

Major General William Chambers

Global Strike Symposium

17 November 2010

Maj. Gen. Chambers: Thank you very much.

It's an honor to be here and to participate in this first and inaugural symposium. It's particularly special for me. I began my operational career in the 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale and was welcomed with my new family to this region, being a Yankee, born and raised in New York, coming to the south was a traumatic event. I was warmly welcomed, and the friends we made here are lifetime friends.

As a second lieutenant representing the 2nd Bomb Wing in 1979 at the Bomb Nav Competition, as part of a crew from the 71st Air Refueling Squadron, aircraft commanded by one of the other general officers that's here today, Major General Buddy Reed. He and I represented the wing at Bomb Nav Comp that year, and it was at that event as a young officer where I felt the full force of Strategic Air Command which at the time, of course, was a command of nearly 40 wings, nearly 400 bombers, nearly 600 tankers, nearly 1200 intercontinental ballistic missiles. I also saw at that first Bomb Nav Comp the airplane that I yearned to fly some day because they were taking all the trophies and that was the premier platform at the time, the FB-111.

So a few years later I ended up in the 509th Bomb Wing flying the FB-111 in the right seat. There have got to be some members of the 509th here. The only wing in the United States Air Force, of course, that can wear the mushroom cloud on their patch because their lineage goes back to the days of the Enola Gay. The 509th tradition carries on, of course, at Whiteman Air Force Base flying the B-2, our most advanced penetrating platform. It's an honor to be here to be part of a forum that is not only rekindling that heritage but also carrying on in a tradition of excellence, camaraderie, team spirit, and it's great to be part of this event.

But I'm not here to talk about the past. I'm not even here to talk about the Cold War. I'm not even here to talk about the post-Cold War. In fact the term post-Cold War is banished from my staff at the Pentagon. Most of the teams that are represented here in this room today started in the Air Force well after the post-Cold War period. For crying out loud, we're in the second decade of the 21st century. So deterrence, the ability to deliver deterrent effects, needs to be looked at with a 21st century mindset based on the roots of everything that made us great as a nuclear-deterrent force.

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So what I want to do briefly is spend a few moments with you to kind of review the past couple of years. From where I'm sitting in the Pentagon, the efforts that our Air Force has undertaken since they made reinvigoration of the nuclear enterprise its number-one priority. Then I'll talk briefly about the current policy constructs we're operating under based on the nuclear posture review and the potential new arms control agreement called New START, and then we'll talk a little about deterrence, and then we'll talk about a couple of things that kind of worry me, the things that kind of keep us awake at night in the Pentagon.

If I can summarize the last two years of focus on the nuclear enterprise, this image is a symbol. These two gentlemen, the leaders of our United States Air Force have been intensely focused on things nuclear, and it began in August of '08 when they arrived as the new leaders of your Air Force and took, during the month of August, time to strategize and map out the priorities of the United States Air Force. They took a couple of very significant steps.

First of all, they organized the thinking about how the Air Force does its mission and delivers power to the nation in terms of a list of service core functions. The number one service core function that they started with was called Nuclear Deterrence Operations. They then established reinvigorating the nuclear enterprise as their number one priority, and then they proceeded to establish a thing called the Nuclear Oversight Board, which is a gathering of the Four Stars that have anything to do with nuclear issues. It meets now on a once per quarter basis to review the issues that we're wrestling with in the nuclear mission, to perform that service core function that they made the first nuclear deterrence operations, and to fulfill that priority which was reinvigorating the nuclear enterprise.

This image simply captures them in front of Congress, but that is not the only place where they have talked about things nuclear. It has been in their remarks. It has been in their visits to Air Force units. And they continue to bring focus, intensity, and to use the Chief of Staff's terms, precision and reliability to the nuclear mission.

Two years ago during that August of '08 strategy session, they set out to make changes to the nuclear enterprise and those changes can be summarized in terms of organizational changes, process changes, and cultural changes.

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Organizationally, this image simply represents three examples of huge muscle movements that our Air Force undertook. The standup of this command, the first Major Command in 27 years, which is totally focused 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on nuclear issues.

