

**General Victor E. Renuart
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Moderator: Our next speaker has flown combat missions in Operation Desert Storm, Deny Flight, Northern Watch and Southern Watch, held a number of commands. Prior to assuming his current command he was Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. Please welcome the Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, General Gene Renuart.

[Applause].

General Renuart: [Video shown].

Jim, thanks for the nice introduction, and Chief, it's great to be here with you today. Mr. Secretary, I appreciate the chance to follow along behind you. You've taken all the tough questions and put them out on the table so my speech will be easy.

After what has been an exciting career, it is time to go in a new direction, so after 38.5 years, this will be my last Air Force Association where I have the honor to speak to you in uniform, and so I wanted to spend a little bit of my time today talking to you about what I think we feel is our most sacred mission, our most sacred duty for the nation, and that is to ensure that our American people, those children and their dad that you saw at the end of that video have the opportunity for a safe and secure community to live in, for a nation that is prepared and resilient to address threats from a variety of areas around our country and certainly from around the world, and that our economy has the opportunity to flourish. That really is what our U.S. Air Force is all about.

Secretary Donley said we are truly one of our nation's most respected institutions. Certainly that is the case. We certainly are the best Air Force in the world.

And that Air Force is busy every day, taking care of your families, your communities, ensuring that they are defended against nation state threats, but also prepared to respond when Mother Nature takes on a bit of her own momentum.

So that's a little bit of what we'll talk about and spend some time on this morning.

Unlike last century when threats were pretty clear and pretty clean, today's world is very different. You've heard terms like asymmetrical or irregular, non-nation state actors, and certainly those are all the case. When we talked about terrorism in the last century, it really was a law enforcement focus and we've found and we've seen that terrorism really now has come to the very core of our nation and held us at risk.

DoD installations are not just threatened overseas as they were at Ramstein when I was younger, but rather they are recruiting stations in New York, they are our air bases and our Army posts in places like Fort Dix and Fort Hood and Charleston Air Force Base and others where we have seen attempted terrorist activities, and some successful in the last few years.

One thing that is not different, one thing that we have to make sure that we protect and support and retain is that balance between the constitutional rights that each of our citizens holds dear and the need for support from the Department of Defense when things go awry. We've worked very hard in our two commands to ensure that we balance those two needs.

But the world is different, for sure. Terrorism is something that has become a fact of life. American and coalition efforts overseas, especially the precision strike activities, close air support, search and rescue, special operations, all of those things have seriously damaged al-Qaida and other terrorist groups around the world, but they're persistent and evolving global organization continue to recruit. We need only to look at our own country in the last ten months. While certainly we have affected the al-Qaida capability in the FATA region of Pakistan, that organization has franchised that business model into other places. Certainly we saw it in Iraq, we see it in the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa, the Maghreb and places like Illinois and Minnesota and North Carolina and New Jersey where we have disrupted terrorist activities here in our country.

I mentioned that in the last few months, nine to be specific, we've arrested plotters of ten different attempts in our country, six of them with a DoD nexus. For those of you that deal in force protection around our facilities, across the country, you know this to be very real, and I hope that it gets your attention and that we continue to

work aggressively at improving the force protection measures at our facilities around the nation.

The airline industry is a target of choice by many of these organizations. While 40 years ago when terrorists were hijacking airliners, it was not the intent to kill mass number of people, but we saw on September 11th where that has very much become a desired target by many of these terrorist organizations.

What's different today is that this recruiting, training and attack network truly is global. We sort of said it was always over there. It was never coming to our homeland. And in fact, that's not the case, and we'll continue to put the target clearly on the United States.

Now my intent is not to make this a fear discussion. My intent is to say that complacency is alive out there and we need to guard against that in our approach to the future and to the defense of our nation. And airmen play a part in this every day.

We need to ensure that we acknowledge that threats like terrorism, like cyber attacks, like chem/bio/weapons of mass destruction attacks, are a very clear objective of many out there, whether they are nation states or not nation states, and we need to not let our guard down. That affects how we fund our defense budgets, it affects how we train and equip our airmen, and certainly how we create the joint force for the future.

