

041118 Air Force Association Air Force Breakfast with General Robin Rand,  
Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command

GEN. LARRY SPENCER: Good morning, everyone. If I could get your attention, please? Good morning. First of all, good morning and thank you all for being here.

As you can see, we typically have these breakfasts over at the Capitol Hill Club, but based on scheduling we had to move over to the hotel this morning. We have a beautiful view here, we have a great speaker, so we're really glad that you're all here. I think most of you know me, but I'm Larry Spencer. I'm the president of AFA.

We are really pleased today to have not only a great speaker and a great leader but a great friend as well. Most of you know General Rand. He will be retiring in a couple of months, and I'm told it will be 39 years or there about, close to 40 years, and 27 assignments, six of those overseas. So I'm sure your wife is looking forward to retirement as well.

If you think about it, though, General Rand has actually been in the Air Force longer than 39 years because his father also served in the Air Force. Not only did he serve, but his father was also a fighter pilot. Not only was he a fighter pilot but he was a combat veteran of both World War II and Vietnam, so clearly family of service and a family of war fighters.

I'm also told, General Raymond, that your father survived being shot down twice. You didn't know that? Once during World War II and once during Vietnam. As far as I know you haven't been shot down, is that right?

No one in the room who knows me doesn't know that I'm a Redskins fan, but you probably don't know that General Rand is a Denver Broncos fan. If you don't know your football, both the Denver Broncos and the Washington Redskins have won three Super Bowls each. But I want to set the record clear because in 1988 the Redskins beat the Broncos in the Super Bowl. I just wanted to make sure you're aware of that, General Rand, before you came up.

General Rand, there's a lot of things on your plate, as we watch the news. Even this morning there's a lot of things going on around the world. You're on the frontline with that. General Rand is, I think, testifying here later today, so he's a busy man. We really appreciate your stopping by, so without further discussion please help me welcome General Robert Rand.

(Applause).

GEN. ROBERT RAND: Thanks, chief, that was very kind. He did his

homework. I told this story over Veterans Day when I was the wing commander at Luke back in 2005. My father got shot down as a young 20 year old lieutenant. He survived and spent 40 hours in the water and got picked up by a PT boat. In Vietnam, 22 years later as a colonel, he got shot down again. A young 20 year old warrant officer picked him up and rescued him.

I'm really proud of him. He came up and he said, son, I wish you'd stop telling that story about me. My feelings were hurt and I said, gee dad, I'm just proud of you. He said, being shot down twice as a fighter pilot is nothing to be proud of. It just means I wasn't very good on those two days.

(Laughter).

It was 10 to nothing at the end of the first quarter. The Broncos were up. The quarterback they had, Todd Williams, 35 to 10 at halftime. It was a beating.

So what am I going to talk to you about? I'm going to take you around the scope a little bit about the NPR, the National Defense Strategy, our priorities, and how we kind of play it. Does that sound okay? And then I want to leave time for questions. I thought we could take a quick look at what we're doing.

This administration conducted a snap Nuclear Posture Review and it concluded, like every administration since Eisenhower – you can add them up, I think that's 12 -- that we need three legs and the triad need to be intact and that we're going to maintain our ambiguous non-declaratory policy and that we need to modernize the nuclear enterprise. I think that's the key takeaway that we have.

That is consistent with what I've been concentrating on for the last three years as the commander of Air Force Global Strike, who is responsible for two of those three legs, the airborne and the missile, as well as a big chunk of the nuclear command, control and communications that go with it. The National Defense Strategy is a wonderful document by the way. It's pretty short, easy to read, and I think very concise.

What it stressed is that great power competition is back. Some would say, did it ever leave? Maybe it did for us, but I don't think it did for China and Russia. I think they've been studying us intensely, certainly since 1991 as we came out of Desert Storm.