A Nuclear Weapons Center, positioned under the Four-Star-led MAJCOM that worries sustainment every day of the year, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, which does cradle-to-grave support of the nuclear weapons systems, which are so dear to all of you.

And then the standup of a new Assistant Chief of Staff organization on the Air staff, reporting directly to the Chief, to be the integrator, the advocate, and the champion for nuclear issues inside the Air Force and inside the beltway.

Organizational changes. These were not insignificant. For an Air Force to carve out a new Major Command, a new Assistant Chief of Staff, and a new sustainment center were huge muscle movements, and we are just now feeling the effects of that.

Process changes also took place. One image that represents a huge process change that took place in the supply chain for things nuclear. This supply chain, which involves an entirely new category called Nuclear Weapons Related Material, a category that was not defined up to that point, now involves an entirely new set of procedures. Training took place for all logisticians that deal with nuclear-weapons-related material. A new reporting process. A new gathering together of inventory of things nuclear across the Air Force, across our contractors, across the Defense Logistics Agency, and new automation tools, which are now just beginning to come online to track nuclear-weapons-related material. It also involves getting rid of parts that were part of the nuclear mission that we no longer need.

All these things were things that had kind of atrophied. Attention to detail that was not taking place. A process change in the supply chain was very important.

Cultural change. Clearly, we have spent the last two-plus years drilling into commanders the need to make sure they emphasize to the Airmen who are performing the nuclear mission everyday how important it is at the wing level, at the numbered Air Force and task force level. We have commanders who are bringing the message to drill down to the lowest level the importance of the bedrock of strategic deterrence to our nation.

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At the Major Command level. We are making sure that we have a zero-error mindset about how we perform this mission. We are holding leaders accountable, and we are making sure that they are reminded that we are the stewards of history's most powerful weapons systems. Our Chief and our Secretary have made no less than 36 visits to nuclear-assigned units across our Air Force in the last two years and four months, personally setting the example of precision and reliability and holding us all accountable to the top-level performance required by this mission.

The other cultural change that has taken place is a new rigor that has come to our inspection process. An image here of an outbrief of a nuclear surety inspection of one of our wings. Satisfactory, of course, being the best possible grade we can achieve. But every sub-area emphasized. New inspection rigor in terms of standardized training for inspectors, standardized checklists, core inspectors at Air Force Inspection Agency.

New trending underway where we share discrepancies, where we look at where our discrepancies rise and fall. Which sub-areas are we having trouble with; tech operations, PRP, security. We have dove into those area to do some root-cause analysis to determine what countermeasures need to apply down at the unit level to make sure that we perform properly in those sub-areas.

Our recent trend in this area is extremely encouraging. It may not actually represent a trend, but we have now had a series of eight successive satisfactory grades by nuclear-assigned units across our Air Force. That includes Global Strike Command, Air Force Materiel Command, and the United States Air Forces in Europe.

We're now going to look at this period of performance. What is it about our culture and our process and our organization that is producing those results and how can we get better?

Organizational change, process change, cultural change, huge muscle movements that have taken place over the last two-and-a-half years. We also have new policy construct present to oversee and guide the direction our nation takes its nuclear deterrent forces.

The Nuclear Posture Review came out on the eighth of April, 2010. It lays out in unclassified form the broad policy strokes that our nation is going to undertake to insert nuclear deterrent capability into national security strategy. What role will they play? What role will the nuclear complex play? Where do we need

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to look forward in this 21st century for the role of nuclear deterrence?

The day after the Nuclear Posture Review came out, of course, President Obama and President Medvedev signed the New START treaty. That treaty, of course, is now in the legislative branch of the United States government. The Senate has the treaty for deliberations. We have answered over 900 questions regarding that treaty. There have been over a dozen different hearings. The advice and consent period by the Senate of that treaty is now underway.

But both the Nuclear Posture Review and the New START treaty affirm the role of deterrence in the national security strategy of America, and that strategy and that policy of deterrence has been with us not too long throughout our history. If you know your American history, you know that we were a reluctant world actor on the global stage. We did not want to engage too much internationally, but the 20th century, of course, brought America to the stage. We came to the aid of the rest of Europe against tyranny, and with the advent of a very, very powerful new technology, we realized that nuclear weapons needed to be thought about, and deterrence became not only a strategy but a policy in our nation.

