

"Global Strike Command"

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Lt. Gen. Klotz: Well thank you very much, Joe, for that very kind introduction. What he didn't say is that when we worked together in the Pentagon, our nightly sport was to leave out little mousetraps and then find out what the catch was the next morning, and we were usually pretty productive in that regard.

It's a real honor and pleasure to be with you today and to join so many friends and colleagues in this premiere Air Force Association event. I'm going to use some slides. I'm not going to brief to the slides, but I'll use them for two reasons. One is to sort of help you follow the flow of the logic, but also I noticed as I was sitting out in some of the other presentations that the camera closes in very closely on the individual who is speaking. I thought I would spare you that this afternoon.

I am also painfully aware of the fact that, actually I am not the last speaker before the reception tonight. Art Lichte has that privilege, so I'll take as much time as I think you all want to do on this.

Now over the past three days of the Air and Space Conference, we have heard a number of very informative presentations on critical issues facing the Air Force and its people. And as Joe indicated, I'd like to discuss today, this afternoon, the Air Force's newest major Command, Air Force Global Strike Command. The activation of Global Strike Command on August 7th of this year, just five and a half weeks ago, marked a major milestone for the Air Force's nuclear deterrence and global strike missions.

We now have a single command to represent this enterprise as a key element of the larger set of capabilities that the Air Force provides to joint team and the nation. But as important as other defense priorities may be, and there are a lot of them, there is none more important than our special responsibility for nuclear weapons. If there is one unchanging, immutable truth about this awesome capability, it is that it demands our constant and undivided attention. This was true in the past, it's true now, and it will be true into the future regardless of the size or composition of our nuclear deterrents and global strike forces.

Earlier this year in a speech in Prague, President

Obama made this point perfectly clear, and I'll quote, "Make no mistake," he said. "As long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain safe, secure, and effective arsenal to deter any adversary and guarantee that defense to our allies."

This then is the fundamental mission of Air Force Global Strike Command; our marching orders, if you will. To provide safe, secure, reliable, and effective forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations in support of our combatant commanders and the President, our Commander in Chief.

In discussing Air Force Global Strike Command, I think it's important to understand how we got to where we are today. As many of you know, during the Cold War our nuclear forces were the mainstay of America's military force posture. Their designation within the defense budget as Major Force Program One reflected this primacy. The United States invested enormous resources to ensure that its nuclear deterrent forces could not only withstand an attack but could also retaliate against the aggressor if and when directed by the President.

For the United States and for our allies, deterrence during the Cold War was predicated upon demonstrating both the capability and the will to respond to aggression with overwhelming force so that any potential adversary would calculate that the risks and the cost of launching an attack would far outweigh any gains.

Nuclear weapons, both those considered strategic in nature and those considered more tactical, became the principle instruments of achieving this effect. The size and capabilities of this force were based in large measure on the size and capabilities of the principle military competitor, the Soviet Union. The requirement to deter other potential adversaries was, for the most part, considered a lesser included case.

For all its obvious and inherent dangers, the so-called nuclear standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union proved to be remarkably stable. It also served to moderate direct confrontation between the two sides out of the fear that events might somehow spiral out of control, and it tended to keep a lid on local and regional conflicts, lest they serve as the catalyst for broader conflicts.

Now at the end of the Cold War the United States took a number of steps to reduce its nuclear forces or to modify their readiness status through a series of unilateral actions and in compliance with arms control agreements. For example, the United States removed nuclear-capable bombers

from alert. All U.S. land-based nuclear weapons were withdrawn from Europe. Nuclear weapons were removed from naval surface vessels. U.S. Strategic Command's Looking Glass Airborne Command Post stopped flying around the clock. The number of ballistic missile carrying submarines was reduced. And under the terms of the 2002 Moscow treaty, the U.S. removed hundreds of warheads from deployed missiles.

Nuclear deterrence was no longer the principal focus of our defense forces. And, as Admiral Mullen, our current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has written, "It is as if we all breathed a collective sigh of relief when the Soviet Union collapsed, and said to ourselves 'Well, I guess we don't need to worry about that anymore.'"

