



Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

All right. Good afternoon, everybody. Here we are at the coveted 3:40 p.m. on Wednesday of AFA slot. I had planned to just invite everybody to pull their chairs up in a circle and we'd have a little discussion, but there's actually quite a few more people here than I anticipated, but I would invite you to move forward if you want to. There's plenty of room. General Kelly and General Minihan are up here, but the rest of the General seats are empty, so please, if you feel like it, move on up here where you can hear these guys talk a little bit better.

Our panelists today that will be joining us, we're very proud and happy to have from First Air Force, Lieutenant General Steven Nordhaus, the commander of the Continental U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command Region or CONAR, and the commander of First Air Force, and General Nordhaus and his organization plan, coordinate and execute the air defense of the United States and air sovereignty operations, and also provide our defense support to civil authorities that help our brothers and sisters across the country in times of need and natural disasters, or anytime they need military help.

Then in a fast breaking ball game, General "Juice" Pirak is joining us as the Deputy Director of the Air National Guard. In that role, he supports the Director, General Loh in everything except going to the Hill today for the planning execution of all the Air National Guard activities, about 108,000 uniformed and civilian guardsmen in over 90 wings. It's something like 150 communities. How many guardsmen do we have in the room with us for this session? That's what I thought.

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

They're a friendly audience.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

I'm glad to have you here.

We had a third component, but the third member was from Air Combat Command and had to drop out because of a scheduling conflict. So I do not speak for Air Combat Command, but I do speak their language a little bit. I ask Air Combat Command if they would help us set the stage a little bit for the fighter shortfall. Is there really a fighter shortfall? Why do we think there's a fighter shortfall? What do those numbers look like? I want to thank General Kelly for letting me steal some of his slides that you may have seen in previous briefs here in this. Can we bring up the first slide please?

So a quick history lesson is how many people in this room were alive in 1991? Raise your hand. Okay, there's a crowd here that wasn't. So in a brief history lesson, in 1991 when we went to execute Desert Storm, your Air Force Air National Guard team had 134 fighter squadrons spread out all around the world. The average fighter pilot flew 22.3 flying hours a month, and the average age of the fighter fleet was 9.7 years across the fleet that's much bigger than the one that we have now.

Fast forward to 1996, and the drawdown that we executed after Desert Storm, and we reduced down to 98 fighter squadrons in the active component and the guard. Our flying was starting to tail off a little bit. We're down to just under 18 hours a month for fighter pilots, and the average age of the fleet is rising to 10.3 years because we're starting to slow down and buying new things. We bought a lot of new airplanes, F-15s and F-16s in the 80s and the 90s, and we're starting to slow down now.

The next chart here is by the time of the attacks on September 11, 2001, we were down to 88 fighter squadrons, 19 flying hours a month. Our average age is now really coming up to almost 15 years for the aircraft. Go forward again into this time that many of you served in when we were going back and forth to the Syncom AOR and spending a lot of time there, spending a lot of time flying in circles, doing both no-fly zones over Iraq, and then flying, doing a lot of close air support and armed overwatch in support



of coalition troops on the ground, and really starting to put hours and years on our airplanes. We're down to 55 fighter squadrons, down to really a shocking 8.2 fighter pilot flying hours a month, and our average age is up to almost 30 years per airplane.

Then when you get to last year, the time that General Kelly put these slides together for last year's event here, we were at 57 fighter squadrons. We're starting to add some F-35, so we grew a little bit from 55 up to 57, but our average flying has continued to go down, and the average age has continued to go up across this fleet.

So you could say, "Okay, General Holmes, you have fewer fighter squadrons, and they're older, but so what? How do we know that we have a shortfall? What tells us that's not enough? We took those down with some purpose behind the decisions that we made, so why do you call that a shortfall? It's not enough to just say you have fewer than you used to. What's the issue?" General Kelly laid out in his brief, and I've summarize it here, that just to meet the day-to-day requirements that the COCOMs are asking for ACC, PACAF, USAFE, and Air National Guard Forces, just to meet the daily requirements that commanders meet every day.

