be willing to leave your door unlocked at your house when you're home, but when you leave, you lock it. We just need to start thinking that way in terms of how you do cyber. It's the same way.

Q: General, when Secretary Gates [inaudible] his budget, he sort of made the case that weapon systems should feel a little safer if they have utility from high end combat all the way through irregular. TacAir, of course has proven its value in counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare.

When you look at long range strike, does it have a role in counterterrorism? Or is that actually a question that shouldn't be asked because it's such a unique capability?

A: There are a couple of pieces of this thing. I agree that the more utility you have, obviously that's important. I think our Air Force Secretary and Chief are working to do that.

But your specific question goes to, so what's the value of long range strike?

One of them, I kind of alluded to this with the question that Bob asked which is, first of all when we talk about irregular warfare, a number of people in OSD have started referring to it a little bit differently. They refer to it as irregular military operations. They do that to make a distinction because if you look at what we typically look at our typical phasing model, we've always put a lot of focus into phases two and three with phase two is the entry, phase three is the actual decisive combat ops. Where we found we were in a bind before and we've put a lot of emphasis, and the reason that General Petraeus has gotten to be a national hero is because he said you really can't fight a phase four

operation using phase three approaches.

So he basically came up with a different concept for Iraq that said we're going to change the way we approach this thing where the objective is to stabilize an area, and to stabilize the area that might mean that we have to kill or capture insurgents but that's not the priority. The priority is stabilization. Whereas before the priority was on killing and capturing insurgents. Then we hope that stability will come from that.

So when we talk about this, and now you talk about what's the role of the Air Force in this, I think up until now we have not done a good job of really looking at what military force in general, not just air, military force in general can do in terms of enabling other instruments of power to be effective.

Secretary Gates talked about this, he said we need to put more emphasis on soft power and those types of things. If I can digress just a tiny bit, if you look back at the beginning of the Air Force, the Air Force was created in 1947 not to primarily to support ground forces or to do mobility. Those were initial capabilities we had. It was created because of this concept that was then called containment and later called deterrence which was an idea that you would use this military force to underpin a national strategy which was largely political in nature.

So when we look at what General Petraeus did in Iraq, there are some huge lessons for airmen there, which is what did he do? He said we're going to stabilize these areas. We want to put the Iraqis in charge of an area. The problem is, if we put them in there the insurgents are going to take advantage of that because they know how to mass and take advantage of these insurgents because the Iraqis are not as well trained as we are. So what we'll do is we're going to bring in these extra forces. We're also going to be in a lot of ISR, because as you know, there's been a lot more ISR that was in there. We're going to protect those Iraqis. If the forces mass, then we'll use the US force to take out the massing force.

Well, the lesson for airmen is, that's what we did in Bosnia and that's what we did in Afghanistan that enabled in one case the Bosnians and Croatians, in the other case the Northern Alliance to be effective. So as you look at this, if you think about this strictly in terms of how effective are bombers in terms of supporting "irregular warfare", the fact is they're used quite a bit in Afghanistan, largely because the B-1s can stay up there a long time. We're gradually building up a capability now to where we can use Kandahar and Bagram and even Kabul to fly TacAir. But as long as we're convinced that we're never going to fight anywhere else but Iraq and Afghanistan, it's okay. If you think you might go somewhere else, until you have the five years it takes to build that up, bombers have played a critical role particularly in Afghanistan since 2001.

Q: But that's long range strike in a tactical role. I'm asking specifically about--

A: Oh, the long range strike?

Q: --the long range strike mission that you command.

A: Well, when we're doing it in a long range strike capacity, that's where you go back to, and this is the thing General Chilton's working on at STRATCOM. So this is the idea that we're going to use, it's kind of the Sun Tzu versus the Clausewitzian approach. What we want to do is go back and make sure the big thing that we're capable of doing that really no other force is capable of doing, we can hold any target at risk and we don't physically have to move our forces. The Navy has the capability of having a presence anywhere, any part of the globe on the water, but we're not constrained by any part of that because of this long range strike.

The idea is not every chance you have to go start bombing. What you do want to do is, you want to use that now to underpin--don't think of it as a tactical use of global strike, think of it as how the ability to have that global strike can underpin a strategy that uses all the instruments of national power. That's where I think the great power of the bomber comes from. One of the problems we have today is that we are still focused on the tactical piece of this and you'd expect that because there's a lot of attention there because we have ground forces in combat and when we're losing, we're having casualties, that causes you to focus there.