Now for those of us who spent their formative years in the Strategic Air Command, it is indeed a very different world. In fact, when I entered the missile career field, there were 1,054 ICBMs located at nine operational bases. Today, we have less than half of that; 450 ICBMs to be precise, located at only three operational bases, as this slide helps to illustrate.

Now it's not that the U.S. military had nothing else to occupy its attention during the immediate post-war period, the Cold War period. The Air Force, for instance, as you all know has been involved in continuous combat operations for more than 18 years beginning with Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and continuing with the enforcement of the no-fly zones over Iraq, the Balkan crises, and most recently the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

All the while, we took part in humanitarian relief operations and non-combatant evacuation missions around the world. In the military vernacular, the OpsTempo has been very high.

Interestingly, some of the same forces that were originally developed and fielded as part of the American strategic nuclear deterrence force, specifically the bombers, were reequipped and put to work in conventional operations in very innovative and devastatingly effective ways. It is worth bearing in mind that a significant tradeoff was in effect being made in each such instance.

As impressive as the B-2 and the B-52's conventional capabilities proved to be in Southwest Asia, their parent organizations still had a nuclear deterrence mission. And as a practical matter, every minute that a bomber crew or a bomber wing commander devoted to honing the special skills required for conventional operations or worrying about the myriad of details associated with deploying overseas was a minute that they could not spend on the nuclear aspects of their responsibilities.

This set of circumstances, a significant reduction in the size and central role of the nuclear forces as well as the pressing need to prepare for and conduct conventional military operations across the Air Force, led to a series of organization and resource decisions that may have made perfectly good sense at the time and when taken in isolation. But they had second and third order effects we did not anticipate, with a cumulative and unintended consequence of diminishing the attention paid to the nuclear forces that still remained in the Air Force arsenal.

Now following the Cold War, in 1992, we disbanded Strategic Air Command which had previously exercised control over all Air Force strategic nuclear forces, the manned bombers, and the ICBMs. We first assigned both the bombers and the ICBMs to the newly created Air Combat Command. Significantly, this new command also had the lion's share of responsibility for Air Force fighter aircraft and a host of other conventional aircraft. A year later, we assigned the ICBMs from Air Combat Command to Air Force Space Command, which also had the enormous responsibility of developing, launching, and operating military satellites. So at the end of the day, Air Force strategic nuclear forces were assigned not to one but to two different major Commands, each of which had pressing business and claims upon their respective shares of the Air Force budget.

A similar reshuffling of the deck also occurred in the enterprise for sustaining Air Force nuclear forces. For many years, the Air Force had operated one product center located at Kelly Air Force Base near San Antonio, Texas, with the sole responsibility for the nuclear weapons and warheads in Air Force custody. That center was shut down as part of the congressionally mandated base realignment and closure process. Its workload was subsequently parceled out among three or more different product centers, with a concomitant loss of experience, expertise, and centralized focus.

Now while several insightful reports, such as those by Admiral Chiles and General Welch, Rand Corporation, documented the inevitable fraying of the nuclear enterprise, particularly in the area of technical expertise and personal experience, it took, unfortunately, a series of unhappy incidents to bring the unfolding situation into sharp focus. The internal and external reviews of Air Force stewardship of nuclear deterrence forces that followed were remarkably consistent in identifying root causes of these incidents.

Just to list a few, fragmented authority and responsibility; as I've already mentioned, declining expertise and experience; ineffective processes for uncovering and analyzing and addressing nuclear-related

compliance and capability issues; erosion of rigorous self-assessment processes and the dilution of the advocacy for investment in nuclear and nuclear-related systems.

To deal with these issues, the Air Force senior leadership established as one of its top five priorities the reinvigoration of the Air Force nuclear enterprise. And last fall, Secretary of the Air Force, Mike Donley and our Chief of Staff, General Norty Schwartz, endorsed a nuclear roadmap designed to ensure that as long as nuclear weapons are a part of our national strategy, they will remain safe, secure, and reliable. Allow me, if you will, to briefly describe several aspects of that roadmap.