Let me just talk about a few of those other areas out there.

Weapons of mass destruction clearly is a desired capability for nation state and non-nation state actors. Whether it is a country like North Korea or Iran seeking to expand its nuclear capabilities or it's a country that is pursuing a biological capability to proliferate among non-nation state actors. All of these are real threats. Jim Jones not too long ago, about a month ago, made a comment in USA Today that it's proliferation, the acquisition of a weapon of mass destruction by a terrorist organization, that is his biggest concern and threat. If you read the reports of many think tanks over the last year, each and every one of them say it's not if but when somebody acquires access to a weapon of mass destruction. And if they do, they will use it here in our country. So we need to ensure that we don't let our guard down.

How do we protect ourselves? We need to be better at security of our installations. We need to share

information better. We need only to look at the results of the Fort Hood study that the Secretary mentioned, we need only to look at the gaps in communication that surrounded the underwear bomber of December 25th, to understand that we let our guard down in the information sharing. We took for granted data that was there and available to us, and we didn't share it in a way that made it actionable by either our military or our law enforcement.

Global lawlessness is also another area that we have to pay attention to. And if you're in the shipping business, you know that terrorism and piracy have gone hand in hand in the areas of the Horn of Africa. But we see increased trafficking of people, drugs, weapons and money as well. All of these are creating a globalized threat network out there that our nations have to pay attention to. All of it tied together in cyber.

Bob Kehler's going to talk to you a little bit later about the challenges of cyber, but I can tell you that whether you're Google or you're a defense industry or you're a nation state, attacks on our cyber networks occur every day and we have no single entity for the nation that is yet coherently integrating this defensive capability for the nation. We have to pay attention to this. That means helping our Department of Homeland Security. Certainly we'll have the standup of U.S. Cyber Command in the near future. But it's really also about how industry pulls together each of those capabilities to ensure that we can defend our cyber networks and in fact then the life blood of our nation, and that will help in security across a variety of different areas.

I mentioned in addition to those nation state threatens, we've got Mother Nature out there holding us at risk. If Doug Fraser were here today he would tell you that certainly Mother Nature played a bit affect in his AOR just a few weeks ago as we had to address the response to the earthquake in Haiti.

Those things occur in our nation as well, and whether it's the lessons of Katrina applied to Gustav and Ike, or it's the lessons of national level exercises applied to a response in Haiti, we've got to create and maintain the capacity for our nation to prepare for and to respond to natural disasters of a variety or types, large and small.

So while these are the kinds of things that our two commands at NORAD and NORTHCOM are focused on every day, and the airmen in our command from each of the services are integrated into that in a way that is making a huge difference.

Across the globe we are watching a great spectacle occur in Canada. The Winter Olympics are quite successfully continuing for the United States. We're leading the medal count today with some great performances yesterday. But behind the scenes there, you've got members of our two commands playing an integral part in ensuring that that activity is also safe and secure. Our NORAD fighters deployed in Canada as well as in Portland are maintaining air sovereignty and air security over the games. An integrated command and control capability is providing situational awareness, integrated ground based airborne radars, Aegis radars, into a common picture that allows us a secure vision into the activities that are occurring as well.

In addition, we've got consequence management forces that are deployed to Whidbey Island and a small element up into Vancouver to ensure that if Canada does need some support from the United States we're in a position to respond.

Those kinds of activities happen every day. Many of you in this room know that because you're involved in it, but if you don't, there are airmen across our reserve components sitting air defense alert; there are airmen across our reserve components prepared to respond to a catastrophic event whether it be nuclear, biological, chemical, medical teams, EOD teams, search and rescue teams -- all prepared to come in when the nation calls. That's the kind of Air Force that we have become since September 11th. That's the kind of Air Force that is able to respond internationally, globally, with precise attack but also very capably at home when our citizens call.

I want to maybe spend a minute or two as I close up looking at a couple of global topics that I think will be on our Air Force's and certainly my command's plate for the next couple of years.

