

TRANSCRIPT

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DWG: Thank you everybody for coming in at this special bright and early 7:45 start. It's later in Europe which may have been a factor here, I don't know. Our guest today is General Frank Gorenc. He's the Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe, U.S. Air Forces Africa, and the Commander of NATO's Allied Air Command. I think I've hit all of your major hats in that regard. Thank you to General Gorenc for making the time to meet with us on his trip to the States. We have 60 minutes, we're on the record. Sir, you wanted to take a moment at the top?

General Gorenc: I just wanted to kind of make sure I put my position in context. I wear a lot of hats, but as the Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe I'm the component to European Command. General Breedlove is the commander of that right now. So I provide to him and execute any kind of air portion of any plan that he would have. I do the same thing for General Rodriguez who is the AFRICOM Commander. So components to those two guys.

I'm the single proponent for air inside the NATO command structure. I'd be happy to dig into that if you would like, but NATO just went through a reorganization and they basically whittled it down to three single service commands, two joint commands under ACO, which is also under General Breedlove in his SACEUR hat.

We just declared fully operational capability for that NATO command structure reorganization, so that's what I do for them.

I'm also part of the Air Force corporate structure. I'm a major command commander. I also help General Welsh in the organize, training and equipping of air forces, and of course for me, my focus are the air forces that are assigned to U.S. Air Forces in Europe

which is roughly about 30,000 people on about five main operating bases, and just under 100 geographically separated locations.

So the only reason I go through that is, is I do have the privilege of watching the entire spectrum of air in particular being accomplished. You know, the organize, training, the equipping, the deploying and the employing. And so I look forward to your questions in those regards.

With respect to my role as a major command commander, of course there are things corporately that many of you cover day to day that are issues for me as well as anybody else, and that's of course modernizing our fleet with our top priorities being F-35, KC-46, and now the B-21 and some mods that will allow for the integration of 4th generation capability.

And then, of course, our biggest concern always remains the development of our airmen. You know, to make sure that we develop and nurture airmen who are able to execute tomorrow but are also in a position to lead our Air Force 15-20 years from now. And there's lots of things going on with respect to that that I'd be happy to address. Entitlement reform, those kinds of things. How do we continue to develop what has been an unbelievably lucrative process of an all-volunteer military with good recruiting, good retention, and the potential to execute in a way that's expected by the American people when in fact we do go to military power?

With that, I'd be happy to begin the process of answering your questions.

DWG: Thank you very much.

I'd like to begin with a question about the operating environment that you're working in right now. The department is planning a big increase in the European Reassurance Initiative next year in response to some pretty aggressive Russian actions recently, I'll just put it that way. What do you have planned in terms of ERI this year? And if the budget actually does quadruple next year, what will that enable you to do? What are you trying to accomplish with this?

General Gorenc: Well, for the Air Force part of it, first of all, it is a significant increase, as you know, but for the Air Force part of it we set out on a course with the European Reassurance Initiative that, as the name implies, it's there to reassure our European allies and to take advantage of money that will enable us to do more training. Heel to toe training is the term that comes out, and heel to toe means it's continuous.

We already had a fairly robust training regime in Europe with our allies and our partners that are there, but it also allowed us to do another activity which I'm keen on and that's continuing to develop the airfields, particularly on the eastern side of NATO, you know, the Baltics, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria and then a couple of other projects elsewhere, that would allow for a more, an easier place to go to accomplish what I call high volume, high velocity kind of operations. If needed to. Airfields with not only a great runway, but a ramp and fuel and weapon storage and all of those kinds of things

that would allow us to react and to accept force if necessary in order to create an airfield environment where we could generate what Air Force's generate and that's sorties, combat power from the air as part of the joint campaign.

So it's a combination of funding for training and funding for airfield improvements. And the other nice thing that we've been able to do is to continue the F-15C model presence out of Lakenheath using the ERI money.

So it's a great opportunity for us. We're grateful for it. We've been taking good advantage and I know that U.S. operations will greatly benefit from that ERI money that's out there.

DWG: Thank you very much.

DWG: It's essentially a follow-up to Adam's question. General Breedlove said a couple of days ago that you guys need to think about transforming air policing mission over the Baltics into the air defense mission. So where do things stand on that front?

General Gorenc: Air policing is a peacetime mission. It's really designed to provide a capability to ensure the sovereignty of NATO airspace. But air policing is just one part of what I would consider to be comprehensive air defense. Air defense is the integration of aircraft, it's the integration of surface-to-air systems. And the third element of air defense, which is airspace control measures.

So we've been talking about this inside of the NATO context and we've been working on what I call the Air Policing to Air Defense Initiative. And so it's a journey right now. We've been doing air policing for a long time. It's a fully developed system. It's on very high readiness with respect to the ability to react to any kind of potential incursions or any potential safety concerns in international airspace, and we use it every single day. But the air defense journey I think is important because it gets us in the mindset of being able to quickly transition to a more robust defense of the air in case it's necessary.