What the Air Force, I would argue that the reason that you have separate services is not so that they'll all do the same thing. They should be providing alternatives. So your alternative may be rejected.

It's kind of interesting, from 1991 until 2003 ground forces, US ground forces were hardly used. The Air Force was the heavily engaged force due to Northern Watch and Southern Watch. Now you hear geez, the air forces are not being used as extensively as ground forces. Well, that's true because we've shifted the operation. That doesn't mean that you'll never have a need for this capability.

But for us to really get that need, one of the things we have to do is, and STRATCOM-- One of the things that happened with Goldwater/Nichols is you split the warfighter from the producer. The organize, train and equip. So this is a case of the Air Force working, Strategic Command needs to develop these alternatives, if you will. It may be that the President, the Commander in Chief and the Secretary of Defense say we don't like that alternative. But the reason that you have an Air Force is to provide alternatives.

Q: Hi, General. I wanted to ask you about future long range strike and the future bomber. I'll ask the question this way.

Secretary Gates has thrown into question the need for a new Air Force combat search and rescue platform, saying he doesn't want to go down the road of having a service specific platform for what is inherently a joint mission.

You are, in your role as Commander of 8th Air Force, you're an advocate for a future bomber. I'm wondering if you see kind of a sea change coming in how you will have to defend the new bomber. Do you think that, going into the QDR that the questions won't just be well what kind of new bomber should we have, manned, unmanned, this type of payload, that type of payload, but rather do we need a service specific platform for what is inherently a joint mission?

A: I think there's a pretty big difference here. The CSAR mission, and I think it's important to point out that while the Air Force has typically conducted that mission, it's conducted for all the services. And the CSAR helicopter was one platform part of a joint operation typically. So routinely when you would do a CSAR operation you'd be doing it in conjunction with Marine aircraft or in a lot of cases it would be done in conjunction with the Army or Navy Air. So the fact, as an example, the Navy ended up years back with having the EA-6 because there was a decision that we weren't going to have all the services do the same capability even though it's a joint mission.

So in the case of the CSAR, I want to caveat it that as an airman I never thought that we only had the CSAR to go after Air Force pilots because in fact that's not the case. But it's a little different here.

The bomber goes back to when you look at how each of the services are different, I mean it's that long range, that global--The bumper sticker we use is global reach, power and vigilance. But that really is what differentiates the Air Force.

So just as, we wouldn't say well the Navy shouldn't buy ships because they're not joint, only the Navy operates ships. The Army actually has more boats than the Navy does.

Q: And more aircraft than you.

A: And more aircraft. But in terms of how they're operated, it makes sense that this is, you're actually getting to the crux of the problem here. It really is a signature mission for the Air Force because if you only try and understand it in tactical terms then it's kind of more difficult to understand. In a tactical term typically there is a supported commander. In the case of Operation Northern Watch and Southern Watch, the supported commander was an airman. We had Patriots and things like that that support us. In the current fight we've got forces in contact on the ground, the supported commander's the ground commanders so everything else is done in support of that. So it's sometimes hard to think about these other levels. These are these alternatives I was talking about. An operational alternative that uses, that you're going to need in the future, for example.

If we pull the US ground forces out of Iraq then there's still going to be US air forces there to help provide ISR, to support those Iraqi forces. And so that the importance is going to go again. That's going to be an operational level type capability.

I keep going back to the strategic piece of this thing, I'm not suggesting we go back to Strategic Air Command, because Strategic Air Command operated on the principle of power for peace, and remember they used to say peace is our profession. The idea of having this capability is to be able to project power around the world to enable your diplomats and our national security apparatus to have some teeth.

Q: But do you see, sir, my follow-up, you said if I understood you correctly, long range strike is a signature mission of the Air Force.

A: Right.

Q: But do you see that being challenged? That's kind of my question. You said, I don't want to misquote you or insult you, but that's kind of an assumption. Do you use that being challenged in any way going into the QDR? Because I for one was very surprised when Secretary Gates made his comments about CSAR-X. I had not ever thought that that mission, or the need for a new platform would be challenged, but it was, and now that whole program's in question.

I'm just wondering, similarly, with long range strike, if you're going to face the same type of thing, going ahead when you try to advocate for the new bomber.

A: I guess I'm an optimist. I hope not. I think it's very different. I believe that, of course I've only been able to read the same things you read from Secretary Gates, but my optimistic read of this was that he was not willing right now to commit to a program until some things worked out. Part of what the QDR--But I think a piece of it was also tied to the NPR and the follow-on START. It was just prudent to not lock ourselves in.