PACAF needs 13 squadrons. USAFE needs the seven that they have. We typically have about eight deployed to CENTCOM, and that goes up and down a little bit depending on the level of tensions with Iran, but we typically have around eight there. On any given day. There are about eight squadrons that are dedicated to General Nordhaus and for his use in defending the continental United States. Then not always understood is that there are another eight squadrons that are either deployed or on call because as the President moves around the country, the President takes defense with him as he moves. If President Trump was in Mar-a-Lago or at Bedminster, then there were fighters there protecting him, and if they move around the country to campaign events, they go with them. If President Biden goes to Camp David or goes up to Rehoboth, then we make sure that they're protected from threats there, and so they're available.

Then because of the addition of the F-35, and soon to be the F-15EX and other new airplanes, if you're converting a squadron, they don't have the full capability that they had before they started. At some point during that conversion, you start one day, you've got 18 F-16s, the next day you've got 17 and one F-35, a week later you got 16 and two, and over the course of a timeframe you train your ops and maintenance people, and so about 80 of your squadrons are devoted to that.

So ACs belief is that the requirement is for about 60 fighter squadrons on any given day, and I told you we have 57 available. So you could think, "Well, they ought to be able to squeak by with that. We don't always have to be doing POTUS support. We don't always have aid in CENTCOM, and that modernization can come and go." But the last thing I'd point out is that that COCOM demand is for what they would call a multirole fighter squadron. We've relied on the awesome immense capabilities of the A-10 for 20 years of armed overwatch and close air support, but the A-10 is not going to do air sovereignty over the United States, and it's not going to do some of the other missions that the COCOMs require.

Hen you look at the number of multirole fighter squadrons we have, if you subtract the A-10s, we have 48. So for a requirement of 60, there are 48 available. I'm sorry. For a requirement of 60, that's right, we have 57, but 48 of those are multirole fighter squadrons, and we'll be able to kind of meet any demand that a COCOM asks for, and they'll be happy if you deploy them to them.

So that's the shortfall, and that's why we believe that there is a shortfall. It's not just a wartime shortfall. I'm not going to talk about O plans, and the requirements in O plans, and how many fighter squadrons does it take to fight the People's Republic of China. If you have to go do that in PACAF and do Homeland Defense at the same time, that would be a classified discussion. But for the daily requirement, there's not enough to go around to do everything we're supposed to do, which means if you're in one of those outfits, you're busy, right? You're deployed a lot, or you're training to be deployed, or you're recovering



when you come back, and that's part of the reason why we've flown fewer hours every year because you're busy, and it takes time to come up and down.

So thanks for sitting through that. If we can take the slides down for a second, I'd like to start our questions off here, and I'll start with you, Spot. So what's the current strategic guidance? What's your commander's guidance given to you by the NORAD NORTHCOM Commander that drives your Homeland Defense and your Homeland Defense posture?

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Thanks General Holmes. It's great to be here. General Wright, thanks to you and the entire Air Force Association community with just a great conference. General Kelly, General Minihan, and to everybody that's here, thanks for being here.

I do also want to give a shout-out to the Vietnam veterans that were here throughout the week. It was 40 years ago today, or around this week that I went down to the end of my block and talked to Major Don Schmenk, 235 combat missions in Vietnam and he said, "You better get focused on serving your country, son." So I went and signed up. Anyway, thanks for the question on the policy and guidance that drives Homeland Defense. Well obviously, we start with the National Defense Strategy, which makes Homeland Defense the number one priority against the pacing challenge of China, the acute threat of Russia, and the other adversaries that might try to compete with us.

So we have that, then the National Military Strategy and then under General VanHerck. At NORAD NORTHCOM, we have both a NORAD COM plan and a NORTHCOM COM plan that fall under that we drive and execute every day with. Then we have the ONEX org. Then as you heard from General Holmes, we also do the POTUS support and the national special Security events, UNGA, which is coming up next week. SOTUA, which is the State of the Union address and everybody's favorite, the Super Bowl, which is a sea air event that we go out and support. Those are the primary things that drives that, sir.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thank you. Can we bring the slides back up please? So what's your current CONAR force lay down that you use to support those objectives?

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Okay, if the slide comes up, currently it's a little tough to see, but you'll see all around the outside of the U.S. we have alert fighter bases, and then a few in the interior. We also have four tanker alert units that are sitting alert, and then we have one that sits alert for Canada. We also have C2 nodes in several locations, and then the Joint Air Defense Operations Center, the JDOC, which I just visited yesterday, that supports and defend the National Capital region.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

So if we have an Air Force fighter shortfall, and I think we establish that we do, and there's a roadmap to address that, but how does that impact your ability to execute that strategic guidance?

