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AFSA PAC

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Lt. Gen. Kowalski: Good morning. I hope your evening wasn't too late last night because if it was I'm going to wander out there and rattle your table a little bit.

I'd like to thank Chief McCauslin and Chief Ledoux for inviting me to come out here. It really is an honor to be part of this, to be able to be up here on the stage and talk to you about what's going on with the Air Force's newest major command.

Congratulations to the Air Force Sergeants Association. You're almost as old now as B-52H is. So well done. [Laughter]. It's tough to hang in there that long.

All of you are here for a number of reasons, but the core reason ought to be that you care. That you care about our Air Force, that you care about our airmen. That's what I see when I see the Air Force Sergeants Association, and I think that's the purpose of what you're doing out here, which is when you go back, those of you that are active duty, you'll be able to understand more, do more, be better leaders and better mentors. So thank you for taking part in this.

Part of what I can share with you is, some of you are very familiar with Global Strike Command -- Chief Hornback, Chief Ledoux -- but many of you may not be. Like was said, it's the Air Force's newest major command. It has been fully operational for less than a year. We'll hit our one year anniversary on the 30th of September. And although we have had some stories and things out there about the command, for the most part there are still a lot of people that don't really know how this thing is set up, and frankly there are questions out there about why we still need nuclear weapons.

So I'm going to try to talk about the global security context, talk about the high level, and then work our way down to talk about why we have Global Strike Command, talk about some of our challenges, and where we see ourselves going in the future in some of the things that we've accomplished. So I'll take you through that.

To begin with, my name is James Kowalski and I'm addicted to PowerPoint. [Laughter]. AS part of my rehab the doctor said I'm not allowed to use PowerPoint today, so we'll see how that goes.

If you're going to take notes on this talk, you'll have to just get out your pen and do it because there's not going to be any slides or anything for you to read. Although I do have two music videos for you, so we'll try to catch those up later.

How many people here had ever been in Strategic Air Command?

[Hooahs].

Wow, that's actually -- of course a lot of people are wearing suits and civilian clothes that raised their hand, but that's okay. [Laughter]. And when we talk about Strategic Air Command, especially when we stood up Global Strike Command, there was sometimes a mixed reaction. There were those that said all right, Strategic Air Command is back. And there were those that went oh, no, Strategic Air Command is back.

But regardless of what your personal opinion might have been about Strategic Air Command there were two things that were universally recognized about SAC. It was professional and it was disciplined. That is what Global Strike Command is attempting to restore in the culture of our nuclear enterprise. We're bringing back the professionalism, we're bringing back the discipline. If you bring those back, then you will get results and when you get results people become more confident. When people become more confident they achieve pride in that organization and they want to continue to do better. That is the sequence of things that we're trying to put together. That's what I need you to understand about it and that's where I need your support for this command as we continue to take it forward.

The Cold War's been over for about 20 years. A lot of people today really don't understand why we still need nuclear weapons. In fact Americans have often been ambivalent about nuclear weapons. We were the first nation to develop these weapons. We were the first and only nation to use these weapons in anger. Our thought and our perceptions of these weapons have matured quite a bit from the very first days of having a nuclear arsenal, where frankly, the military sort of considered them just like another weapon only really, really bigger.

It evolved to the point where we understood in the '50s that it really wasn't just like another weapon. There were

clearly cases where we were not going to use it. We did not use it in Korea. We did not use it in Vietnam. In the late '50s what nuclear weapons became for the U.S. was a counterweight to the Soviet conventional superiority. The Soviets vastly outnumbered us in Europe, and if we wanted to retain Europe and the Western democratic coalition there in NATO, we knew that nuclear weapons would have to deter them, the Soviets, from a conventional attack. That worked fairly effectively. And over time, and we see this as we get into the '80s and the '90s, nuclear weapons as our arsenals stabilized between the Soviets and the U.S., we find that nuclear weapons, their role in our National Security Strategy was to deter weapons of mass destruction. So we were very ambiguous, especially when you think about Iraq, we were very ambiguous in whether or not we would respond to a chemical or biological attack with nuclear weapons. Part of that was to attempt to deter WMD in addition to deterring nuclear weapons.

We're at the point now in our National Security Strategy where we see our nuclear arsenal as only deterring other nuclear arsenals. And that is the role that we have now.

Part of that is because of our own conventional superiority where we're fairly confident that we can pretty much range across the globe and hit the targets that need to be struck. So as we have scaled back the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, that arsenal and how we operate, maintain and sustain it has sort of slipped further and further away from the conscious of most Americans.