DWG: Does that entail bringing more aircraft to the theater?

General Gorenc: It could, in a rotational mode. The way that our Air Force works is we have a set of capability that resides in Europe. It's 75 percent smaller than it was since 1989. But we make up for it with rotational forces inside the context of our Air Expeditionary Force. So in the end as the commander I would make a recommendation to European Command, if we needed to bolster air policing, if we needed to bolster any kind of air defense, if we needed to bring in surface to air capability then I would make that request via the normal process, and if it prioritized high enough, we certainly have the capability and the tactics, techniques and procedures to integrate that capability as soon as it arrives.

So for instance, we have a theater security package that was announced, F-15Cs. Part of that theater security package from the Guard is going up to Iceland to do the air surveillance mission. They're going to land, they're going to turn their aircraft, and

they're going to immediately fold into an already established mission. So it's a capability that we practice. We can do it with permanently assigned forces like the F-15Cs from Lakenheath, or we can do it with rotationally available forces that prioritize high enough within all of the priorities worldwide. That's the way that we would do it.

DWG: And lastly, if I may, you had F-22s deployed, a temporary deployment last year.

General Gorenc: Right.

DWG: Are you thinking about the same thing this year?

General Gorenc: I always am interested in getting fifth generation capability to Europe. We certainly asked for it. The question is, does it prioritize high enough against all of the worldwide requirements? There hasn't been any formal decision for this year, but I was absolutely thrilled with the fact that we were able to bring the F-22 over to Europe last year. We did some good training, we did some good validation of the infrastructure necessary to take care of those kind of airplanes in Europe. And I would say it was a huge success.

I think also the places that we took it, just seeing it, there was a feeling of the fact that we took the time to bring the high end aircraft to Europe, and I would say that that reassured some of our allies just by its presence.

So we find it valuable to continue to do that. It's great practice for our crews, it's great practice for the pilots that come to Europe and fly in that particular airspace. So we look for every opportunity to bring it because there are some great training opportunities available in Europe for that kind of aircraft.

DWG: Good morning, sir. I'd like to follow up on that a little bit. Both on the bases and the F-22.

Your footprint, as you mentioned, has declined considerably over the last 20 years. Given the current situation, do you think it's time to maybe reopen some facilities? Or is the push actually to move these [inaudible] footprint?

General Gorenc: It's kind of an interesting time. We just finished a process legislated by I think it was the law in 2012 where we did a European infrastructure consolidation. And it was a process that was long in the works. We completed it. In the end, the results of that European infrastructure consolidation was the divestiture, the big piece was the divestiture of Mildenhall. And then there were some minor locations. But I can honestly say that for the first time in a long time there's a great balance between infrastructure and force structure in Europe.

Now all that being said, conditions have changed since even that study started. Crimea broke out, the Ukraine broke out, Syria broke out, and the bottom line is, my focus and my concern is to make sure that we have the available infrastructure to accept incoming rotational forces or if something happens on a large scale, that we would have the ability

to bed down all of the aircraft or any kind of reinforcement that comes into Europe. So all of that is first and foremost on my mind with respect to infrastructure in Europe.

But for the most part, I'm satisfied with what we have available, both on a permanent and a rotational basis. Clearly the situation in the world has prioritized some of our missions higher. You know, this is the discussion of the rebalance to the Pacific versus Europe. I know there's a lot of discussion in this town about what all that means, and you know, I'm eager to see how all of that plays out, but clearly in Europe there's a renewed emphasis because of the strategic direction east, as General Breedlove would describe it, and the strategic direction south.

But all that being said, I also think that there's a strategic direction north. And I think that the high north will eventually become an issue, partly because of, you know, climate change and the ability for ships to pass in that area, and so I know some of our allies and some of our partners in the north are concerned about that. So in every direction I see requirements, particularly for airfields. So it will be an ongoing discussion with respect to priorities, which way we're going to concentrate, but for now the east and the south are dominating.

DWG: On the F-22, the deployment that you had last year, four airplanes. Was that strategically relevant? I mean other than to prove that they could land and be refueled and maintained in a minimal sense, was that anything more than just a validation of [inaudible]? And do you think it's time to have a more permanent presence of F-22s in larger numbers?

General Gorenc: I guess I'll answer that question by saying a journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step. You've got to start somewhere.

On the one hand, we were eager to introduce it to the European theater, and on the other hand we wanted to make sure that it was done in a way that represented a logical first step. And there are logistics with that airplane, you know, that have to be accommodated. And, by the way, there's a heavy demand for that. So the fact that we were able to carve out even a small group of airplanes to come out there was a significant first step and a beginning in the process of introducing fifth generation capability into the European theater.