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Thank you, sir. Another great question. To date, as we look at it, the service provider, the Air Force mainly through the Air National Guard here because all the units generally sitting alert are Air National Guard units. We do have AWACS on Title 10, and we have a POTUS on Title 10, so it is a combined effort there, but from that, we're meeting the day-to-day requirements outlined currently. FY '24 looks very



solid as well, thanks to a lot of great work by ACC and the Air National Guard. I know as we look into '25 it gets more challenging as we get to more F-35 conversions, more F-15EX conversions, and so we look forward to working with the service provider here on how we meet that challenge, sir.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks. Juice, can you walk us a little bit through the Air National Guard's role in supporting all the Homelands Defense missions, your first Air Force?

Maj. Gen. Duke A. Pirak:

Thank you General. It's appreciated. And also, want to thank Air Force Association as well, General Minihan, General Kelly. It is a privilege to be here. As the boss said, I'm the Deputy Director of the Air National Guard, so supporting General Loh, and the care and feeding of our 108,000 by any measure, or by the measure that he likes to use rather it would be the Air Force's largest MAJCOM. We provide 94% of the Homeland Defense capabilities. That's all the fighter units that are providing day-to-day aerospace control alert. Then obviously, that yellow line that General Nordhaus has, the sector controls of the C2, as well for the eastern and western sector. Then of course, capability that extends all the way out to Hawaii. A little bit outside of general nor house as AOR, but also an important mission we perform there.

Our units are in unique position to perform this mission obviously because they're CONUS based. They're certainly not confined to that. In fiscal '22, we performed 44% of the Air Force's global taskings, and in FY '23 we're on pace for 47%. We do that for pennies on the dollar, compared to an active force. That's not to say one is better than the other. That's just to advertise what we believe to be tremendous value proposition of the Air National Guard fighter force structure.

It just so happens that the Air Force is facing a fighter recapitalization crisis, and it's very acute in the Air National Guard where traditionally, we have the majority of the legacy fighters. That crisis manifests itself in a unique way where we're very concerned about our ability to continue to perform the Homeland Defense mission, all Air Force missions, but in particular, the Homeland Defense mission, especially if those units, some of our oldest legacy airplanes, either dry out because there's no service life left, or just simply not recapitalize in time. That's a tremendous concern to us on behalf of the Air Force.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks a lot. Can you take the slide down please? So General Nordhaus, back to you. The Air Force is pursuing new approaches across their fighter capabilities, things like next generation air dominance, the collaborative combat aircraft, C3 BMS, or JAD2, ACE concepts. We talk about those mostly in terms of a fight against China, but are those things that you'll be employing in the Defense of the Homeland as well? Which one of those are important to you?

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Okay. Yeah, thanks for the questions General Holmes. So let me start off with a couple things, which is there's new policy guidance being worked in the coming months. Up in the department right now they're looking at advanced cruise missile defense for the homeland, they're looking at ONEX, and General VanHerck has just completed and signed out his Homeland Defense design next, as well. One of the things I'll start with is General VanHerck talks about that Homeland Defense does not start in the homeland. It starts with our allies and partners and it starts in the Ford combatant commands, and so that we're focused on that global integrated layered defense as we look at that, which requires all



domain awareness. It requires uncrewed and unmanned autonomous platforms. It requires sensing from not only air, but space and sea, and how those are integrated with our allies and partners into a fuse picture.

Then that gives those sensors then into effectors, where we could use kinetic and non-kinetic effects to take out threats that we see at a range, and a time, and a place of our choosing. One of the biggest things you can never give back is time, so being able to have indications of warning, and be able to sense the globe better, and being able to give that time back to our senior leaders. So from that standpoint, certainly focused on how we can look at Homeland Defense in a new way, and I think we'll get some new policy guidance, and General VanHerck is moving out on his homeland design, next.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Is there anything you can tell us or anything you want to add about what the next steps or evolution will be, or what's going to change in 2024, and beyond?

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Sir, in 2024, not a whole lot, as we get after, right? As the Chief Staff of the Air Force, General Brown said, change is a journey, and so we're on that journey, and we're trying to accelerate and integrate those changes as they come out. Things that we know are coming, OTHR is getting bought and paid for, so four in the U.S., two in Canada. Those are not a panacea, but that will greatly increase the indications and warnings in the sensing capability. We just saw SDA in the news for putting up 24 satellites that will provide a proliferated war fighting space architecture that we'll be able to sink into with C@ and provide that warning and indication, sir.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Okay, thanks. Juice, so what does the future mean for the Air National Guard?