That's not a big shift either, for Air Force Global Strike Command. At Air Force Global Strike our mission is to provide strategic strike and nuclear deterrence. It goes to figure that we need to concentrate on near peer competitors for deterrence and assurance. Inside of that National Defense Strategy are three takeaways for us, who wear this, and that is make sure we're building a lethal force, a more lethal force; we want to strengthen our alliances; and we want to make sure we can improve our performance and affordability. That has been the task that we got from Secretary Mattis.

So I just wanted to quickly share that. I thought the secretary and the chief of

staff of the Air Force brilliantly laid out at September's AFA at the Gaylord, their priorities well in front of the National Defense Strategy. It is nothing short of brilliant and speaks to the brilliance of our secretary and chief. Look at what they said their priorities were and tell me if they don't align perfectly with the National Defense Strategy.

Pretty cool, what do you think? We've got to get after readiness. Cost effectively modernize. That's right up with that third part of the NDS. Drive innovation very much tied to modernization. Develop exceptional leaders and strengthen our alliances.

When we got that, I go, how is Air Force Global Strike doing? I've been saying our fight is our mission. What's the mission? Deter and assure, global strike. It's easy gang, not in days, weeks or months, but in hours or minutes.

That's what we do. We hold targets at risk anywhere on the planet, quickly. Now we need some help to do that with our dear friend Dewey Everhart and all his tankers, to get to some of these places, but that's the beauty of what we are able to do.

Airmen, develop exceptional leaders. We are concentrating on our airmen a lot. Our families, who support those airmen, who support the mission. We want it to be rooted in our values, our core values. We're a value-based organization in the United States Air Force. We want to make sure that we're developing men and women that are steeped in the profession of arms. And we want to use our rich heritage to motivate us to those values so we accomplish the mission with great lethality. So I say we're in (G ?) with the NDS. We're in (G ?) with the secretary and chief.

So what are my focus areas? It's simple. I thought about this. One day someone asked me, what do you do as the MAJCOM commander? I go, you don't have a set script, each day is a little different, but if you can put it in buckets there's four buckets that I play in all the time. The first one is fight tonight. Are our men and women ready to execute for multiple combatant commanders that are around the globe. We'll talk about that here in a minute. Are we ready to go?

The second bucket that I play a lot in, and I'm certain we've had an opportunity over the last three years to do this, is the fight in 2030. Are we going to be ready, be able to be lethal, keep pace, exceed what our potential adversaries are going to be able to do? That's modernization, maintain and sustaining our platforms while we are transitioning to our newer systems. The fight in 2030.

And then we spend a lot of time on our airmen. There's about 34,000 airmen in Air Force Global Strike Command and we want to make sure we're doing what we can to develop and ensure they're ready to go. And then our families. I like to tell you that airmen -- happy airmen are productive airmen, are lethal airmen. Unhappy airmen detract from our lethality.

One of the things that will make our airmen unhappy is when there's strife on the

home front So this is more than just a feel good thing, this is tied to our lethality. If airmen bring that unhappiness to work, it detracts. Stressors that exist in our family, we don't want to short-change the importance of our families in this command. So that's a big priority.

That's kind of the four buckets that we have. It's a tough world and we're busy. It's a tough world, gang. I don't need to tell you. You're reading it, you're hearing about it. Let me just take you around the globe, though, on a day-to-day kind of what the men and women are doing in Air Force Global Strike.

In the upper left is a picture of a missile alert facility. We're the one leg of the triad that sits at alert 24/7, nuclear alert. We are the nation's nuclear umbrella. We're the most responsive leg of the nuclear triad. We are on alert 24/7.

It is a tough mission. I like to call them my silent assassins. Assassins don't brag about their job because if they do they'd be out of a job, wouldn't they? Well these men and women don't brag about their job either, they just go about doing it. They serve in the five missile fields that exist in Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota.

And it's a contested environment, a contested AOR. Some people aren't comfortable with that term. It's contested by rough weather. Have you ever been to Minot in January, or Malmstrom? How about in April? It's still snowing around there, by the way. You got a little taste of that last week, didn't you?