And also, the other thing that's significant, of course, we talk about fifth generation F-22, but the fact of the matter is, this year our first ally over there is going to receive the F-35. It's the beginning of their fifth generation capability and fifth generation journey. So I think it was good to get the airplane over there. And whether it was strategic or not, I guess I'll leave that up to you. All I know is given the way the world is, given the way the world changed in 2015, the prioritization to be able to get fifth generation aircraft into Europe was a good first step even though it was with a small footprint.

DWG: Is there any reason why the F-22 being deployed permanently to Europe is considered destabilizing or provocative?

General Gorenc: I don't see any, but again, I'll leave that up to the strategists.

I do think in the process in Europe, I think there isn't always an ongoing discussion between what is escalatory and what is de-escalatory. All I can say is wanting to defend your sovereign airspace couldn't be any more de-escalatory. So as far as I'm concerned a commitment to making sure that NATO airspace is not violated I think is probably job one. So I think that that particular aircraft, as you know, is very very capable in that role. I think it was a good reinforcement of that concept. I see it as nothing more, it's clearly a de-escalatory move as far as I'm concerned.

DWG: Speaking of the F-35, in light of everything that's going on with Russia, are you seeing any additional interest among European partners in acquiring that aircraft beyond what has previously been planned? Or has that kind of remained steady?

General Gorenc: I think it remains steady. I would say. You know, I'm on the periphery of that obviously. I'm a commander in the field, executing air ops. I'm not in the procurement business. But man, am I proud of what we've done with the F-35. I think most people forget that the F-35 is an historic program because it's the first time that we've committed to procuring an airplane in a joint way with coalition partners from the very beginning. That's not insignificant, in my view. So the success that we've had and the capabilities of the airplane and the promise of the airplane I think is, I can't wait. And by the way, as a NATO commander, the other thing that I like I because there are so many European allies already committed to the program, I believe that the very foundational premise of NATO will be moved along in a big way with the F-35 because of the interoperability that will afford from the very beginning.

I think that the F-35 is going to do for NATO what the F-16 did in the sense that many of the partners and many of the allies were flying it and so we're going to share common tactics, techniques, procedures, concepts of operations. We're going to leverage the logistical systems, the training systems. I think it's going to go a long way to provide the interoperability that we strive for in the NATO concept.

As you know, we're putting the F-35 into Lakenheath. The Brits are also partners in the F-35 program and I think there's great synergy there and I know that we're working really hard to make sure that we can see where we can do common training and common logistics and those kinds of things. I'm very hopeful for the F-35. I see nothing but exponential capability floating out of that system as we continue the process of acquiring the whole fleet.

DWG: Thank you, General Gorenc.

I want to talk about the Rapid X concept. You and General Carlisle expressed optimism that it would be in the FY17 budget. Was that concept fully funded? And did you get the funding that you needed? What will that funding do for you?

General Gorenc: The funding will allow us to carve out some time to actually practice it. But Rapid X, I don't want to assign any mysticism to Rapid X. Rapid X is basically

the idea that we're going to deploy airplanes in a very agile and quick way to accommodate missions, maybe from bases that don't necessarily have the full infrastructure. And so that we would bring in four aircraft and then go ahead and rearm them and maintain them and then they go fly another mission and then we leave that base. So I think that's important to make sure that we're able to fully explore all of the locations that are available to us in Europe. Maybe not in a robust way as we would know a big base, you know, with lots of infrastructure. But to be able to take advantage and create challenges for any potential adversary with respect to being able to interrupt our operations. So that's really what the concept is.

So it's really more of a tactics and techniques approach to sortie generation using the available airfields that we have. It's safe to say, you know, Europe is one of these places that has lots of runways. The question is the infrastructure that's surrounding the runway. It's not just good enough to land and take off from an airfield. You have to have the support, the fuel, and all that other stuff that you would need to generate combat power.

DWG: So just to clarify, is it something that would not necessarily be a new start, but is included under the Agile Combat Support mission or Rapid Global Mobility?

General Gorenc: It's both. It's both. I mean we're kind of in a gray area there, to be perfectly honest, and quite honestly, this is going to take an organizational kind of an innovative kinds of approach to this. I mean what we're doing is we're pushing people that maintain bases and maintain aircraft into places where they don't normally operate. So this is an innovation that's relatively low cost, that will make the adversary's problem that much harder and it will better put us in a position to leverage the asymmetric advantage that air power brings to any kind of joint task force or any kind of fight.

DWG: Can you give us a better idea geographically of where those unimproved airfields are going to be?