First, we established a new air staff two-letter directorate responsible for policy oversight and integration of our nuclear enterprise activities. For those of you who are familiar with the traditional process of numbering headquarters staff -- one is personnel, two is intelligence -- we designated this organization A10.

Second, we created a Nuclear Oversight Board jointly chaired by the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff to oversee implementation of this roadmap; to review nuclear policies, standards, performance metrics and compliance, and to ensure the continuing effective stewardship of the Air Force nuclear enterprise.

Third, we consolidated all nuclear sustainment matters under the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center at Kirtland Air Force Base near Albuquerque, New Mexico. In a sense, kind of a return or back to the future since the Armed Forces Special Weapons Program immediately after the Manhattan Project was established at Albuquerque. That process is well underway.

Fourth, we recently stood up a new B-52 squadron at Minot Air Force Base, bringing the total number of active squadrons to four. This will help us better achieve the proper balance between the B-52's nuclear deterrence mission and its conventional mission.

Fifth, we are modifying our inspection processes to make them more rigorous and standardized across the Air Force; and incidentally, I hope, the Navy as well. Along with that, we are developing the experts who will know how to effectively inspect the nuclear enterprise.

Finally, we stood up Air Force Global Strike Command, a major command on the same level as other Air Force major commands -- Air Combat Command, Air Mobility. It will consolidate the ICBM force and the nuclear capable bomber force -- the B-2s and the B-52s -- under a single command.

Now since I have sort of a special attachment to Air Force Global Strike Command, let me take a few minutes to describe what we've done and where we are and where we're going. We're establishing this command in a very systematic step-by-step approach. We have to get it right.

The first phase was the stand-up of a provisional command in January of this year at Bolling Air Force Base under the leadership of Major General Jim Kowalski, who is now the Vice Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command. I might add parenthetically most people know that when the Strategic Air Command stood up, it was not stood up originally at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha. Most remember that General Kinney had it for awhile at Andrews Air Force Base, something I did not know until we started this is actually SAC was in existence for several weeks or months at Bolling Air Force Base. So again, kind of a return to the future.

The principal tasks of the provisional Command were to develop the initial planning documents to define the manpower requirements and to begin actually assigning people to Air Force Global Strike Command.

The next phase took place on August 7th with the formal activation of the command at its permanent headquarters location, Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. As you can see from the picture, the Secretary was there. The Chief of Staff was there, as well as several elected officials and community leaders and veterans of the Strategic Air Command.

The ensuing five and a half weeks have been very busy. Our overarching task to date has been to ensure that we have all we need to function as a full-fledged major command headquarters, including the ability to respond to emergency situations. To that end, our civil engineering and our communications specialists have worked tirelessly to move the command into our facilities at Barksdale and to get our information Technology Resources up and running -- no trivial task.

Every day I see at least a half a dozen new faces in the headquarters building as we continue to bring our initial cadre of manpower on board. Our Plans and Programs Directorate is working very closely with Air Force Space Command and Air Combat Command to provide our input to FY12 POM and all of our directorates are developing the hundreds of required command supplements to Air Force Instructions.

Finally, our Personnel Reliability Program Office is up and operational, and we are expecting our first Staff Assistance Visit early next month to ensure that everything is in place.

These are but a few of the hundreds of action items from the Chief of Staff-approved program plan that our staff is currently working on. With all eyes firmly fixed on the upcoming assumption of the ICBM and bomber missions, with the first of those being the assumption of the 20th Air Force and the ICBM mission on December 1st of this year.

Now hopefully some of you were here, or most of you were here, yesterday to hear General Roger Burg give a very eloquent discussion of not only the ICBM force but issues facing the 20th Air Force. As everyone I think knows, the 20th Air Force is headquartered at Francis E. Warren Air Force Base near Cheyenne, Wyoming, and consists of the three missile wings you see here. Each wing has 150 operational Minuteman III ICBM missiles, and we sometimes forget also a fairly sizeable complement of UH-1M helicopters. The 20th Air Force will add about 8,000 government personnel to the command.