It's contested by development, urban development, fracking, wind mills. And it's contested, God forbid, we've always got to be prepared if anyone wanted to try to intrude or have ill-will towards us and our resources and our assets. So these operators who are out there, these young men and women, typically lieutenants and captains, and these defenders that we have that secure the missile fields, and our maintainers and our helicopter drivers, crews that have to help with the security aspect, it's tough.

I'm really, really proud of them. It's hard to measure success. How do you measure success out there? Nuclear free, right? I think we'd be less successful if they weren't paying attention and weren't watching.

Underneath that, though, is stuff going on in the East and South China Sea. It's enough of a concern that Admiral Harris and his folks before him have wanted to have more presence in the Pacific AOR than we had permanently. So we have basically had bombers at Guam Anderson Air Force Base continuously for the last 12 years. We just brought in the 20<sup>th</sup> bomb squad from Barksdale Air Force Base, B-52s, in January. They're busy, and their primary reason is to deter and to assure.

If you look what's going on next to that, it's pretty tough isn't it? You know who that is. What's going on in Russia? Talk to General Scaparrotti, talk to General Walters. They're pretty busy right now. They're busier than they were in 2014 when you were

over there, and it was a busy place then.

My dear friend, my classmate Steve Mueller, was stationed there. I remember guys when I came into the Air Force in 1979 the Soviet Union was our focus. It was easy. It's what we trained for, it's what we talked about. And then all of a sudden, what happened? The wall went down. Victory in our lifetime.

In 1991 I was a lieutenant colonel on the Joint Staff and I remember we had discussions are we going to bring the Russians into the NATO alliance? We're not having those discussions right now. 2014 was another game-changer. And so we support that with airmen out of Fairford, United Kingdom. We're making sure that he's aware that we're aware.

The ayatollah, Iran, I don't know what they're really up to but I do know their fingerprints are on just about every act of violent extremism that happens. We do know they have some capabilities and we're ready if they don't cooperate. Our B-2 wing, the 509<sup>th</sup> bomb wing at Whiteman and the 131<sup>st</sup> bomb wing at Whiteman, our Guard total force wing, is ready if we have to do anything there.

And then you come down and the chief says, we need to be in a three point stance. Who has served in Korea? A few of us have. I've served their twice.

When I went over there for my first tour in 1994 and stayed a while and served with my dear friend over there Sledge Armor (ph), his grandfather was the dictator. When I went back in 2003 and '04 his father was the dictator. Now he's in charge and I like to say he makes those two look like altar boys. He isn't anyone to mess around with.

That part about why we're at Anderson in the East and South China Sea, guess why we're also there? We're to support General Brooks and General Bergeson with our bombers if we have to. We're ready. God forbid, but we're ready.

And while that's all going on we still don't get the opportunity to take our eye off of what? What's going on with the violence extremists? So we've got a squadron over there right now at Al-Udeid in Qatar. It's just rolling in. We brought our B-1s back into the CENTCOM AOR to replace the bus. They're flying combat. There's a B-1 – I can promise you this – 24/7 somewhere over the skies of Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan.

And then the one mission that people aren't too familiar with, I don't think, is what goes on in our own backyard, in Central and South America. We've got Joint Interagency Task Force South, part of Southern Command, and Admiral Tidd, and our B-52s and B-1s provide what we can, not all the time, but when we can we provide some amazing ISR support with those targeting pods. We'll go find those guys that are hauling illicit illegal drugs. Occasionally we'll be able to find them, fix them, track them and target them. They know they're targeted and they don't want to get caught, so they end up throwing their millions of dollar's worth of stuff over the side. They hate that, the sharks love it. It's a real coup for us when that happens

(Laughter).

So what I want you to know is this is not episodic. What I just talked to you about isn't something we have the luxury of doing. Let's go concentrate on PACCOM for a while. After a few weeks we'll run over and let's go support General Scaparrotti and when we're done with that we'll shift our attention over here.

Today, as I am talking to you, we are engaged simultaneously in the Pacific AOR, in the European AOR, in the CENTCOM AOR. We are engaged in the SOUTHCOM AOR while we are maintaining nuclear alert and ready to generate for General Hyten to meet his requirements. I'm incredibly honored to be the guy that gets to kind of orchestrate all these things that are going on. I told you it is pretty global.