I don't believe that there's any thought that the nation should abandon having a bomber force.

Q: General, dovetailing a little bit on Tom's question, a little more than 20 years ago the airmen executing this strategic deterrence mission would have gone into [stabilization]. Now it's kind of hard to put on a bumper sticker what they're contributing to the counterterrorism war. Can you give us a sense of A, the morale of the airmen executing that mission? And B, the quality of the airmen in getting into that profession.

A: That's a good question. Interestingly enough, and I apologize, interestingly enough when we had the problem with the unauthorized weapon transfer, we referred to it, and went back to look at what happened. The first thing we recognized was that, and this is basically coming out of the DSB report that was led by General Welch. That was a belief that they're correct, that we had stopped thinking about strategic and nuclear deterrence as a mission in the Air Force, certainly for the bombers. Because once we took the bombers off alert we thought if you're not on alert then you must not be part of the deterrence force.

That's incorrect. Dr. Schlesinger made that point pretty well. But you're part of the deterrence force whether you actually have weapons loaded or not. The fact that you can load the weapons makes you part of the deterrence force. That's also why you practice loading the weapons, is to show your competitors and once again your friends, that's very important, that you do still have this capability and that you can quickly bring the force back up if you need to.

One thing that happened at that point was whenever we have a mission we always put someone in charge. You recall at the time, one of the things that the Defense Science Board report said was that there was no one above the wing level that was really focused on that mission. There are a number of reasons for how that developed over time, but the real reason was we didn't treat it as a mission.

General Corley, Air Combat Command Commander, when he took over said we're going to treat this like a mission. Put a commander in charge. That was me. And we're going to activate Task Force 204 with the sole focus on making sure that we conduct this mission the way it's supposed to be done. That's what we did.

That sets the stage to answer your question.

What we realized was that when you look at some of the problems we had, they really were people related problems. At the heart of it the Air Force is not about the platforms, they're about the people, the airmen that operate those platforms.

One of the questions that came up was how can Minot, for example, who had done so well on an NSI in May have allowed something like this to happen in August? The answer is, of course, the immediate answer was there must have been a flaw with the NSI itself. But when you peel the onion back what you find out, it was not the inspection itself. There was an aspect of the process. The real issue is that the people that were inspected in May weren't the same people that were doing the operations in August. That's because we would tell the wings 18 months ahead of time when they were going to get the inspection. So this became more of an evaluation of their ability to prepare for a test, to prepare for an inspection, than it was actually what they did day to day.

So what Air Combat Command did, we now do all of our, most of our, there's one type of NSI we do that's a notice, and that's when it's done in conjunction with a nuclear ORI. But otherwise all the nuclear surety inspections are now done no notice or limited notice. Quite frankly, it takes months to get ready for one of these, so a no notice is basically they show up on your door with a very small team to just look at one little piece. You have absolutely no notice at all. They walk in, they say right now we're going to test air crews, or we want to go out and check your weapon inventory. That's the complete no notice.

The limited notice is they basically, they have to apply to get a permit to land at the base, and at the point that they apply for the permit, that's when you know that something's

going on because why is it they've got this big airplane coming into your base from Langley?

So in conjunction with that, though, our weapon handling regulation, AFI 21-204, it had been modified during the period of time when we went through what's called the Quality Air Force Period. We were trying to flatten organizations, empower the people at all levels. By the way, in the nuke business the last thing you want to do is empower people at all levels to make their own decisions. [Laughter]. By the way, that's what the AFI basically was set up to do. What we did was we put it back the way it used to be and we now enforce those standards.

So we now practice this every day. We're actually holding the airmen to a higher standard. And because we do that, believe it or not, that's exactly what they expect. The people that join the military like regimentation. When you take away this regimentation you take away the sense they have of being in this uniform military service. That's why we wear uniforms and everything else.

So I would say that the morale prior to this, particularly in the nuclear area, was probably not good because no one seriously treated it as a mission. We weren't getting the resources, we weren't getting the people. Since then it is now considered a viable mission, we do put people against it, morale is high, a great sense of professionalism, and in fact every chance we get we keep inviting people to our bases because we want-- In fact the invitation goes out to you. We want you to meet our airmen, we want to see our people do it. You will be impressed to talk to one of our airmen doing the nuclear mission. I think I can speak for General Burg in the ICBM world as well. You will be absolutely impressed at the level of professionalism and how excited they are to be doing the mission.