Let me just talk a little bit about the Arctic. I'm not an expert at the global warming theories. I do know that we are seeing more water opening in the Arctic now than we've ever seen before. I do know that the impact of competition in that region is going to create some stress, some competition among nations in the Arctic. NORAD and NORTHCOM both operate there every day. NORAD and NORTHCOM both need to expand our capabilities to partner with our Canadian friends and certainly others like the Russians, the Danes and the Norwegians in the Arctic region to ensure it's safe and secure.

But we need a national strategy that is more clear and we are working aggressively with our partners in the State Department as well as in the Department of Defense to grow and clarify the nation's strategy in the Arctic region. But we also have to ensure that we can operate safely. The lessons we learned, for example, in the Antarctic, we need to apply into the Arctic. We need to expand our communications, our command and control, and our situation awareness in that region. We continue to push on that from the joint community.

The Arctic will be a place for the future, and I think the competition for natural resources for food sources will all drive us further north in the coming days.

As we think about the nation's capability to respond to disasters, certainly the lessons of Haiti are important for us to incorporate in the future. We've made some decisions within the Quadrennial Defense Review that I think will require some discussion, partnership among the National Guard and the Reserves, certainly with our other services, to ensure that we have an agile consequence management response force that can go, in my view, anywhere in the world if it's needed, and will continue to take the lessons of Haiti and the lessons of Katrina and the lessons we've learned in the last couple of years of exercises, and try to apply those to a more coherent force. But we also have to be prepared with our transportation systems to move that capability rapidly. Duncan McNabb did a great job, a spectacular job creating capacity in Haiti on a very short notice. We've learned that we have to configure ourselves better to be able to respond to his airlift and the time that he can provide it to be able to get on the ground very quickly. You saw superb operations on the ground by our combat controllers and our CRG, but you've got to also make sure that the stuff that goes into those airplanes is configured so that it can employ as soon as it hits the ground.

Those are the things that we are seeing out of Haiti that will allow us to be more agile and more prepared for the future.

Another area that we have spent a lot of time on within our two commands is that of growing our situation awareness in the air domain. We've hosted a meeting with the Department of Homeland Security to create an air domain intelligence integration cell. That will sound a little bit like an Air Force thing that we would do at an AOC, but this is a very different approach. This is to fuse civilian law enforcement information together with our traditional air operations information into a coherent

picture in the U.S. that can acknowledge the diversity and variety of air traffic that we have and tie it to the intelligence streams that we see to hopefully better identify tracks of interest that may be a threat to us.

We're continuing to work on this and we're getting great support out of the DNI's office, DIA, CIA, and others to create the cell at NORTHCOM that will allow us better vision into threats that could come to us from the air domain.

All of this is critical to the nation's security as we look at either a nation state threat or an asymmetrical threat.

A final point I'd like to spend a minute or two on is the area of missile defense. We've had some spectacular successes. We're continuing to grow our missile defense capability. Certainly for the homeland, but the phased adaptive approach introduced by the Department of Defense in the last six months I think shows real potential for the future.

But we airmen need to be better schooled at the art of missile defense. We don't necessarily have that as a core competency and yet we place on the shoulders of our air component commander that role of AAMDC and we've got to grow that institutional capacity more so that we are better configured to deal in a global missile defense as well as a theater missile defense area. We've got to partner with our ship mates and team mates in the Army and the Air Force who, by the way, do this for a living, who understand how to integrate missile defense into their operations. And we've got to learn from them and find ways that we can partner to take advantage of their expertise.

We bring the great expertise of integration of information, of integration of systems. They bring the tactical expertise of how to put that interceptor, that missile on a target. Together we can create a better capability for the nation by sharing the expertise of each of our services as we look at missile defense for the future.

So ladies and gentlemen, it's been an interesting few years for me at NORAD and NORTHCOM. I had a question from a friend earlier today that said what would you like to fix or continue to develop? I feel pretty good that over the last three years we've been able to create the kind of capability that the nation deserves to respond to, to prepare for, to prevent and to recover from a variety of threats to our nation.