But at the end of the day nuclear weapons are first and foremost strategic weapons. Nuclear weapons are political weapons. The military value of nuclear weapons is relatively small and remote. I can't think hardly of any scenario where nuclear weapons do much for us in a conventional conflict other than controlling escalation. That's a pretty important value, but that's a strategic value and that's a political value.

Regardless of our intent about our arsenal, and we have recently signed the New START Treaty with the Russians. Inventory will be coming down, both nations, to about 1500 warheads. Regardless of where we go next, and there's continuing discussion about what is the right level. Can we continue to show leadership by working with the Russians to bring our forces down. It's important to keep in mind that deterrence is not something we get to choose to impose on others. Deterrence is in the mind of your adversary. Deterrence is psychological.

The reason deterrence was so effective in the Cold War is because both the Soviet Union and the United States feared these weapons. There was a great deal of uncertainty of what would happen if we got close enough to a conflict that possibly some accident or incident could lead to a major conflagration. That fear and uncertainty, in my mind, is clearly at the core of deterrence and we can't decide what somebody else is going to be afraid of. So it's good to have some kind of margin in there for ourselves.

So at the end of the day as long as any nation has nuclear weapons we will have nuclear weapons, and as long as we have nuclear weapons we will ensure that we have a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal that is run by professional and disciplined airmen.

Let's talk about what the world looks like today. Let's talk about those potential adversaries. I don't know that I've ever seen a more dynamic security environment than we have today. We've gone from the bipolar world of the Cold War to the unipolar world that we got to grow up in in the '90s and early 2000 and now we are looking increasingly at a multi-polar world. We're looking at the rise of nations in Asia, India, China. We're looking at some proliferation of weapons, some improvements in nuclear arsenals. We're looking at the rise of what we like to call non-state actors, extremist groups that are able to use our information technology global infrastructure to coalesce around ideas. The guy that just did the attacks in Norway, a lot of his thinking came from other nations as these right wing extremists coalesced around ideas. We see al-Qaida doing the same thing in Islamic extremism as they use the web not only to recruit and to spread their ideas, but to actively train, and to spread the techniques of mass destruction to those that are inclined to use them.

So in the context of this world, in the context of we must retain a nuclear arsenal as long as any other nation has it, what are the specific values, what are the specific objectives of our deterrent force?

Number one, to maintain strategic stability with Russia and China. Russia and the U.S. have together, since near the end of the Cold War, have led the march down in relative parity through agreements as we brought the arsenal down from tens of thousands to 1500. That's a significant accomplishment. And part of that accomplishment is the establishment of diplomatic and military to military relationships that allow a continuing engagement, continuing understanding, allow us and the Russians to have transparency on intent so that we understand what the

other nation is doing. So we can understand that while they may have the capability they clearly don't have the intent. That puts us back to where we were in the Cold War. There's a great deal of value in that relationship and in how the U.S. and Russia continue to work forward here, to the point where we are working together on things such as nuclear security, on things like counter-terrorism.

This summer we'll have a Russian delegation come to one of the Global Strike Command bases. They'll go out to a Guard base where we do a lot of our security forces training, and they'll watch and we'll share ideas on how you provide security to convoys. That's an important development.

For the Chinese, their arsenal is about a quarter to a third of the arsenal of the U.S. or the Russians. Their nuclear strategy is a little bit different than ours, and we are just now, and you've seen it since January when the Secretary of Defense went over to China and now the Chairman has been over to China, where we're trying to get established those military-to-military relationships to that on a number of issues to include nuclear arsenals, we can have that kind of dialogue, we can have discussions, we can share intent through these transparent engagements.

At the end of the day one of the sayings I'd like to leave with you is from Secretary of State Dean Rusk. He was Secretary of State in the '60s, sort of the height of the Cold War. And when we talk about the nuclear arsenal and we talk about our professionalism, we talk about the size and modernization of forces and all the rest of those things, here's what Secretary Rusk said. He's talking about the Soviet Union but you can apply it to any potential adversary today. "Don't expose them to intolerable temptation through our own weakness."

The second reason that our nuclear environment is important in today's environment is it provides regional nuclear deterrence against bad actors. We all know who the bad actors are. Those are the actors that are not only working on their own nuclear programs, but they're working on the means to deliver those weapons and that's an important part that often gets lost. Especially if you take a look at Iran.

On the one hand Iran is clearly, in my mind, on a path to obtain a nuclear weapon and at the same time they're on a path to develop significantly longer range ballistic missiles. That is a troubling course, and the intersection of those two things provides an inflection point not only within that region but globally.