Now coming back just a moment, the forces for which Air Force Global Strike Command will have responsibility have been and, most importantly, remain a central component of our nation's armed forces. Each makes an important and unique contribution to the security of our nation as well as that of our allies and our friends.

Of the three legs of the triad, as you heard General Burg say yesterday, the ICBM, because of its multiple communications capabilities is perhaps the most responsive to national leadership. Continuously on alert and deployed in 450 widely dispersed locations, the size and characteristics of the Minuteman III force presents any potential adversary with an almost insurmountable, insoluble challenge should he contemplate attacking the United States with nuclear weapons.

Because he cannot disarm the ICBM force without nearly exhausting his own forces in the process and at the same time leaving himself vulnerable to our sea-launched ballistic missiles and bombers, he has no incentive to strike in the first place. In this case, numbers do matter, and the ICBM contributes immeasurably to both deterrence and, more importantly perhaps, stability in a crisis.

The next major milestone will be the assumption of 8th Air Force and its nuclear-capable bombers in global strike mission on February 1st of next year. The 8th Air Force is headquartered at Barksdale Air Force Base, the same place Air Force Global Strike Command is bedded down. It consists of three bomb wings flying two different types of aircraft. The addition of the 8th Air Force will bring approximately 12,000 additional government workers into the command.

The B-52 and the B-2 bombers of 8th Air Force are also critically important components of the strategic nuclear triad because they possess great flexibility and versatility. They can avoid flying over sensitive areas in ways that ballistic missiles may not be able to do. They can be used to signal resolve and intent, two very visible steps to increase their readiness or deploy them to different locations.

And just as the various components of the triad provide mutually reinforcing complementary capabilities, so too do the two different bombers, with the B-52 providing unique unmatched standoff capabilities and the B-2 providing the capabilities to penetrate and attack heavily defended targets. Both, in my view, are absolutely essential capabilities to our overall strategic nuclear deterrence.

Finally, both of these bombers, as I alluded to earlier, possess vitally important conventional or non-nuclear capabilities, as they convincingly demonstrated just recently at the opening phases of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Rest assured, for those who may be concerned, Air Force Global Strike Command is committed to providing robust and relentless advocacy for current and future bomber capabilities in the conventional as well as the nuclear realm.

Now in addition to the missile and bomber units I just mentioned, the command will also take over the ICBM test mission of the 576th Test Squadron located at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and the targeting analysis mission of the 625th Strategic Operations Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. For the time being, we will also have two detachments co-located with Air Force Space Command at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, and Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia to work closely with those commands as the transfer of the two mission areas gets carried out.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Air Force Global Strike Command will assume lead command responsibilities for the UH-1N helicopter and hence become the principal advocate for replacing this venerable workhorse with a platform that is more suitable for the post-9/11 requirements providing security to our fielded ICBM force. A platform that has greater unrefueled range, greater speed, and the ability to carry more security force personnel.

Now Full Operational Capability, FOC, of the Air Force Global Strike Command will be achieved this coming summer with about 900 personnel on board at the headquarters at Barksdale and roughly 23,000 people in the entire command. We're on a very aggressive timeline, with a lot of work to

be done. In fact, this is the first time since 1982 that the Air Force has created a major new command from whole cloth without direct lineage to another command as ACC was to TAC or AMC was to MAC.

It's a tall order, and the only way we'll get it done is through the magnificent work of all those in 20th and 8th Air Force and, most especially, our marvelous hosts at the 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale.

The nuclear deterrence and global strike forces of the Air Force remain vitally important to our nation as well as to our friends and allies around the world. For the men and women of Air Force Global Strike Command, that means we have an extraordinarily important mission, noble and worthy work to perform, work that demands the utmost in professionalism, in discipline, excellence, pride, and esprit.

As Secretary of Defense Gates said in his remarks made to the bomber and missile personnel at Minot Air Force Base last December, and I quote, "Handling nuclear weapons, the most powerful and destructive instruments in the arsenal of freedom, is a tremendous responsibility. We owe you," he said "the attention, the people and the resources you need to do the job right. Yours is the most sensitive mission in the entire United States military."