General Gorenc: They're all over Europe. I mean obviously, strategic direction east, strategic direction south, we're talking about the eastern part of Europe and the southern part of Europe with respect to some of that capability. And even, I mean I'm also the AFRICOM. Africa Commander. So there's places you can do this anywhere in the world. It's applicable worldwide. So we need to go there. That's the point.

We're an Air Force, we're the smallest we've been in a long time. So every mission counts, every sortie counts, and we have to find innovative ways to generate that combat power just at the right time, just at the right amount. So that's kind of the way that I look at it.

DWG: Thank you. On a separate, Pacific rebalance, what impact is it having on your command in terms of resources, defense [inaudible]? And given the kind of security threats the [inaudible] having right now, do you think this is [not] the right time for the [inaudible] more years?

General Gorenc: I missed the first part of the question. Given --

DWG: What impact the Pacific rebalance is having on your command in terms of resources and defense posture?

General Gorenc: The what now?

DWG: Pacific rebalance.

General Gorenc: Oh, the Pacific rebalance.

Well, as the commander in Europe I don't, you know, that just reflects the strategy of the United States. You know, as the European Commander, I'm agnostic to the focus of the overall strategy. My job is to make sure that we understand the ramifications of that rebalance.

Now all that being said, I was comfortable even during the rebalance in the sense that we are an expeditionary Air Force. I do have assigned forces in Europe so I had a group of tools that I would use to build partnerships and I had headquarters that were necessary, you know, to plan courses of action for the commander and so I was comfortable in that role.

When Crimea happened and ISIS happened and they were starting to nibble at European Command infrastructure to fight the conflict in CENTCOM, I was confident in our ability of the Air Force, which is an expeditionary Air Force, to make the adjustments necessary that reflects the strategic choices of the leadership in this country.

So I don't sit around and ponder that too much. I don't argue about it too much except I make sure that I'm as clear as possible with my requirements. I'm as clear as possible that everybody understands that I have enough resources to build the relationships and build the trust that we need to with our partners because we are, after all, a country that goes to conflict in coalitions and in Europe. You go in with an alliance.

That focus doesn't bother me, and in many cases I agree with it, you know, to the extent of what's going to happen or what we're looking at many years down the road, but I do know what's happening in Europe now, and I think the system has accommodated Europe very nicely even given with the focus on the Pacific.

I hope that answers the question.

DWG: The European drone flight regulations, are they having an operational impact on you? And do you see an urgent military need to press the Europeans to alter them?

General Gorenc: It's a good question but I don't feel any differently about the regulations in Europe than I do about the ones in the United States. Clearly, remotely piloted aircraft, the federation that is remotely piloted aircraft, the volume that remotely

piloted aircraft provide, and the products that remotely piloted aircraft provide, it's safe to say that the American way of war is going to include remotely piloted aircraft.

And so this kind of goes back to your question in the sense that I want to make sure that for whatever way that we're going with respect to [COAs] in Europe to handle contingencies, that all of the NATO alliance members in my NATO hat and all of the partners that work with us in a great way understand the issue of remotely piloted aircraft and the airspace that would be necessary to operate remotely piloted aircraft.

So I see this as a process. I see this as a building trust with what the capability is, and I am satisfied with the things that we're doing in that area, and I'm satisfied that particularly in the NATO alliance, they understand remotely piloted aircraft. We've done numerous exercises in that area. As you know, NATO has committed to an organic fleet of remotely piloted aircraft called the AGS. And so I think that the issue is out there. The question becomes as we procure these systems, as we basically acknowledge the fact that RPAs are an essential part of the Western way of war, that we accommodate that activity certainly for conflict, but it also has to be accommodated for training.

DWG: So you're able to get the accommodations you need now.

General Gorenc: Yes. We have to work really hard at it, you know, but the bottom line is I think our allies and our partners have been very accommodating in that area. So we're seeing better opportunities to do that and better integration with the courses of action, at least that I'm dealing with from the air.

Now the good news is, like I mentioned, it's an essential part of the Western way of conflict. The situational awareness and the persistent intel, surveillance and reconnaissance that that system has afforded. Particularly in the counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism conflict in Afghanistan as part of the alliance ops, everybody recognizes it so I'm comfortable with it.

DWG: And I have a Russian pilot question. How are they behaving out there? Are they behaving professionally in most of your encounters? Have you had any particular incidents?

General Gorenc: The answer is yes, it's all for the most part been professional. Every once in a while, very few times, there's some portions of the intercept that is not what I consider to be normal. Of course we document that, and if necessary we communicate our displeasure, but that's very rare. So I'm completely satisfied with the work that we're doing in that area and the behavior and the professionalism on both sides, I think, has been good.

DWG: I'd like to take you up to 50,000 feet. American parents want to know, how do two kids from Yugoslavia end up as generals in the U.S. Air Force? How and why did that happen? And how cool is it to out-rank your older brother?