So what are our challenges? We've got to modernize. And here's the good news, we are. What a great time it has been the last three years to be in Air Force Global Strike. This is, simultaneously, the things we're doing.

I just want to thank our industry partners that are here today. Without you – you're tied, we're wing. I just want you to know how grateful I am to you and what you do for us. We don't take time to tell you that enough.

We're working hard to replace with our Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, the aging Minuteman III. We're well on our way on the B-21 with Northrop Grumman to deliver on time and on cost the B-21. We are humping hard to get a replacement for UH-1N helicopter. We're working really hard to update and modernize our nuclear command and control and communications.

We're going to replace our weapons storage areas with weapons storage facilities. I like to call them weapons generation facilities. They generate lethality.

We're modernizing and sustaining and improving a legacy bomber that is 57 years old so that it can fly for another three or four decades. We're modernizing. Do you know why? Do you know why?

Because others get a vote. I'm going to get challenged on this I'm sure later today, are these things necessary? You tell me. Hey brothers and sisters, I'm your insurance policy. You tell me. Others get a vote.

What are they doing? We ain't playing tiddlywinks gang. I just want to introduce you to a couple of our airmen. Our second priority – just real briefly, isn't that an awesome looking airplane? It's cool. The B-1 is such a cool airplane. It's going to be around a while. It's done so many great things. It's in the fight, and our air crews are amazing.

But I just want to introduce you to about 12 really cool airmen that we just kind of

randomly selected from across the command. We brought them in October to our senior leader conference and we let them hang out with us. I just want you to look – it's hard to maybe see, but if you want to see how great America is, if you want to know what we can be, the best part of our country is right there.

Look at that. You've got black people, white people, females, males, short, tall, from all walks of life. You've got a young man – look at this character. We call him A2 because I can't say his name. He's from Africa. He's got a doctorate degree. When he came over here his degree was in how to make water drinkable for his village.

He joined our Air Force. He's a vehicle operator at FE Warren with a doctorate degree. Guess what just happened to him? He just got selected for officer training school. I can't make this stuff up. Isn't that cool?

And our families. General Luney used to tell me when I was a younger wing commander and I didn't appreciate it. He said, you recruit airmen, Rand, but you retain the families. I get it now. We serve, they sacrifice.

General Spencer mentioned 27 moves. That's a bunch, isn't it? I live through my daughter now.

Matt, my son in law, got promoted Friday, Good Friday. It was cool. How many father in laws get to preside at their son in law's lieutenant colonel. You know what they say, behind every lieutenant colonel is a very surprise mother in law, right?

(Laughter).

I got to do that with my 13 year old grandson and 10 year old grandson. My seven year old granddaughter was there and it was a glorious day. On Sunday, Easter Sunday, him and I drove up to Raleigh. I went west back to Barksdale and he went east over to some place that we're not going to talk about, for his umpteenth deployment. It's personal. Those spouses that we brought in for our Spartan Commanders course, are willing to continue to sacrifice and serve for us, and I just always want to make sure we pause and reflect and are grateful for what they do.

I'm going to open up my comments at my hearing today and I'm going to say, you know what is the single strength behind Air Force Global Strike is the 34,000 airmen and their families who have amazing service and sacrifice. That's what I'm going to start with. Then they can take their swings at me on whatever they want to, but they're not going to get away without knowing that if we have flaws it isn't because of that.

And then we have our core values, gang. We're a value-based organization. You know how I know that? Because I get to hang around with guys like this. Our recent Chief Master Sergeant Selects in the command – and I failed to introduce the Chief Master Sergeant of my command, Tom Mazoni (ph). Tommy, stand up for a minute, chief. Thank you for your service.

(Applause).

Chief Mazoni orchestrated this five day course where we brought in our new chiefs and their spouses and we just had a glorious time with them. But I'm comforted because I know that they're going to be the overseers as we make sure this institution stays on track.