This new command reflects the Air Force's firm and unshakeable conviction that strategic nuclear deterrence and global strike operations are a special trust and responsibility, one that we take very seriously. With the new command's activation, we began the road towards consolidating Air Force assets in this critical mission area under a single command; one that will serve as a single voice to help maintain the high standards necessary in stewardship of our nation's strategic nuclear forces.

Once again, my thanks to the Air Force Association for inviting me and inviting all of us to be here today. It has been both an honor and a privilege, Joe, to be with so many friends and kindred spirits, and I look forward to taking any questions that you may have.

Moderator: Thank you very much, General Klotz for that great overview of Global Strike. [Applause].

The first question concerns, we understand that Global Strike Command has been warmly welcomed in Louisiana, and I'm told that there were things like billboards that say SAC is back. [Laughter]. Would you comment a little bit on the comparison and maybe contrast to the difference between SAC and Global Strike.

Lt. Gen. Klotz: Well, Air Force Global Strike Command is not Strategic Air Command, although in a technical sense, for those of you who are interested in Air Force history and Air Force heritage, we do inherit the lineage and honor of the Strategic Air Command.

You may be interested in the fact that as we were developing the command patch for the command, there were three different courses of action that were considered, and one was to take the Strategic Air Command patch and just translate it as Air Force Global Strike Command. But the reality is that we don't live in the same world as I laid out in my presentation, as those of us who grew up with Strategic Air Command lived in. The world has changed. Even though it's still a very dangerous and unpredictable place with a lot of potential conflicts, conflicts that we're, wars that we're involved in at the moment. It's not the same situation that we faced with a heavily armed Soviet Union able and willing under certain circumstances to brandish its strategic nuclear forces in order to achieve political objectives.

So it is our hope that we will take from Strategic Air Command the same rigorous adherence to standards and checklists, the same discipline, the same pride, and the same esprit as the command we inherited lineage from, but adapt it to the world in which we live today.

Finally, the practical matter of this command is not as big as Strategic Air Command. We will not have the tanker force that SAC did. We will not have the long-range reconnaissance assets that SAC did.

Many people don't know this, but at one point SAC was the largest command, it had the largest number of fighters of any command in the Air Force, and we won't have any of those. So it's a different world. It's a different time, and hopefully the command that we have fashioned will draw the very best from the past but be looking forward to taking care of today and the future.

Moderator: The next question is concerned with people, and given that people are the key to the mission and the nuclear enterprise, what do you see as your most significant challenges in this area?

Lt. Gen. Klotz: Well I think our most significant challenge, as has been pointed out in several sessions already in the area of people, is experience and expertise. The Air Force has drawn down significantly in terms of the number of people that it has. Fortunately, in decisions taken last year we have stopped the decline and we've put it

back on an even level, which is great news for the nuclear enterprise because we've inherited a number of people from that particular decision into the nuclear enterprise.

But that having been said, a lot of people left who had tremendous knowledge and experience in this, as there were various programs designed to provide them incentives to leave the service or to cross-train into other career fields.

We've also done a number, again, made a number of decisions in the personnel area. Perhaps, as I alluded to earlier, for good and compelling reasons at the time but in retrospect you have to question why in, for instance, reengineering, the way we assign Air Force specialty codes; AFC individuals losing those identifiers, those special-experience tags that identified an individual as having experience in the nuclear area.

So, for instance, in the bomber world a bomber maintainer became a big aircraft maintainer, and as a big aircraft maintainer she or he could be assigned anywhere rather than working or doing some of the special types of maintenance that are necessary on the B-52s and B-2s. So I think we understand that and will work back, but it's not something we're going to be able to do overnight.

To build up bench strength for a baseball team sometimes takes many years and lots of trades and a little bit of money. And so I think we'll need to do that as well to build our bench strength back up, but I think that's the biggest challenge we have -- expertise and experience in this enterprise.