General Gorenc: That's really cool. [Laughter]. Well, you know, I have to say, for those of you that don't know, I am an immigrant to the country. My parents immigrated in 1961 and we became citizens in 1973. My brother graduated from the Air Force Academy in '75. I graduated in '79.

I have to say that I think it reflects the fact that serving in the military is equal opportunity, and I think that the military is a place where people like me, and my brother in this case, can thrive and it's performance-based. I guess I would say that.

I'm also grateful, to be perfectly honest, that the congressman that nominated me to go to the Air Force Academy went through a very thorough process. It wasn't all test-based, because quite honestly, I'm not a good test taker. But I always tell the story about me marching down to my local congressman's office for an hour-long interview at the age of 16 and there's a housewife, a priest and a local businessman for an hour asking me why I wanted to go to the Air Force Academy. And that was the fundamental part of his nomination process. And I'll tell you, based on the SAT test that I took, which I had to take three times just to get ten points above the min to get in, you know, I was very grateful for that opportunity. So he used the civil service exam.

He gave me an opportunity and he gave my brother an opportunity to come into this great Air Force, and then the Air Force, which is a very results-based, performance-based evaluation kind of organization, and that's how it happened, simply put.

I didn't join for patriotism. I mean on the rung of the social system, we were lower middle class at best. I went there because it was free.

DWG: Why the Air Force though? For the two brothers.

General Gorenc: That's a good question. I think that the mission, the airplanes intrigued me. And by the way, this is another story that I tell. When I was growing up my dad and my brother, my dad used to drag us to the air shows and I used to go watch the Thunderbirds. I grew up in the time when the Thunderbirds were the F-4s and the number four airplane had a black tail because they couldn't keep it clean, as much as they wanted, it's always flying in that formation. So I think we were drawn to the Air Force by the public displays of military and the people that represented the military.

DWG: So you never saw the Blue Angels?

General Gorenc: I did. I did. But you know, in the end it was about the Air Force -- and my brother led the way. My brother was four years in front of me, so I'm a four star because he was there always four years ahead mentoring me. He made it to two star and obviously he gave me some knowledge and insight into that.

But the only reason I tell these stories is I think, I hope that we, and my goal is to reach out to as many of the people and to introduce them to what the military is and what the opportunities are in the military. I'm an absolute beneficiary of the military being out there at air shows, about demonstrating to the American people exactly what we're

buying and the people that are operating it. That inspired me to get to the point where I went to a congressman who didn't just use the highest SAT score as a cutoff of who's going to go to the Air Force Academy. He learned who I was and what I wanted to do and I'm very very grateful to that. But that's the short answer to that.

By the way, the other thing that was interesting about that story is, the same congressman that gave both my brother and me the nomination to the Air Force Academy was the congressman who sponsored my family into the United States from Yugoslavia.

DWG: And he was?

General Gorenc: Congressman Clement J. Zablocki. A good man. He was a good man. And so I am grateful for that opportunity. But that's how it happened.

And so that's why our message to our airmen, both Active and Guard and Reserve and Civilian is to recognize the opportunities that we have inside of our Air Force and the only limitation to where you want to end up is yourself. Because all of the opportunities are there.

DWG: General, I wanted to ask you about, you talked about the ERI, you talked about how it's reassuring allies, but is it having any impact or have you seen anything you can share that any of the actions done in the last two years is actually deterring Russia?

General Gorenc: I don't have any proof of that. I think that's an ongoing discussion, but I think it's a discussion that's equivalent to did we deter the Russians during the Cold War? I don't know. I mean nothing happened during the Cold War. There was a natural conclusion go the Cold War. So in my view the reassurance of our allies is a fundamental part of deterring in this case the Russians. The rest of it is to make sure that you develop a credible force, that you develop a capable force, and in the context of the discussions, that you show a willingness if necessary to use that force. That's for the civilian leadership to decide exactly how they're going to do that.

So my focus as the air component in the United States Air Force in Europe is to make sure that we continue to develop trust, that we continue to develop relationships, that we continue to provide ready forces, and in the Air Force, of course, that means overnight. So much of our military response requires readiness levels overnight. And so I don't know if there's any specific metric as to deterrence of the Russians specifically, but I do know that the capabilities that we're working on right now are an integral part to any response and I think there are emerging capabilities that continue to have to be developed and nurtured also to at least to let everybody know that when it comes to the four instruments of power, you know, diplomacy, information, economic, and military, that that military part is capable, that it's ready, and that it's part of the comprehensive approach to anything that's going on in the world.

Now all that being said, I think that given the situation that I see in Europe there's continuing challenges. For instance, the expansion of the A2AD -- anti-access area

denied parts of Europe, particularly on the Eastern side, continue to expand. From sea to shining sea. From the Barents to the Baltics to the Black Sea, now to the Mediterranean. We see a continual movement of the development of modern, long-range, layered surface-to-air missile systems that would counter and create uncertainty for freedom of movement in the areas covered by those systems.