Maj. Gen. Duke A. Pirak:

Thank you, sir. Obviously, excited about new operational concepts and technology, employing this in the ACA mission, but I still go back to what I would consider to be the existential piece, just the availability of that force structure to begin with to be able to do the mission. It is a bit of irony in my mind what we're dealing with here. This panel is about fighter shortfalls and impact on the Homeland Defense. Let's talk about the policy piece for a second, the strategic guidance General Nordhaus addressed in the beginning there. Operationally, it has become a minimum expectation that we have this capability to protect America, protect the President, and we do so proudly in the Air National Guard. We do most of that mission. That being said, is the Air Force is not the benefactor of any fence, of any steady state demand signal, any policy guidance that builds defense around that force structure to say it will always happen, which leaves the tension to the Air Force to try to figure out how to do this, along with the rest of the joint partners.

Going back to that expectation of the American people, that they will always be protected, that the President will always be protected, we might reconsider this panel. It might be global fighter shortfall, given the Homeland Defense mission, which I think we consider to be baseline there. Now, as I say that, it's not a plug for recapitalization of the Air National Guard at the expense of anybody else. The Air Force has a fighter recapitalization crisis, and we want that rise and tide to lift all boats. We just think that in the Air National Guard, we're somewhat sinking disproportionately there under the weight of those legacy systems because of an old way of recapitalizing there. That's our concern.



Moving forward, I will say there have been a couple of announcements recently. If you can pull up a slide, sir. I believe we've got...

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Yeah, can you bring them back up please?

Maj. Gen. Duke A. Pirak:

If you think of General Nordhaus's slide here, and then take a look at my slide, and you can see where we're on path to recapitalization, where that's happened, or we're on path, particularly in the F-35, F-15EX. These are named units through the basing process. The yellow dots there are post block F-16 units that presumably will be around for some time. The red are units that don't have a plan right now. I know this is not just a concern for the Air National Guard, a concern for the Air Force, given that baseline requirement the General Holmes talked about in the very beginning there.

Some of those are attack squadrons that don't participate in the Homeland Defense mission. But if you look at particularly on the eastern side there, the couple of block 30 units that perform a good portion of the protection of the capitol and protection of the President, in a very short time, they will not exist. The unique problem set that my boss has in the Air National Guard is if you stand down a guard unit that's been at this business for a while with all the experience and capability, unlike the active duty Air Force, very difficult to build that back up.

A point that I really want to make to our active duty brethren here, we benefit in the Air National Guard from a strong, healthy, active duty Air Force, a recapitalized, fully manned after duty Air Force, wherein those men and women decide to serve differently in their local communities and the Air National Guard. So we have this discussion not at the expense of anybody else, but again, we want that rising tide to lift everybody there. It just so happens that the near rocks are those red units, and I do worry about the nation's capacity to protect America if those units dry up in the near future.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks, Juice. As we think about what's happening in the world and we think about what our Homeland Defense forces have been asked to do, it's the week of September 11th. It's the time that we all think back to that asymmetric attack that was launched against the United States, and the efforts that we took after that to improve our defense system, including for many months, we flew fighters constantly on alert around the country.

The command and control for that effort was driven at First Air Force under guidance from NORAD and NORTHCOM. That's not a really easy task, even for the asymmetric threat. NORAD NORTHCOM has multiple regions; SPOT commands, the CONUS region, there's an Alaska region, our partners from Canada are true partners in NORAD, and they have a region that has to be protected as well. So you had immense command and control challenges just against the asymmetric threat. But now as we start to think about a war with China, or as we think about the things Russia has said that they can do and have the options to do to escalate a fight, or to try to convince the United States to stay out of it, then we're back in a world where General VanHerck and General Nordhaus have to have plans to defend the continental United States back against conventional threats, against military threats, which is another layer of C@ challenges.

So General Nordhaus, how do you look at that coming C2 challenge, and what are you doing, and what do you need to do?