Deterrence is really a psychological endeavor. It is simply getting inside a potential adversary's cranium and convincing them that any potential action they might take against us is not worth the cost, and that means demonstrating the will and the capability to inflict cost or to deny benefit to those actions.

Deterrence is not all about military things. It is the entire toolset of a nation and its power. Diplomatic, informational, military, and economic tools play to produce deterrent effects.

The fundamentals of deterrence haven't changed. The need to understand potential adversaries. The need to understand those attributes of military force that produce deterrent effects. Those fundamentals haven't changed, but the strategic setting has. We now face an environment in the 21st century, not with just one monolithic potential adversary but many, that range the spectrum of military operations.

Our role in that, our very birth as an Air Force was based on our ability to go deep and hold targets at risk, either with platforms, air-breathing platforms, or intercontinental ballistic missiles. Our very DNA is in deterrence. That ability to

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project those deterrent effects hasn't changed, and thinking about it must advance into the 21st century that we now operate in.

As stewards of these most powerful weapons, the need to demonstrate both will and capability relies on Airmen like you to perform this mission with the precision and reliability that General Schwartz talks about, because we fulfill two-plus legs of the nation's nuclear deterrent capability. Not just the bombers, not just the ICBMs, but also dual-capable aircraft in Europe as part of an alliance, an alliance that we're signed up to by treaty to come to the defense of 27 other nations in Europe. Nuclear capability in Europe is still very important to projecting deterrence and assurance to our allies there.

In this new environment, crisis stability, the ability to project, think about, predict those parts of the world where crises might arise, that very precarious thing called crisis stability rests on our friends and allies around the world whether we're bound to them by treaty or not. That alliance structure rests on the bedrock of nuclear capabilities.

That nuclear capability is that part of the national toolset that inflicts costs by projecting the will and capability to deliver this power when necessary. Those nuclear capabilities produce deterrence. Those deterrence capabilities extend deterrence to allies, assuring them that we will come to their aid, and also sending a signal to potential adversaries. Potential adversaries that range the spectrum from regional nuclear aspirants or regional power grabbers to non-compliant nations who do not want to follow international norms to non-state actors to extremists who want to do us harm, who want to get their hands on nuclear technology, doing that in a way that anticipates tension, anticipates crisis, to be about prevention and not war fighting.

But in order to prevent, we've got to be ready to take the fight to the enemy, and this is where your United States Air Force got its birth. It is where our number one service core function rests -- the ability to project power deep, to hold all target sets at risk, no matter the spectrum of adversary.

One of the things, however, as we go forward, to project these effects, what are the things that worry us at headquarters Air Force the most? The things that kind of keep us awake at night.

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This is an image of one of the things. This is a series of images of what are the things that worry us the most, and that is human capital. The days of SAC that I talked about as a second lieutenant are now very different. The assets that performed this nuclear deterrent ops mission are precious. They represent less than ten percent of the active duty force. And except for one career field, of the 30 that perform this mission, they are all dual capable. That is across the course of a career they come in and out of the nuclear mission. That requires deliberate active management of these career fields, from communications to maintenance to our defenders to our air crew to our ICBM crew. That kind of deliberate active management of our human capital has to be done better and we are working on that.

At the last nuclear oversight board, the A-10, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence was given the role of functional authority for human capital. That is my staff will now be actively involved with the A-1 community to look at the training, education, and experience to make sure that one each Lieutenant Colonel Michael Cardoza, Commander of the 69th Bomb Squadron has got the background, the right training, education, and experience to take that guidon from his ops group commander and lead a nuclear-qualified squadron. That active, deliberate, not *ad hoc* management of our human capital is extremely important.

The other thing that concerns us the most is the recapitalization of our weapons systems, the modernization of the weapons systems that General Klotz introduced us with this morning that are averaging over 40 years old.

The Air-Launched Cruise Missile; a very capable penetrating weapon. In the next decade or so, it will begin to lose its capability to penetrate anti-access and aerial denial environments around the globe. It needs to be looked at, and a follow-on to the ALCM is now being studied.