Moderator: And as a follow-up to that, a number of years ago a number of missileers were opting to take more of a space focus in their career. Do you see that pattern changing at all, with the degree of emphasis on the nuclear enterprise?

Lt. Gen. Klotz: On one of my slides up there I said this is going to be a command that focuses on rigorous fact-based and analytical approaches. But let me give you some anecdotal information.

As we were standing up this command, there were a number of officers who, quite frankly, had equally strong credentials in both ICBM operations as well as space operations. And what I have found is that many of those officers have opted to come in to Air Force Global Strike Command rather than pursue potential job opportunities in Air Force Space Command. And I think the reason for that is that those of us, again, who have been in this business

understood, or understand, that more rigor and discipline needed to be brought back into the process and therefore they feel that they can contribute personally to doing what is the right thing.

Another component, I think, of that is that everybody who's down in Barksdale standing up this command is the first ever in that job. For now and forever, they will be the first ever. And I think the opportunity to create something new, to know that whatever you do is going to have a lasting impact on the command is a powerful incentive for people to come into it. So quite frankly, we've been able to attract some very promising talent into this Command.

Moderator: This question concerns perhaps some additional recognition or benefits for people serving in the nuclear career field. Is Global Strike Command seeking or are there any thoughts about additional benefits or entitlements to attract Airmen and others into the nuclear program.

Lt. Gen. Klotz: Well I think it's important that we understand how, in a very general sense, pay and benefits are provided to our Air Force people. We are very carefully circumscribed by law in terms of what we pay our people and how we pay our people. And as an institution, we have some flexibility to provide additional pay, for instance, for hazardous duty, for combat duty, or through the selective reenlistment bonuses that target those job specialties in which retention happens to be a problem.

In fact, in the past year or so, we've expanded both the amount of money that's available in the selective reenlistment bonus as well as the scope of the selective reenlistment bonus. That's how the corporate Air Force approaches how it does that.

So I know there are efforts underway within the missile community at this time to take a look at that. We will, as we take on responsibility for the ICBM mission and the bomber mission, this will be one of our top priorities of our personnel and of a personnel director and me personally to ensure either through monetary or non-monetary incentives, that those people who serve in the nuclear and global strike mission understand the importance of their contribution to the United States Air Force.

More important than any of that though, I think, is for senior leadership, both in the Air Force and in the government as a whole, to constantly and repeatedly remind our people who are doing the ICBM and the bomber business just how important they are. They're not on the front pages of the newspaper. They're not covered, hopefully most days,

by the cable networks. In fact, we eschew that kind of notoriety, but they need to understand that they are an important part of this Air Force, they're an important part of our military, and they make an enormously important contribution to our national security.

Moderator: Let's shift to hardware if we can a little bit. The Minuteman III has been around since 1970, as indicated on your slide, and we've done some things to extend the life of our guidance systems and propellant. Aren't we about at the point in time where we really need to seriously consider a replacement for the Minuteman III, and do you think we'll see one before 2025?

Lt. Gen. Klotz: Of course, again, as General Burg pointed out yesterday, we have spent over the last decade between six and seven billion dollars, depending on how you calculate the cost, to modernize and update the Minuteman III ICBM. We touched literally every inch of that 60-foot missile, from the nose cone to first-stage nozzles.

So in many respects, even though this missile was first fielded in the 1970s, a lot of the components, the fuel propulsion, the propellants inside the missile, are relatively new. We carried out this series of modifications and updates to the Minuteman with the expectation that we would be able to extend its life at least through 2020.

We now have congressional legislation that requires us to study and come up with an analysis of alternatives; a roadmap, if you will, of how we might extend the life of this missile beyond 2020 to as long as 2030. So I think we'll get the results of that in the next several years, and that will be the point, I think, where we'll need to begin to talk about a follow-on to the system.

It may be that we choose, rather than to build an entirely new system, to continue a process by which we might replace various components of the existing missile to one primarily to make it a more serviceable and more easily maintained system than it is. There are certain things that we have to do with the ICBM in terms of maintaining it at the phenomenally high alert rates that we achieve, that quite frankly are very labor intensive. And if you were designing a system like that now, you wouldn't do it that way.