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:



Okay. Once again, thanks for the question. As we've seen even in the news, our adversaries, our competitors, China and Russia, have been doing combined bomber patrols, Surface Action Group. With their conventional capabilities, we certainly need, like you said, to be able to have that C2, to be able to work through those challenges. We do see the divestiture of the E-3, and looking at the E-7 in the coming years is that challenge that we'll have to work through. We look forward to bringing the E-7 on, and looking for the solutions as we mitigate that even with our joint partners.

Some of the things we're doing on the AOC is we're looking at AOC evolution, and continue to work that with the Air Force and with the systems that we have. Cloud-based C2 is being integrated into EADS and WADS right now, which is part of the JADC2 network. We're also doing distributive ops between AOCs with the 601st and the 611. We continue to expand out to make sure that we can use digital transformation to be able to find, fix and pass information back and forth between the AOCs. I would say those are the initial big things, sir.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

How you, and how does General VanHerck think about... You talked about defense of the Homeland starts forward. How do you think about integrating with the other geographical COCOMs to do this mission in the future?

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Well sir, our 601st is constantly interconnected with INDOPACOM and with EUCOM, and with their AOCs. As we go back and forth with that, we're sharing pictures and information that we have, and we'll continue to make sure that we do that as we go forward. As we get to a proliferated space architecture, OTHR, we need to integrate with our allies and partners because our allies and partners have a huge piece in this as well. Then in the Homeland, within our inter-agencies as well, that we continue to integrate with them and share that information so that we can see the information and identify threats as soon as possible, so that we can react to them.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks. Juice, not always fully understood across the country is the fact that not just the fighter squadrons that are on day-to-day alert come out of the Air National Guard, but the majority of the bodies down at First Air Force, and the majority, if not all of the bodies that the Eastern and Western air defense sectors are provided by the Air National Guard. What are the C2 challenges for the Air National Guard, and how do you fit in helping NORTHCOM NORAD solve those?

Maj. Gen. Duke A. Pirak:

Appreciate the question, sir. It sort of follows the same pattern, right? There's been tremendous modernization in the last couple of decades in the sectors and our C2 for Home and Defense, tremendous integration with FAA radars, and whatnot. Those are all encouraging, but at the end of the day, the very facilities in which they reside are legacies of the Cold War, just very different thinking, even down to the orientation of the radars, which as it turns out in some cases is actually a good thing as we have a return of some of those old threats there, so this is a massive infrastructure technology bill that we're going to be facing in the future here, and this is also an important part of Air National Guard advocacy and Air Force advocacy when we're thinking about Homeland Defense.

I would like to go back to some of the early comments, sir, if you don't mind, and talk about Homeland Defense in general, and how we should reconsider this when we're talking about defensive America from the air. 20, 22 years on, I've been involved in this mission, tactical, operational and strategic levels.



A common criticism I hear in the Pentagon, sir, is "Well, we got to reconsider this. There's got to be a cheaper way to do business." Yes, point defense can be done from the ground more cheaply, not necessarily effective. When we're talking about potentially having to take lives of other Americans and making this decision, the man in the loop, the ability to go up and intercept and identify and provide more information for decision makers like General Nordhaus is still important.

That's all important, but we should also reconsider the future of Homeland Defense. To echo the words of our policymakers, adversaries have learned from the American way of war, the wellspring of our strength, the center of gravity is the U.S. Homeland. Deterring us from even getting to the fight is winning, from the adversary standpoint. Protecting our ability to even muster to communicate, we're going to have every bit of a contested EM spectrum here at home trying to talk to each other as we will abroad. So even the ability to muster and get to the fight is going to be an issue.

If the adversaries can undermine political will, have us focus on our own power grid problems, have us focus on a stock market that doesn't function, a failing economy that will turn the heads of our elected leadership sort of inward, and our adversary achieves those objectives. So a key part of a deterrent value is a robust homeland defense posture that isn't just for the September 11th type of threat. It's for all of the above. There will be no taboo for our adversaries to protect and directly attack the U.S. Homeland and a major war. That taboo certainly extends to Guam, which is part of the U.S. Homeland, Hawaii, Alaska, which are front and center. They are the FEBA, they're the flat to that Asia, Pacific fight.

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Hey sir, can I jump on that just a little bit? Yeah. As we talk about power projection in a contested environment, we know the homeland is not a sanctuary, right? We're being attacked daily in the cyberspace and in the information space, and so the concepts that the Air Force Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve are getting after, which is the AFFORGEN, the multi-capable Airmen, and the ACE concept, and then mission command, those things are all relevant in the homeland, and we have to think about that because we need resilient basing. We need hardening so that no matter what our adversary might try to do, that we're be able to be agile, and that we can do combat employment and make sure that we retain the force, and then can power project in a contested environment.