And then our heritage. History makes you prouder. Do you believe that? It makes you smarter. History makes you smarter.

Our heritage will make you prouder. I want to tap into that because I believe our heritage to be a tool we can use to instill pride and esprit d' corps and good morale. But we've got to learn it. We've got to teach it.

So I'm mindful – I want to show you guys something and then I'll open it up for questions if you want. Every year we give an award out to four airmen in our Air Force for courage and leadership and exemplary performance. It goes to a junior NCO, it goes to a senior NCO, it goes to a junior company grade officer, and it goes to a field grade officer. It's a cool award. We pick the best of the best for it.

I'm here to tell you, sadly, a lot of airmen don't even know what's behind the award. So today you're going to learn the story behind this award.

(Video played).

As I round out my career I have two classmates that I started with 43 years ago. I had them beat by a year because I was on the Dumbo track. I had to go to the prep school. I don't know if you two remember it, but on June week – we called it back then – on Monday we all had to gather on the toratzo. Vandenberg Hall was named – and the other dorm was just called the new dorm. On that day in early June, on a Monday a bright sunny Monday, we dedicated that new dorm and named it Sijan Hall. I'll never forget that.

Questions? Now you know who Lance Sijan is, right? Any questions or do I have to get off the stage?

GEN. SPENCER: Please state your name and affiliation, and one question per person please.

GEN. RAND: She's one of my favorites. We're old pros together. We do this Texas two-step all the time.

MS. RACHEL KARIS (ph): Good morning, Rachel Karis with Inside the Air Force. Can you give us an update on where you are in deciding the replacement rate for

GBSD when it comes online and taking Minuteman III down? And are you looking at still the possibility of a SLEP for Minuteman III?

GEN. RAND: I'm not looking at the possibility of a SLEP for Minuteman III. We're firmly committed. We're in the technology maturation risk part with the two down-selects with Northrop Grumman and Boeing. We're committed to GBSD and we will make sure that we will continue to meet our New START Treaty requirements and whatever that becomes after New START is either renegotiated or whatever will be the case post-2021. So we'll be able to balance it and make sure we continue to meet the operational plans that are dictated to us.

MS. SANDRA Erwin: Thank you, general, Sandra Erwin with Space News. The Nuclear Posture Review talks about the nuclear command, control and communications that are going on review for possibly changing the organization, the governance. Can you give us an update on that?

GEN. RAND: Yes, I can, and that is that I'm not completely privy to what's being under the tent right now. That is a discussion that I know is at the levels with the secretary of Defense and the chairman. I know that STRATCOM will have a heavy role in this.

I can speak to my part in that, and that is we have designated Air Force Global Strike as the lead command for the Air Force part of NC3. I continue to work within the governance we have right now, and it's a multi-agency, if you will, governance that we have with OSD and certainly with multiple commands. The services all have a play in this all the way up to certainly the highest levels of government. So I will hold fast. If you ever get Vice Chairman General Selva here he can do a better job of probably giving you more specifics.

Anything else? Did I bore you or dazzle you or what?

LT. COL. EPHRAIM RIVERS (ph): Ephraim Rivers, I'm a lieutenant colonel in the Air National Guard with the 131<sup>st</sup> Bomb Wing, a part of the team at Jefferson Barracks. We've been working with Global Strike to bed down a new mission there with the 157<sup>th</sup> Air Operations Group. We're trying to fight right now with some funds to renovate an old historical facility. We've been talking with Air National Guard to try to figure out how we can get in the lane of doing a MILCON to do that work properly. I just wanted to thank you for your team's support in helping us do that. We'll be coming hopefully to Barksdale in the next coming month or so to try to work out with your team how we can be a part of that and do it the proper way.

GEN. RAND: Great, thanks.

LT. COL. RIVERS: Yes, sir. Thank you.

GEN. RAND: I'll ring in with Willie B. and tell him you put in a plug for that.