Just as nobody rebuilds carburetors anymore unless you're an antique car enthusiast. You take it into the shop, they hook up computers, they diagnose the problem, they repair or they replace the component that is not working. We need to get to that level of ease of

maintenance in the ICBM business as well.

Another reason for doing that is that every minute that you're out on a launch site doing maintenance on a missile it is a potential vulnerability in terms of security. So to the extent that we can make that process much easier, not only to save wear and tear on the maintenance equipment and on our individuals who perform maintenance, but it also is an enhancement to our security.

Moderator: Beyond the Minuteman III and the follow-on bomber, what about the less glamorous area of things like support equipment, test equipment, vehicles? Is that an area that has been sort of neglected in terms of funding and attention?

Lt. Gen. Klotz: The short answer to your question is yes, not only in the ICBM business but in the bomber business as well. I don't need to tell the experts in this room that before you can load a bomb on a bomber or place a warhead on top of an ICBM, there is a series of checks of the weapon itself as well as the connector to the connections to the platform that all have to be performed by various types of test equipment. It's not a very glamorous part of the business, but it's an absolutely key and essential aspect of the business and, quite frankly, we have underinvested in that.

One of the key limiting factors to many of the actions that Roger Burg is taking out in 20th Air Force now and that Floyd Carpenter has to deal with in 8th Air Force is tired, worn-out, dare I say antique test equipment that our maintainers have to deal with. So this will be a key part of what we do in Air Force Global Strike Command. And I must say Air Force Space Command for the ICBM side and Air Combat Command on the bomber side are already very much on the trail of this particular issue, and we're getting great support from Air Force Materiel Command to develop a roadmap for not just test equipment but all the other equipment, whether it's loaders or vehicles or trailers that are part of maintaining both the ICBM and the bomber force.

Moderator: This one is not necessarily directly under your responsibility, but it concerns the nuclear stockpile and our nuclear weapons. What are the plans that you see are critical to extending the life of our nuclear weapons in terms of safety, security, reliability into the future?

Lt. Gen. Klotz: Well, excellent question, and we talked a little bit about this in the four-star panel this morning. Nuclear weapons are equipment like other types of equipment that we have to deal with. They have components

in them that age and have to be replaced from time to time.

We also are probably more acutely aware of the special requirements for maintaining the safety and security of our nuclear weapons stockpile as the threat of terrorism has come to the United States in a very dramatic fashion just a few years ago. So both of those things brought together, the need to replace aging components and the opportunity to design in greater safety and security features, is occurring roughly at the same time.

We need support to do that. We have strong support from the Department of Defense as you heard Secretary of Defense Gates say this morning. We have very strong support from the Department of Energy.

Now what we need is to get the necessary enabling legislation that will allow the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense to do the studies and begin the process of modifying the existing stockpile; one, to prolong it as long as we require those weapons, but two, to enhance the safety and security features.

Moderator: Sir, a final question. You've been commander for about a month I guess of a new command in our Air Force. How are you going to judge the success of the new command that you have just activated?

Lt. Gen. Klotz: That's an excellent question, and one we constantly ask ourselves or have already begun asking ourselves down at Air Force Global Strike Command. In fact, it even began as part of the nuclear roadmap.

I think success will come when see that sense of adherence to standards and discipline that we all knew as part of the beginnings of this particular business infused back through the entire command. And part of that will come again from recognition on the part of all of our people just how incredibly important what they do is every day. Whether it's walking the fence line in a weapons storage area or performing maintenance on one of these systems or operating it from a launch-controlled center or from a cockpit.

And then, when we achieve that, I think we can say that we have, we are approaching success. But in this business, the standard is perfection. And it is something that you have to pay constant attention to. It's not something we're going to fix necessarily overnight, and it's not something that's going to stay fixed unless we pay attention to the people and to the equipment and to the processes which we use in carrying out our responsibilities.

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