Third, the third value of our nuclear arsenal and one that is often forgotten has to do with non-proliferation. It has to do with keeping other nations from having nuclear weapons. And specifically what I'm talking about is the nuclear umbrella, the deterrent umbrella that the United States provides to its friends and allies, and if the United States does not have an arsenal and the forces and the operational credibility to continue to assure friends and allies, then those nations might be incentivized to go out and develop their own nuclear arsenal. That's a caution point for us, because non-proliferation is one of our key National Security Strategy goals. At the same time our own efforts and our arsenal as we attempt to bring it down could run into conflict with that.

So let me talk real briefly now, I've given you sort of that larger context, let me talk about how we got here. How did we get to the point where in about '94 we bring down Strategic Air Command yet here we are in 2008 having to basically resurrect a sort of different version of that?

If you think back through about 1992, those of you who may be old enough to think back to then, and you talk about a couple of big things that happened in that timeframe. One of them was in '89 the Berlin Wall fell. Mikhail Gorbachev was talking about Perestroika, an opening. Yet at the same time you could see that that Soviet Bloc of nations were becoming wrestles. They were starting to come apart a little bit. But the intent and a lot of the logic behind the Cold War started to fall away. There was a demand in the U.S. for well, it's time for the Peace Dividend. We've signed these agreements with the Russians. It turns out they're not so bad. Let's start bringing down these arsenals. And we did. We started down that path.

At the same time we came out of Desert Storm and the phrase that we talked about was revolution in military affairs. It was an amazing combination of stealth, precision, interconnectivity, communication, information technology that allowed us to do incredible things with conventional weapons. The days of carpet bombing to get a target were over. The days of sending multiple aircraft to hit one target were over. We were now in the days of sending one aircraft to hit multiple targets. A big change. A revolutionary change. But it required more investment. It required us to rethink how we did it. And it created a different way to think about hey, maybe we could deter conventionally. Maybe we can bring that more into our construct of how we deal with other nations and how we avoid conflict in the future. And the intersection of those two things led to the dissolution of SAC. We needed to save money. The

American public expected a Peace Dividend. Yet at the same time we had to modernize these forces to take advantage of the things that we found out coming out of Desert Storm and that's the path that we went on.

It seemed like a good idea, but there were a couple of problems with it. One of the key problems is when you take a mission area like nuclear weapons that frankly is not like all the other mission areas, nuclear deterrence is not the same as close air support. Majors and master sergeants talk about 2000 pound weapons. Senators and SecDefs talk about nuclear weapons. Yet the Air Force as we broke apart SAC and moved the pieces to other major commands, took that nuclear mission area, took nuclear deterrence, and made it compete within other Air Force major commands against other mission sets. So it was competing against a revolution of military affairs; it was competing against transformation when Rumsfeld came to office; after 9/11 it was competing with counter-terrorism, it was competing with conventional conflict Iraq, it was competing with counter-insurgency. So after 15 years of under-resourcing, of changing the support structure in logistics and materiel, we get to the point where in 2006 we accidentally ship nuclear weapon related material, specifically missile fuses, to Taiwan. A year later, in 2007, we accidentally shipped nuclear weapons from Minot to Barksdale. That resulted in a sea-change in the Air Force. I think at the time we thought this was a one-off. This was just a mistake. We'll figure out what's wrong up there and go fix it.

The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Moseley, he did a very smart thing. He did a very wide-ranging review of all of our nuclear operations. And the results he got were very troubling. The results he got led to, in 2008, direction from the Secretary of the Air Force to establish against a number of things that we'd been directed to do. But one of those things was establish a new major command. That new major command was needed to address many of the problems that were found. Problems such as fragmented authority and responsibility. Problems such as under-investment. Problems such as lack of compliance, training and oversight.

So the command was started as a provisional in January of '09, it was activated in August of '09, and then got its first operational forces in December of '09 and took command of the bombers in February of '10. Then, as I said before, declared fully operationally capable on 30 September of last year.

It's an interesting way to do this. If those of you -- Who here has time in Special Ops Command, AFSOC? Some hands go up, not quite as many as the SAC hands, but that's okay.

What happened in 1980? Does anybody remember what happened? It was called Operation Eagle Claw. It was the failed rescue of the hostages in Iran. It was followed within just a couple of years by the failure of Special Ops force in Granada. What came out of that was from the Department of Defense, from Congress, was that the entire military has gotten the Special Ops things wrong, and we have to set up a command to make sure we get it right.