I think that if there was a sailor sitting here or an Army person sitting here they would have the same story. So on the surface of the sea you could make the same discussion in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea.

I don't know if that's part of the deterrence equation that you see, but clearly, there's a proliferation of those kinds of environments. So we'll see how this goes on. I think it will be a continuing debate.

But the measurement of the effectiveness of our deterrence efforts is something that over time we have lost. In our hope to get a reset with the Russians, in a good relationship, one that's cooperative and all that kind of stuff, I think it kind of fell short. So we're kind of we kind of lost what it meant to deter.

And by the way, there's also a balance between conventional deterrence and nuclear deterrence, it's safe to say. So we'll see how it goes. But what I do know is for the things that we're doing it clearly reassures our allies and time will tell whether or not it creates the necessary deterrence.

DWG: But how can you bring the sophisticated military hardware to Europe like the F-22s? And that will [inaudible] the Russians building up those defense systems. You know perfectly well that your action brings out the conflict on the part of the Russians. It's as simple as that.

General Gorenc: All I do know is those systems extend far into territory that could adequately be described as self-protection. The fact of the matter is today from the modern long-range SAM system, layered system in Kaliningrad, there's coverage well into the Baltics and there's coverage well into Polish airspace. That's the fact.

It is a tradeoff, clearly, and it reflects the aspiration of, in this case, the Russians. But in the end it's something that we need to pay attention to and we are.

DWG: Have the Russians acting from Kaliningrad, have they painted any NATO aircraft?

General Gorenc: I don't want to get into the details of that, but the potential is always there. And the bottom line is, the uncertainty to freedom of movement, even inside of NATO sovereign airspace, that uncertainty created by those systems is enough to take pause.

These are unbelievably capable systems. This is not the 1970s IADS, Integrated Air and Missile Defense of the old days. I guess I'll leave it at that.

DWG: It's interesting you said regarding we've lost our ability to measure deterrence. That kind of gets into a question that I had, in terms of kind of our thinking on Russia has changed so rapidly just in a few years. You look at the 2012 Defense Strategic Planning Guidance, they're barely mentioned and when they are, they're mentioned as an ally. Now you have senior officials talking about how they're the biggest threat to the United States.

I'm curious from where you sit, do you see a knowledge gap at all within the military in terms of the people who understand Russia and are helping kind of plan for the way forward here beyond just the ERI?

General Gorenc: I don't think it's unique to the military. I kind of go back to the time where, I mean strategically what's happened, you know, I think I want to put this in context from the 50,000-foot view.

NATO has three missions -- deterrence, collective defense, is the foundational requirement for NATO. The birthday of the North Atlantic Treaty signing was yesterday, 1949. That was the birthday. That was kind of the focus. The other mission, crisis management and collective security, they're also NATO mission.

Until 1989 NATO was focused exclusively on collective defense and deterrence. After 1989 when the Wall fell, slowly that narrative and that focus went to crisis management. There were even U.S. senators, the very famous line by Senator Lugar, go out of are or go out of business kind of ultimatum to NATO. And they did. They went to the Balkans, and then they ended up in Afghanistan.

Then Crimea happened. The reemergence of the collective defense deterrence mission became first, is now on the forefront of thought inside of NATO. And that kind of strategic change in view as reflected in the Wales Summit Readiness Action Plan, that was a movement to increase the readiness and responsiveness of NATO forces to reflect the new reality is kind of what we're going through.

So with respect to the knowledge about Russia, I don't think it's a uniquely military problem. I would say again, after 1989 happened and the Cold War ended, clearly we were looking for ways to engage with Russia in a more positive way and you documented that kind of view with respect to Russia. Yeah, I think we're working hard to make sure that we fully understand the thinking, that we fully understand motivation, and that we begin the process of redeveloping the knowledge base necessary to assure our allies and deter in that case. Deterrence is about perception too.

DWG: How do you go about doing that?

General Gorenc: Just refocus within the organizations that we have. I don't see a big move to increase manpower across the board to reflect this new reality. We're going to have to work inside of our organizations not only in the military but everywhere in government to kind of make sure that we get that expertise back.

In the height of the Cold War there were tens of thousands of Russian analyst, and now I think we're in the thousands. I don't know the exact numbers. But the point of it is, there was no need for it. Now we need to build it up just to make sure that we understand what the, how people are thinking and what it is.

I mean what does it mean, what do all these snap exercises mean? Your guess is as good as mine. I'm a military guy. I know what it means for readiness. But the point of it is, what does it mean in totality? Is it intense? Is it a readiness issue? So those are the kinds of things that I think we need to get a better feel for in my view. I'm not saying it's lacking, it's just, it wasn't necessary and it's reflective of the strategic change that has happened just in the recent past. That's the way I look at it.