The nation's capability in these areas is better today than it has ever been, and we want to continue to grow that over the coming days.

The final point I'd leave you with is, internationally we continue to have a challenge with our partners to the south. We've got to help Mexico continue to grow in its capacity to deal with the drug trafficking threats that they see in their nation. The Mexican military is leaning forward in ways that we've never seen before in terms of the partnership that they choose to have with the U.S., with the U.S. military in particular, and the ways that they reach out to us more and more in the future.

The drug trafficking problem is clearly a significant threat to President Calderon. He understands that clearly, but he has, if you will, hitched his wagon to a partnership with the U.S. in a way that I think he thinks will bring them success. We need to continue that support to Mexico, we need to continue our interaction to help them build capacity and I think Mexico will be successful in each of these challenges.

That's a bit of a walk around our AOR. I think I've got about six or seven minutes left on the timeline to preserve for a few questions, so Jim, if we want to ask and see if there are a couple out there, I'm happy to take those.

Moderator: Yes, sir. We do have a couple.

First off, there's a question about remotely piloted aircraft. What challenges do you see in using remotely piloted aircraft to safeguard the United States?

General Renuart: There are a variety of challenges, and I think we had in fact some great discussion this past week on that topic. I'd put our issues in kind of three buckets. First, we have got to create the, I'll call it certification. That sounds a bit rigid, but it's really the ability to inspire confidence in the FAA that the operators of the systems have sufficient training that they can operate in the national aerospace system and not put the rest of air traffic at risk. That sounds like it should be very easy. We do this all the time in Iraq and Afghanistan. But today there are about 7,000 airplanes flying around in our national airspace system right at this minute. We need to ensure that we integrate our remotely piloted systems into that in a way that's safe and secure.

The FAA is willing to work on this and they've come a long way in partnering with us in this regard, but we've got to get not just the Air Force but the other services and the other departments of government who operate the systems to create a common set of standards that our pilots need to operate in. I know the Air Force is working really hard on that, as is Joint Forces Command.

The second is we need to create within, again, back with our partnership with the FAA, we need to create a common set of procedures that all understand and that we divide airspace, create airspace control plans that allow for comfortable integration of those systems when they're needed.

I think the final piece is, we need to be careful that we don't make remotely piloted aircraft the tool of choice for every activity. Many many of our systems operate spectacularly and they are piloted, they don't have to have the same limitations that we have from the FAA today. So I think the art form for our air component commanders is to integrate each of those systems in a way that can be successful for use in the homeland. Certainly disaster response has been one of our biggest uses, but we've tried to also expand our use in border security and some other areas that I think has allowed us to be more supportive of our law enforcement agencies.

Moderator: You touched briefly on interaction with the Department of Homeland Security, could you expand a little bit about that in terms of whether or not there is some duplication of effort and communication?

General Renuart: Wow. You came away from Katrina and the criticism was there was no interoperability in communications. So gosh, if there's duplications I think we're probably making progress. But I'm not sure that's what that question meant.

I think there are duplications of some functions today and that's probably okay. I'll give you a great example. Urban search and rescue. You can go around the country and find probably ten state supported urban search and rescue teams that are spectacular, and we saw a number of those on the ground in Haiti.

You can also go to the United States Marine Corps and find two urban search and rescue teams, our immediate response teams, out of the [SEABURF] that train to the same high standards that our urban search and rescue squads do, and are also spectacular. In fact the President of the U.S. Urban Search and Rescue Oversight organization, and I

apologize, that's not the right term, told me that they're as good or better than any that he's seen.

So we do have some complementary capabilities that it makes sense to have some overlap. We could use those militarily. Certainly we could use those to support an operation like in Haiti.

I think the bottom line with DHS and DoD is we're growing capacity parallel in case in certain cases they overlap. I'm not sure that we want to stop that just yet until we've reached a bit more maturity in both the relationships in each of the organizations.

Moderator: Thank you very much, sir. I've got three or four more questions, but unfortunately we're out of time. We appreciate very much you coming and for your excellent presentation. Thank you, General Renuart.

General Renuart: Thanks very much.

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