Now think back. On the spectrum of conflict where you have the low end over here and the high end over here -- high end being nuclear, low end being counter-insurgency -- where was the focus in 1980? It was all over here on the high end. We stood up a special command, a singularly focused command to bring excellence back to Special Operations.

Now where are we 2008? All the emphasis is down here on the lower end of that spectrum of conflict, and we have to bring back a singularly focused command at the high end of conflict, to sort of keep our eye on that ball a little bit.

So what we have done in 2008 is pretty much what we did back in 1980. We organized to create certain behaviors in our units and our airmen. With the knowledge that behavior over time equals culture. And that through this reorganization we can get the cultural change that we need which in my mind is especially important because nuclear weapons are a special trust and responsibility.

Let's play the first music video.

[Video shown].

If you were paying close attention you noticed I snuck in my PowerPoint slides during the video. [Laughter].

I can't get anybody to smile in my command, though. They're all pretty serious.

One thing I'd like you to take away from that video, though, what I've talked about mostly up to this point is the nuclear deterrence, that particular mission set. But what I will tell my airman and what I will tell you is that we juggle a lot of balls in this command. Two of them are crystal -- the nuclear one and the conventional one because we have significant conventional responsibilities as we go forward. In fact in February B-2s launching from Whiteman Air Force Base struck 45 hardened aircraft shelters in Libya. Gadhafi learned a couple of

important lessons from that. One is, his shelters weren't hardened. [Laughter]. The other was, they really weren't shelters.

We also, through the 608th Air Operation Center executed command and control and worked with STRATCOM in the forward AOCs to support the B-1s, do planning and support for the B-1s that executed against nearly 100 targets. They did two missions. One over, rearmed, and then one mission coming back.

Only the United States of America has that kind of combat power to reach from here, from their own nation, to virtually any point on the globe. Strike targets, return home. And do it again, and do it again, and do it again, and provide that sustained combat power anywhere we want. That's a credit to all of you. It's a credit in particular to our tanker crews and our AMC brethren. We couldn't have done it without the tankers. But it was a great effort.

We take it for granted. We forget that nobody else can do that. When we talk about deterrence at other than the nuclear level, that's a deterrent capability and if you're a bad guy you should be paying attention to what happened out there, and they are. You watch what's going on in China as China tries to mold its military for anti-access and area denial. You watch what's going on in countries like Syria and Iran as they try to acquire the next generation of air defenses. They know what we can do.

Today we've got about 15 percent of our airmen are in direct support of combatant commanders. We've got about 1100, and the word we use is deploy. We deploy them out to the missile field. They're in direct support of Strategic Command. That's who they work for our there.

We've got about 1200 airmen deployed to the AOR. Most of those to CENTAF, some of those working continuous bomber presence out of Guam.

I told you it's been almost a year since we achieved fully operational capability. What do we need to do as we go forward?

First we need to think about what our objective is. What I have seen going around to this command is every airman in this command wants to do good. Those airmen need two things from us. From the headquarters, from you as NCOs and leaders, they need to know what it is we want them to do, and they need to know that what they do is important.

As we go forward we have three challenges, three things we need to do as a command. The first is we have to complete the restoration of the culture that embraces the special trust and responsibility of nuclear weapons. And it's not just our airmen who are hands-on in operations or maintenance with these weapons, it's all of our airmen. I'd like to single out Senior Airman Jonathan Gasparetto. He's a 90th Missile Wing military alert facility chief. He's in the services squadron. His intelligent response to an electrical emergency at one of our facilities potentially saved the equipment in the launch control center. He went on to earn Senior Airman below the zone and was the Air Force's 2010 Services Airman of the Year. He knows his work is important to the mission.

Our second challenge, while we achieve that enduring cultural change in our nuclear business, we have to maintain our conventional excellence. We have to have airmen who can perform their mission with the discipline needed in nuclear operations, yet still have the flexibility to excel in the AOR. Airmen like Tech Sergeant Bradley Williams of the 5th Bomb Wing. He's the NCOIC of Vehicle Operations. He's responsible for all transportation for the 5th Bomb Wing and 91st Missile Wing. He deployed to Kuwait. Convoy commander for 17 trips moving cargo in and out of Iraq. On one of those convoys a vehicle rolled over and his calm leadership as the on-scene commander saved the life of an injured Kuwaiti national. Tech Sergeant Williams is now fighting a different enemy. Some of you may have heard about the flooding up at Minot. Sergeant Williams thought he might be okay if he moved all his stuff up to the second floor. The water came to the roof. He lost it all. He's probably today still ripping out drywall. He was yesterday when we called him. Tech Sergeant Williams is one of our 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year. Right now he's in a race to get the drywall out and get his house habitable before winter sets in. That's Minot, so we're talking about two weeks. [Laughter].