DWG: Otto, then Jen.

DWG: General, you talk about the downsizing of Air Force elements in Europe. Part of the rebalance and the concentration in the Persian Gulf region, you've also lost a lot of your Navy component. You haven't had a carrier passing through for years. The Marines have thrown in some ground task for, but they're not [inaudible].

Would you liked to see a more [inaudible] presence of the Navy somewhere? Another carrier in for Europe, the Med?

General Gorenc: I'm an air power guy. I don't care where it comes from. I don't care whether it comes from the U.S. Air Force or the Navy or the Marine Corps. Your question is fundamentally one of priorities. There's only a certain number of carriers, there's only a certain number of MAGTAFs, and I think that our leadership prioritizes them in accordance with what the ambition of the country is.

I get asked this question a lot. Do you want force structure to grow in Europe? Do you think we should be bigger? I don't even know how to answer that. The bottom line is, I know what I have. I know what I have to do. I know that the only way to address the shortfall in certain times with respect to the tools that I have, I have to become innovative in other ways. So that's what we're doing. And up to this point, I'm satisfied. I think we're able to meet the aspirations. Would I like more? Of course. But in the end, as an American citizen, I recognize the fact that there's a certain amount of resources available and where that stuff goes is a direct reflection of the priorities of the nation.

DWG: You talked about earlier about the role of RPAs and UASes. The Navy's going to put their version of the Global Hawk somewhere in your theater. Are there still plans to integrate the Air Force's Global Hawk with the Navy's --

General Gorenc: I'm not exactly sure where we are on that, but clearly it's a common platform. I think there are opportunities. There are logistical requirements for those airplanes with respect to controlling and data and all that kind of stuff, so I think there's

lots of opportunities for that, but I'm not an expert exactly on how specifically we're integrating, I think it's called the Triton, right?

DWG: Yeah.

DWG: The Triton and our Global Hawk exactly, but clearly there are opportunities.

And I think, by the way, from the NATO side, one of the, I went to visit our friends in the north, our ally in the north, Norway, and the first thing they show is a map of the world looking straight down on the north. You know, if you have not done that, take a look at it. It's very informing.

DWG: Australia's done the same thing. Australia as the center of the world.

General Gorenc: Right. I have to say that's been the really fun part about my job, because one of the first things I always do is put myself exactly at the, in the capital of the country. I look east, I look south, I look north and I look west, and you can really understand where that leadership is coming from when you do that. I think we need to be more geographically sensitive. I've learned that where you sit in NATO really defines your view. That's why they call it geopolitics.

The three parts of national power that we never talk about are geography, resources and population. That's why they call it geopolitics. Your foreign policy is a direct reflection of where you sit in the world, and I think that's one of the fundamental things that we need to do to better understand the views of other nations. In my view.

DWG: We need to move into the speed round now. We have about two minutes left for Jen, then Laura, and then Jim.

DWG: Last week General Dunford mentioned that in Syria intelligence collection is getting better. So I wanted to check in with you, from your standpoint what do you see? Especially since in your theater of operations, what do you see since Crimea started? Is intelligence getting better? What's driving that?

And then you mentioned that emergent capabilities are still needed. What are those?

General Gorenc: I think they're two separate things. In the end, I'm not a CENTCOM guy. That conflict doesn't belong to me except for the fact that some of the sorties generate out of Incirlik. But the point of it is, there's targeting. The beauty of precision guided munitions is that they land on where you tell them to go. But the requirement to do that, especially in the intel area, is enormous.

So we're always looking at ways to get better intelligence that would increase the effectiveness of the kinetic effect that we're trying to lay down. I'm not necessarily familiar with the details of General Dunford's comments. But clearly, if that's what he's saying I believe it.

The targeting, intel is like a mountain without a top. You're always looking to make it better. You're always looking to make it more relevant. You're always looking to make it actionable. But we have so many tools now to get that. Some tools are better than others depending on the scenario you're in, but they're all important. So that's the way I'm going to leave that one. Because I think that better kinetic effect is a result of better targeting which is a result of intel and what it means and what you're trying to create.

DWG: Following up on the F-35, the planes are going to be going to [Riyadh] and Farnborough this summer. So what do you hope to see out of the F-35, particularly the F-35B this summer out of those air shows, and how do you think that will translate sort of across Europe and show our allies and our partners what this plane is capable of?

General Gorenc: I think what it's going to do for the European allies is reinforce the idea that we're talking about a real piece of equipment. We talk about some of these platforms always in concept. You know, to actually see it I think is an important step in the procurement of that airplane and a reinforcement that what we have is real.