Q: Thanks. I wanted to go back to what Julian was talking about about cyber. You talk a lot about network operations and cyber defense. I wanted to sort of ask you about the bigger picture. There's been a lot of reorganization going on within the department. Your command, 8th Air Force, used to be on its way to being a major command for cyber and now it's not. People like General Cartwright often talk about how the US government effort is dysfunctional, lack of communication, [inaudible]. I'm wondering what do you think needs to be done to fix that, to improve how our government, different parts of our government operate in cyber? And also on the international level, the rules of engagement, how to identify combatants. What do we have to do to get up to speed on this?

A: I should tell you that I happen to know, also from reading the paper, that Melissa Hathaway just gave a report to the President on this and I have no idea what's in the report. The bad news is I had a chance to read this report, but it was not on my priority list so I haven't even read it. But that's what she was tasked to try to look at.

I will say this, from a, I'll reiterate the comments I made earlier about what we do for

ourselves from a defense standpoint. I'm a big believer in also looking at some things that equate to the cyber deterrence, and I believe as a nation we need to understand, and this is just not the military, number one there are some critical vulnerabilities that need to be addressed. That primarily is what Homeland Security is being asked to look at. The other piece we have to do is we do need to establish some, up to this point there's a huge reluctance, largely because we tend to treat the internet like it's free so no one wants that thing to be regulated at all.

[Missing Portion]

--freedom for everyone and a recognition that this is the way we're doing our global economy so we need to enforce some kind of discipline on how we use it.

Q: So a very quick follow-up, you're talking about an international enforcement mechanism? Because the internet is international, you can't have US rules if you want everyone to follow it.

A: Eventually you'd like to get to where you had an international regime. But you're not going to even be able to start moving towards an international regime until you've figured out, we're going to be a leader in this area. So what we really need to look at it is what are the types of things we would do as a nation. When I talk about regulation, it has to do with, one of the simplest things right now, right now there's been huge resistance to, because of privacy concerns, to attribution on the internet. There's a lot that can happen if you have attribution. If you're able to identify packets, for example, so you know where they came from. Just like a privacy director, if you don't know where they came from you just say if I don't know where they came from I'm going to choose to ignore it. But right now because none of them are identified because we won't even allow that really to happen, we set ourselves up to where it's just total chaos.

Q: General, after last year, to go back to the nuclear issue, [inaudible] Air Force failed their inspection. What did you change this year to get some of those units back on track? And I understand they passed their reinspection. But the first go-around. How close are we to getting nuclear units back to that? And how important will the Global Strike Command [inaudible]?

A: A good question. First of all, let me just real quickly, the Global Strike Command, the Chief and the Secretary are working to stand up Air Force Global Strike Command because they want to institutionalize this Air Force focus on this important mission. So that's why that's being done.

What's interesting is, in the bomber business which is the one I'm more familiar with, we have not had a failure since the INSI for Minot. And when we actually looked at that one we recognized that once again it was because we had not properly addressed the people issue there. As soon as we addressed the people issue we were able to deal with that.

We have found in Air Combat Command that since we went to the no notice program, the NSI performance has actually improved, which was counter-intuitive, by the way. The reason we think it improved is because, what ended up happening, people were basically brought up to speed to try to do something. Now they have these processes in place that they use all the time. So it's being reinforced every day as opposed to something you gin up to do just for that one time show.

Q: Have there been any no notice NSIs thus far? To my knowledge there have only been, like you were pointing out, real small--

A: I have this interesting problem. I can tell you that Whiteman has had a no notice NSI and Barksdale has had two. One no notice and one limited notice. I got that backwards. Whiteman has had the limited notice NSI and Barksdale has had a limited notice and a no notice. And Minot has had a no notice. That's the one where they send the small team up. So five of these. The dumb thing is our current rule is that we will tell you if a unit fails an NSI but we're not going to tell you how a unit did overall unless they fail. Which-

Q: --make it positive. [Laughter].

A: That thing is being reviewed. But the bottom line is there's been five of these and we are very pleased with what that's done. Again, whether it's one of your local stringer, an affiliate, whatever, that would have an opportunity to go out to one of these bases we love to show off what we've done to reinvigorate this.

These are compliance inspections and what you have to realize is that this is a case of where one mistake, you flunk. So I'm not going to tell you that there is no possibility that we will ever have a failure again, but I will also tell you that because we've gone back to the way we used to do this--You may see a failure of a nuclear ORI. That's a little tougher. It's not just a compliance issue. But in terms of doing a nuclear surety inspection, these wings have put processes in place. This is on the bomber side. And I know that AFSPACE is doing the same thing with the ICBMs. I think they're going to see the same thing.