Our third challenge is to sustain and enhance the force while preparing for the challenges of the future. That's code word for budgets are coming down. Our nation is \$14 trillion in debt. This is not something to push back on. This is something that we have to lean into. We have to help our country recover and we've got to do that by being smarter about how we do our business.

We're at the point or will be at the point in the near future where the payment on the national debt will exceed the Department of Defense budget.

In my mind that's another cultural change that we need to aggressively go after. A cultural change within at least Global Strike Command where we think about how to do our business faster, better and cheaper.

Frankly, you're not going to find \$14 trillion by going after one percent of the DoD budget. That's about what Global Strike Command is.

But the culture that we can create if we take this as an opportunity to figure out how to be more innovative is a culture that can permeate the rest of the Air Force and the rest of the DoD. It's very hard to get any not for profit organization to become more innovative without a direct competitor driving them to seek improvements and seek how to do things faster, better and cheaper. So we're trying to do that.

The key impediment is us. The key impediment is mid and senior level leadership because we have been successful at how we have done business and it's very difficult for us to see how to do things better. So when we have the young airman out there who's got an idea, it is much easier to say no than it is to say yes.

What we're trying to create is a culture that says yes if. A culture that says okay, let's look at it. Let's see where the obstacles are and let's see if we can do it that way. That's a very different answer, perceived differently, than an answer that's no, we can't do that because of X, Y and Z.

So that's what we're trying to get through the command. We're trying to put the institutional pieces in place so people can get their ideas out there, but it's got to be deeper than that. It's got to be at the educational level. We have to have NCOs and senior NCOs that are willing to say yes, if. It doesn't always mean the answer is yes, but it means that we're going to think about it, we're going to look into it, that we are going to listen and that we're going to recognize and reward the folks that are putting out the good ideas.

Now we've made a lot of progress in a number of areas. We have a seat at the Air Force corporate structure now, so this mission area is fully represented to Air Force senior leadership. We're pursuing advancements in all of our current weapon systems. We're pursuing a long range strike family of systems, we're pursuing a bomber, we're pursuing a standoff missile, we're pursuing conventional prompt global strike. We're also beginning the analysis of alternatives for the follow-on ICBM. Right now I

think it's called ground-based strategic deterrent. These guys keep changing the name on me.

We've improved our inspection teams, we've improved how we handle and account for our nuclear weapons related material. We have taken an incredible leap forward in how we do our nuclear education. We have brought back a lot of things that we had pushed aside over the last 15 years. We've stood up an intelligence formal training unit. We do very focused nuclear security training out at Camp Guernsey which is an Army National Guard Camp that is generous enough to let us use it for this kind of convoy training.

What we're trying to do, since last year, is build back that esprit-de-corps, to make people understand that what they do is important, to get them excited about their mission.

Let's play the second music video.

Who remembers the competitions in Strategic Air Command? Missile Comp, Bomb Comp.

[Video shown].

A lot of the cultural change that we're looking for I saw at that hangar. You could see it in their eyes. They were excited about what they were doing. They were trying to become the best they could be at what they were doing. That's something that they will take to wherever they go next.

So we've got great airmen, committed warriors, every one of them wants to do well. Airmen like Miriam Santiago, Air Force Sergeant Association Base Honor Guard Member of the Year from the 341st Force Support Squadron at Malmstrom. Airmen like Brianna Brooks, who was awarded a Purple Heart in the aftermath of an RPG attack on her MRAP over in Afghanistan. She's from the 2nd Medical Ops Squadron at Barksdale. And Master Sergeant David Gridale, 509th FSS at Whiteman, 2010 Air Force Career Assistant Advisor of the Year.

It's not just the airmen. It's the families. The spouses and children who serve. Who each bear their own A-Bag with loneliness, separation, new schools, moves, new starts, bad jobs, no jobs, caring for others. They didn't sign up for this, but I don't know how we'd do the mission without them. So to all the families, thank you, and please take that home as a message from us for them.

A special thank you to AFSA. Through your chapters you've given our airmen the framework to take care of each other and take care of the mission.

The latest example, I mentioned Sergeant Williams and the flooding at Minot. The AFSA Chapter at Barksdale sent a check for \$15,000. [Applause].

With that, thanks to AFSA, thanks to all of you for your incredible service to the nation. Maybe we can bring up the lights and take some questions.

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