For us, it's real. We have thousands of hours already. In fact, my son-in-law flies F-35s. So it's real. And he's practicing right now to make that aircraft achieve that initial operational capability. So I think the effect of seeing it, of understanding it, of encouraging more conversation with it, of addressing all the things that we're doing, trying to get the price down, trying to increase the capability, trying to help everybody understand the logistics concept is a fundamental step in the development of an aircraft like the F-35.

And I think we also need to, I like to always talk about the F-35 in a historical concept with the way that we bought the F-16. As I mentioned, the F-16 was bought -- we developed the F-16 and then we sold it. This airplane, we brought in the allies and the joint partners from the very beginning. So I think the achievement of that goal is going to go a long way to create excitement of it. A discussion on the cost of it I think is necessary too, because we've made great strides in that particular area.

I think this is a big step. And for those countries that are out there looking at it, looking at the viability of their force in the future, I think that the F-35 will become viewed as an option, particularly with respect to the price.

Remember, one of the big things about the F-35 that I think is important is clearly there's a major commitment by our military, both Air Force, Marines, Navy, with respect to that. We're talking about high volumes of airplanes and these airplanes will be around for a long time.

So the logistics and the support and the integration and all of those things I think are a reinforcement of what the potential is for the F-35. I'm really excited about it and I'm glad that it's out and about.

This goes back to the, I went to see the Thunderbirds, it made me connect to the Air Force. This is the same thing. Seeing it, touching it, being excited about it I think is really important in the process of acquisition.

DWG: Could it be used for a deterrence signal?

General Gorenc: Yes. Again, fundamentally deterrence is credibility, capability and willingness. That airplane is going to make what we do from the air and across the board, it will in itself help.

And interestingly enough, by the way, the other thing that's interesting about the F-35 is General Welsh always talks about our core missions. Air and space superiority, ISR, strike, mobility, command and control. This is an airplane that's going to contribute to four out of those five core competencies of the Air Force by itself. The only thing that it doesn't do is mobility. That's exciting in itself. And the understanding of what that multi-role capability is across those five core competencies that Western nations expect out of their Air Force is a concept that we need to advance. That's what makes it so exciting for me. And to see it fly is fantastic.

DWG: Sir, Incirlik, we're evacuating the civilian dependents from there. How's that operation going?

And further, you're going to be changing now, all these guys are on a three-year tour. I guess they're going to shift to a one-year tour out of that? And what does that do to the morale of your airmen in that country?

General Gorenc: I choose not to use the word evacuation. It was an ordered departure that reflects a state where we felt like it would be better to take the dependents out of there in the short term. It's really a temporary kind of condition, depending on what happens in the future. That's the way that I look at it. Words are really important with respect to this.

We also have a tool called early return of dependents, which is more permanent. So the analogy would be early return of dependents is a PCS move, whereas an ordered departure is take two suitcases. You may come back.

Now obviously we're going to have to evaluate that. By the way, the ordered departure is complete as of last Friday. It's done. So we'll see what the future brings, but in the end the safety of our dependents and the safety of our airmen and those working in that area have to be accommodated and that's why the decision was made. For both Incirlik and Izmir, and then of course there was a voluntary departure in Ankara. Then of course families always have the option to early return their dependents. That's done on a case by case basis. We often have requests for early return of dependents from Ramstein.

That's the way that I choose to look at it, but Turkey has been a great ally of ours for a long time. Right now, given their location with respect to a hot conflict, we just thought it was the prudent thing to do.

DWG: And the morale of the airmen?

General Gorenc: The morale of the airmen is fantastic. The mission is robust. Incirlik has become a location of what I would describe as a sleepy hollow is now fully operational, 24x7. Lots of aircraft, lots of allies there. So that part of it is going well.

I have to say though, the morale of our dependents, obviously we did, I visited there multiple times. But they didn't want to leave. That's why we ordered them to leave. They wanted to stay. But given the fact that they'd been on base since last September and hadn't been off-base, it was time. And so the conditions were right to do that ordered departure. In conjunction with the State Department.

As you know, those departures, voluntary or ordered, can only be directed by the State Department. So there was consensus in that area with respect to Americans.

DWG: General, clearly we could use another hour but I know you have places to be. Thank you for coming in.

General Gorenc: I'd rather stay here, but -- [Laughter].

DWG: We'd love to have you back.

General Gorenc: I'm available any time. Thanks for the questions. It's always great for me to have the opportunity to talk about our airmen in Europe. The thing that I didn't mention that I always do but I didn't in the context of any of the answers is, you know, being forward ready now is what our mantra is in Europe. We're one step closer to many of the things that are concerning for our country. And despite the fact that we've decreased in size by 75 percent, I think, and given the fact that we consume roughly 1.8 percent of the entire budget, I think we're getting really good payback for those forces that are forward ready, and ready now.

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