Maj. Gen. Duke A. Pirak:

I will just add onto that. I mean, considering that joint war fighting concept, air force future operating concept, there is a fight to get to the fight. That fight actually starts here where we sit. So all of the concepts that we're talking operationally with ACE and MCA are all going to be applicable things to even generate air power to one, protect the homeland, which is not just an emotional assertion, it's a policy imperative, and then to get to the fight.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks, Juice. As we watch what's happening in the war in Ukraine, and I know many of you follow that closely. If you watch their battle for air defense and for air sovereignty, even with all the numbers of air defense systems that have been provided by NATO nations to help them defend their airspace, a cruise missile threat is a tough threat to defend against. It takes sophisticated surveillance to be able to identify launch points and know where to put your resources. You can't defend every point with ground resources. There just never will be enough. You're going to have to find a way to have the command and control to get the right airborne asset in the right place to be able to defend the country. I'm proud of the efforts that you two lead to think through the challenges and guide your Airmen to be able to execute them.





As we wrap up here, General Nordhaus, I'd like to offer you a chance for any last things you wanted to talk about that I didn't ask you.

Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus:

Okay. General Holmes, thanks for the panel. I know General Pirak, you had about an hour's notice, so amazing job. I thought I'd hear this quote this week, which is the MacArthur quote, which is about one year prior to World War II where he said the history of the failure of warfare can almost be always summed up in two words, too late. Too late in comprehending the deadly purpose of a potential enemy. Too late in realizing the mortal danger. Too late in preparing, and too late in uniting all the available forces for resistance.

All week through this conference, I really picked up the sense of urgency, which we all know we have, that we have to accelerate change, we have to get after this together. It's with our allies and partners that we see with Canada, we do a theater security with Mexico as well, that we're working together to stay after Homeland Defense. But shout out to all the people. I was out to the 113th today. I was to the JDOC this week. We have amazing men and women every day defending our nation across the board at Alert Units and other sites that are defending our nation every day, every second. I know with our people being elite war fighting force and the mindset that we talked about this week that we'll be stronger together, and we'll be even stronger tomorrow, so thank you.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thank you very much. General Pirak, Juice?

Maj. Gen. Duke A. Pirak:

I appreciate it. I had no idea we were going to have quotable quotes here, so I'll have to show my nerd card as well, pull out a little Thucydides, maybe. But I will tell you one of my favorite books *An Army at Dawn*, if you had an opportunity to read this, talking about American campaign in North Africa where we had a very difficult time, first world contact with the maneuver army, that was Rommel's Panther divisions, and Blitzkrieg, and all of that. The postmortem of that was quite interesting. Not necessarily the author's conclusion, my conclusion, I think we're in the very same time. We have the very same hubris.

We won World War I, and we walked into Europe with pretty good equipment, a lot of the same tactics, same thinking, and thinking we'll just be able to lean into this adversary and bend them to our will. I just don't see that in the future. I just don't see that. I think we have had air superiority, sir, for many, many years. We have been able to protect America, and we have certainly prevented any future 9/11 type attacks, but I think we should reconsider that that is not a foregone conclusion in the future. We're going to have to work for air superiority, whether it's at home or abroad, and we have to pay some attention to our forces here at home, lest we have nobody left to be able to do it. Thanks for your time.

Gen. James M. Holmes, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks, Juice. A quote I'll throw out is from one of our former Chiefs of Staff who like to say I don't know when the next war will happen, but I know that we, all of us here at this convention, that's the uniform people, active duty Air National Guard, and the industry partners that give us the tools that we use to fight with. We have until then to get ready for it. The reason we do these conferences is so that we can work together to try to get ready for it.

I want to thank all of you for attending. I want to thank all our industry partners that are fighting, and scheming, and trying to figure out how we can use traditional systems, and the new things that have



been invented in R&D and the IT community, and all the tools that it takes to make this work together to spend time together this week. You can feel a sense of urgency here and I hope you have it. So from an old retired guy, I don't know when the war will happen, but we have between now and then to get ready for it, and so keep doing what you're doing and keep getting ready for it. How about a hand for our panelists?

Thank you.