The support equipment that keeps our weapons systems and its infrastructure supported. Transporting wreckers whose hoists and winches need refurb. Vertical lift, which allows our defenders to not only over watch our ICBM convoys but also disperse to missile launch facilities. Our weapons loaders for the ALCM which need to be managed better and restored to full capability.

Finally, that airplane that in Washington is very hard to convince people that the B-2 is not a new airplane. This is an airplane with 1980s avionics. This is an airplane that its digital backbone needs to be upgraded. This is an airplane whose

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communication capability needs to be modernized, whose trailing edges need work.

These kinds of modernizations and sustainment efforts of our weapons systems have got to be taken on. They were taken on by corporate Air Force during the FY12 POM. There is an extraordinary amount of investment in the kinds of things that keep these weapons systems going, but at the end of the FY12 POM, in years '16 and '17, we face an extremely significant bow wave of recapitalization and modernizations costs to produce a follow-on to the Air-Launched Cruise Missile, to perhaps produce a new long-range strike penetrating platform, to purchase new vertical lift for our missile fields, et cetera.

Human capital, recap and modernization are the two things that we are most focused on in the Pentagon. Continuing to strengthen the nuclear enterprise, which takes advantage of all the reinvigoration efforts, institutionalizes them, formalizes them, and focuses on the humans that perform this mission, the Airmen that perform this mission, and their weapons systems is extremely important.

Understanding the role they play to produce deterrent effects in the 21st century environment is extremely important, and we have an effort underway for Airmen to be at the table as deterrence in the 21st century is discussed. It remains the foundation of our national security, and we harken back to a statement by our President that as long as these weapons exist we will maintain safe, secure, effective nuclear deterrent capability.

I leave you with some very important words to remember from two extremely capable warriors, veterans of our Air Force in the form of General Welch, who said not too long ago that our nuclear weapons systems during the Cold War were the most effective and the most reliable weapons system ever produced because they were never used. They did everything they were supposed to do, every second of every day during the Cold War, for 60 years. Our job is to fulfill the charter of General Chilton at the bottom right. That is not only to be ready to go to war but to be ready to go to war so that war is prevented. That is the highest calling we have.

I open it up now for questions. Perhaps I've brought up an issue or I've mentioned a topic that you'd like to know more about, and we have time -- approximately 15 to 20 minutes for questions. Anything on your mind? Anything that I can address?

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Where's the 509th? There it is.

Question: Colonel Robert Walker from the 91st Operations Group.

General, can you give us a preview of what your approach to human capital development and investment will be like? One of the things we've looked at here is specifically in the case of a field-grade officer taking command.

One of the things I'm concerned about is our company-grade officers that we have talked about the early years being the developmental years with two or more assignments below the [inaudible] and MAJCOM, but what I assess, General, the early years have become the accidental years and we're not deliberately developing our [DEOs]. Can you give us a preview of what that might look like, Sir?

Maj. Gen. Chambers: Great point. Earlier in the first decade of this century, our Air Force personnel system took on a thing called force development, which was the deliberate management of talent and expertise across the Air Force. Its main focus was on the field-grade years, and we want to take advantage of that. It is important during the field-grade years to properly manage our nuclear expertise as well so that they are going to the right schools or getting the right command opportunities to compete.

Your point about the company-grade years being just as important is a valid one. There are a couple of different approaches that we've got to take. Part of the reinvigoration phase was a reinvigoration of curriculum across our Air Force in the training and education area. That curriculum enhancement needs to be looked at. Is it adequate enough? Are we sufficiently providing those company graders the bedrock of understanding of deterrence and nuclear deterrence ops?

We have taken on other efforts with regard to human capital that involve the definition of something called key nuclear billets. Key nuclear billets are billets that now identify and are coded by the personnel system in every [inaudible] that requires a depth and a recency of nuclear experience on which that unit's mission hinges in a very near way.

Those key nuclear billets -- there's about 1,100 of them across the Air Force. Managing them at the right fill rate with the assignment system and managing them with the right quality is

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very important. In the company-grade side and in the NCO side, we have pretty much a system that assigns people based on most ready to be reassigned, not most qualified for the job. And that is a process that needs a little work.