You have to recognize, when one of these units fail, what it fails for, in fact some of the things I think we told you what it was they failed for. You'd say they failed for that? But there's like no tolerance for error in this. So you should be very proud of the people that are doing this mission and they're doing a great job.

Q: I was just going to ask for the no notice portion of it, it's my understanding that a lot when these guys go in for the no notice portion, it's the commander that's asking which portion. Tell me if I'm wrong here, but the commander's asking which portion he wants looked at, the concerns he has in his wing. When are we going to get to a point where it's no notice into the NSI and we're talking completely across the board for an inspection

for the entire wing? Is that even possible?

A: It's pretty hard. But it's pretty close. The fact is that a typical limited notice NSI, they start on a Monday and you get notified on Saturday night that they're coming in Sunday afternoon. And there's no time, if you weren't already ready there's nothing you can do to get ready. So they might as well be a no notice.

But the limited notice, by the way, typically what Air Combat Command has been doing is an area that met their criteria but they were concerned that the processes weren't as good as they should have been. That's the sure-fire bet that they may come back in to look at you because they're looking for, what we're trying to do is assure the Chief, the Secretary, and in this case General Corley that the processes that are in place, and that the people who are in place, really are prepared to do the mission.

Q: I wonder if I can ask you one more. For the next generation bomber, which characteristics are the most important? If you could rank order them--speed, stealth, range, payload, or availability?

A: It's hard to put these things in order. But when you're talking about a bomber, range and payload are always, it's not a bomber unless it has range and payload. So those two together have to be, and there's some tradeoffs that you can do between those two. And for the types of things that we're looking to try to do now, the stealth is going to have to be important. Unless, as Mr. [inaudible] was pointing out, we get some really good EW platforms.

But the--

Q: So speed is fourth?

A: Speed is, eventually, for the next one speed is not as important. I think if we start looking at, maybe what we're hoping with this long term, the 2035 bombers, they talk about it, it would be nice to have something that was hypersonic.

Q: The NGB, the one that's--

A: The speed piece of it is not as important as the range and payload.

Q: And availability?

A: You mean what year it's available?

Q: Yes, right.

A: Oh. I thought you meant availability like logistics availability. The key to the availability you talk about is going to be tied to, if it's not going to be available when the

platforms basically been set to replace which are the, I believe it's tied to the ALCM, then you're going to need some kind of way to deal with that slip. But I'll say this, the F-22 is a magnificent platform. So as a bomber person, you drool with the thought that you'd have a bomber that could have those kinds of characteristics. It's not going to be exactly the same, but it would be, having a next generation stealth aircraft would give us a huge capability.

Q: Is there any desire at all to somehow link long range reconnaissance and long range strike?

A: Yes, but with a caveat that what we're moving to, and for example, one of the things I meant to talk about today and didn't really have an opportunity, we now are using B-52s for homeland defense. So we put an electro-optical pod on it. We work with the Navy and 1st Air Force. We've done a number of missions. We go out with some broad area surveillance platforms and the Navy gives us a ship to locate based on a signature. We've gone out a thousand nautical miles or more off the coast and we find the ship, we put the pod on it, take pictures, ship it back. Then wait for instructions. Typically we'll do some type of what they call a recognition identification group maneuver. But that's a good example of the point that says right now we're moving to where every platform is a sensor.

For example, every fighter that can carry a pod, which is all of them. If it has a pod and it's got the little transmitter package in the pod, you can send that picture back and it's no different than sending back a Predator image, for example. And we've used that same capability with the B-52 after Hurricane Ike, for example. They were trying to get some Predators in to be able to go do the surveys, and the weather still wasn't conducive for the Predators. And the FAA was concerned about having these unmanned aerial vehicles operating, they were going through all the stuff. We went out with a B-52 and we were told where the thing--It took us a little over two hours to survey. That was two missions, two hours apiece. And survey about 240 points.

So the answer is yes, but it's actually already happening. Every airborne platform is becoming a sensor, is a source of data for either surveillance or for intelligence purposes.

Q: So there may not be the need for the long range surveillance specific platform, that they could meld together?

A: Well, I think the intelligence community probably would have a fit about that. So I think the intelligence community still is going to have a need for a platform that's been optimized for data collection. For their specific data collection.

My point, though, I wouldn't say that means you don't need it. What it means is that how you optimize it, you can take advantage of all these other sensors at the same time.

Q: We're out of time. Thanks very much.

A: Thanks for having me.

END TEXT