LT. COL. RIVERS: Yes, sir

MR.MARC SELINGER: Hi, general, Marc Selinger with Defense Daily. You mentioned your part on the UH-1N replacement. I was wondering if you could elaborate on that, including when you expect a contract award? Also, are you concerned about the protest that Sikorsky filed? Thank you.

GEN. RAND: Thank you. What I'm concerned about is further delays to getting awarded the contract. I'm hopeful that we'll get the award later this summer.

We're into source selection and so I don't have any more details about that. But I'm very anxious for a selection to get past us so we can start delivering what has been a tremendous war horse, if you will, the UH-1N. But we want to be able to get a newer platform that can improve our capabilities out there.

I would tell you, though, we've done an amazing job on the ingenuity of our men and women to keep that UH-1 operational and meeting the requirements. How we're doing business is nothing short of spectacular. There's no threat to the security that we provide. It's just a new helicopter will give us an opportunity to do it more efficiently and better.

That's why – you know, everything expires. Otherwise, we'd still be flying B-17s and P-51s, right? So it's time, it's time. We'll get there.

I'm very encouraged. We've made a lot of progress. You know, a lot of commanders before me have advocated. I know when General Chandler (ph) was the vice chief there were a lot of discussions about how we've got to replace the UH-1N, we've got to replace the UH-1N. But I'm the first commander that can say we have dollars allocated for doing this.

So it's going to happen, and that is something that I take great comfort in knowing, that we've been able to move the ball right inside the five yard line. Now we've got to get it in the end zone. Does that answer your question?

GEN. SPENCER: Another question?

MS. : Your PowerPoint goes through the new NPR and the new NDS, and I'm curious if there are any specific initiatives or specific questions that these new documents are making you kind of chew over? Is there anything that you're moving forward on, like new action items, as a result of these?

GEN. RAND: Candidly, I think I need to say yes, because when the boss gives you some homework you've got to read it and you've got to make sure. So I'm looking at those three components. Build a more lethal force, that's a clear directive and so how does that apply to Air Force Global Strike? I like the glide path we're on.

Strengthen our alliances and partners, is an area that we've got to continue to work for. We do multiple things to do that, and we've got a couple of partners and allies in the room here. We can never do too much. And then making sure we're doing things smartly.

So it's not a wakeup call by any means, but it's a call out to analyze. In the Nuclear Posture Review I certainly find it comforting for me because it validates the things we have been doing and it gives me that extra motivation to continue to do that. I'm not sure I'm answering your question directly, but of course we're aware of those and we need to make sure that we're doing the things we're directed to do.

MS. : Can I ask you to clarify your Huey comment. You said the contract award is later this summer?

GEN. RAND: I said I hoped so. I don't get to choose when the contract is awarded. It's in source selection and I have nothing to do with that. I'm hopeful.

MS. : Do you think it's later than June?

GEN. RAND: I'm hopeful it will be. I'm just going to stick to that, thank you. I don't know. I don't get any say in that. That's what you've got to understand.

Once the contract goes into source selection, the guys that are responsible for requirements are on the sidelines are cheering and hoping and praying. We're not a part of that, for good reasons. So we have to let the system that is mandated by legislation and laws, work. We'll get called when it is time.

GEN. SPENCER: Thank you very much.

GEN. RAND: I've got to go meet a senator, a very important person, today. I don't want to be late. Thank you, everyone, all the best.

(Applause).

GEN. SPENCER: Many of you will recall that Global Strike Command once had a three-star commander. General Rand, at the time, was the commander of (AETC) and I remember when we made that position a four-star – and I was actually in the room when General Welsh called General Rand to tell him that he was being moved to Global Strike Command. I remember him telling him he wanted him to be a modern day Curtis LeMay.

(Laughter).

He certainly has done that. Thank you all for being here for General Rand. This is an AFA coin, technically known as a manhole cover.

(Laughter).

Thank you so much for being here.

GEN. RAND: Thank you.

(Applause).

Again, thank you all for being here. We look forward to seeing you again on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May with General Jay Raymond from Air Force Space Command will be the speaker. Thank you all for being here. We thank you for your support of AFA. Have a great day. Thank you so much.