Again, our personnel system is designed to manage an active force of 332,000. It has big levers, big levers that for the most part are very effective at getting out that capability to commanders in the field. But some of those big levers aren't precise enough to manage this very precious resource of company-grade expertise or midlevel NCO expertise or even senior NCO expertise.

We are beginning now the transition that the evolution of the development team concept from the field-grade officer side to the senior NCO side. We started with the single career field, which does nuclear things their entire career, called 2W2s. The nuclear weapons career field for our NCOs requires hand-massaging management of senior NCOs so that it's not just the senior NCO who has been at that base the longest that gets the assignment to the next, but also the one most qualified, who has got the most record, the most depth and recency of experience to take on a supervisory role at an ICBM wing or a bomber wing.

The other piece of this has to do with the numbers. We have parts of the human capital piece that require to be relooked. We are well aware of the administrative burden that, for instance, the personnel reliability program has placed on our nuclear units. Well, for all of the right reasons it seemed at the time, the Air Force took away full-time PRP people from units. We need to look at whether we need to find billets in the Air Force, precious though they be, and reinsert them into units to help with the management and the administration of the PRP program. Those are not senior people, probably, but they are good solid citizens at the junior level.

So I didn't specifically answer the company-grade question, but it is something we are looking at in terms of the numbers. You know we have a very interesting company-grade problem in the 13-S world. It is a career field from which we get both missile operators and space operators. The company-grade profile of those career fields is inverse in relation to each other. We need a lot of company graders in the ICBM world, and we need a lot of field graders in the space world. [Laughter]. So those two pyramids, one right side up and one upside down, have to be merged somehow. So looking at 13-Ss is an important thing to do.

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Space Command did a tremendous job in the development of the space professional. We could probably learn from that, but the management of 13-Ss in the ICBM world needs a little bit of attention because we are potentially facing a field-grade issue in the not-too-distant future.

That, on top of the effects of other big levers that our Air Force is taking -- new-hire tenure rules, selective reenlistment bonuses for the NCOs, perhaps things like assignment incentive pay -- some of those old tools that we used to use for assignments to Korea, et cetera, maybe we can apply them to company-grade or NCO assignments elsewhere in the nuclear enterprise.

So that's a quick menu of the things we're looking at in our functional authority role. We have some similar problems in Europe in that area as well.

Other questions? I think we have one in the back there.

Question: Major [inaudible] from 8th Air Force.

General, you mentioned that the New START is pending ratification in the Senate. Secretary Gates has come out publicly in favor of ratification of the treaty. Does the Air Force have a dog in the fight? In other words, are our leaders advocating one way or another with regard to this treaty?

Maj. Gen. Chambers: A great question. It's a favorite question in Washington right now. To get to the heart of your question, when asked our Air Force leaders have given their opinion about the treaty. However, it is less an Air Force issue and more a Department of Defense policy issue, a State Department issue, and an issue for the White House and the National Security Staff.

We, as an Air Force, our job is to provide ready, reliable, effective forces to produce the deterrent capability that the treaty will continue to require, and also be ready for the verification regime, the on-site inspection regime that the new treaty will do. All that planning is now underway. There are [inaudible] plans being developed here at Global Strike Command. There are specific implementing AFIs being written at Headquarters Air Force as to how to conduct these inspections.

But to get to the heart of your question, the treaty, as our Constitution stipulates, is on the legislative side of our government. Inside the Senate, it is their job to deliberate.

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As an Air Force, our Air Force leaders have been asked a whole lot of questions about it. They have responded. The Department of Defense has answered over 900 questions of the Senate about the treaty. There have been over a dozen different hearings about the treaty. As these deliberations continue, of course, we've had an election in America. It has changed some of the dynamics in the Congress. We are observers of that. We watch. We wait. We answer questions. We only opine when asked, and we let our civilian authorities in OSD policy, in the State Department, in the National Security staff of the White House answer those questions.

It will be an interesting thing to watch. I cannot speculate as to the timeframe for ratification or if ratification, but our job is to plan to be ready.

Questions? Time for one more. Anybody? Okay.

Thank you very much. I appreciate your attention.

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