

TRANSCRIPT

## Defense Writers Group

A Project of the Center for Media & Security  
New York and Washington, D.C.

---

**General Herbert J. “Hawk” Carlisle  
Commander, Air Combat Command**

**November 10, 2015**

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT AND MAY CONTAIN ERRORS. USERS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAPES OR NOTES OF THE SESSION IF ABSOLUTE VERIFICATION OF WORDING IS NEEDED.

---

**DWG:** We’ll get started and conduct today’s Defense Writers Group as, the entire thing will be as a speed round. Because we have a large group today, we’ll try to get through as many people as we can. If we can just limit yourself to one question, we’ll let the General take it from there.

As you all know, General Herbert J. “Hawk” Carlisle, Commander of Air Combat Command is our guest this morning and we do appreciate him doing the long commute from Hampton, Virginia in the bad weather this morning.

We’ll start with John Tirpak and then go to Philip Schwartz.

**DWG:** Good morning, General. You’ve mentioned and your predecessors have mentioned and it’s now pretty obvious we cut off the F-22 a little too early. So what do we do now? Do we buy more F-35s? Do we accelerate the replacement for the F-22? Do we put the F-22 back in production? Or is there some other work-around that you’ve thought about.

**Gen. Carlisle:** Well no, I think it’s a combination of just about everything. I mean F-22 is a fantastic airplane, and as everyone well know it’s doing tremendous work over in the Middle East today as well as other places where we’re flying them. And hindsight’s always 20/20. I think in retrospect we stopped the buy too soon. I mean we could have used more F-22s certainly in the world we face today.

I think the answer is a combination of continuing to work the F-35 and improve the capability of that airplane, which we are working very hard. It’s a fantastic airplane, continuing to improve.

I think we are, we're looking at what we're doing an Enterprise Collaboration Team on Air Superiority 2030 and what that looks like, which may be a Next Gen, it may be a combination of things. Family of systems. But we're working that for the future. So there is a look at what's next.

Then of course I think Long Range Strike Bomber is another factor in the capabilities and the family of systems. I think long range, long endurance, large payload is very important for the future.

**DWG:** For air to air?

**Gen. Carlisle:** No, not for air to air, not for air superiority, but certainly for precision attack. You can use it in a variety of precision attack.

No, the air to air fight is going to be a challenge in the future. It's going to be a combination of all those things we're looking at. The F-35, the F-22s we do have. What would come as the next generation, electronic combat is part of that. The family of systems. As the ISR enterprise grows, our ability to put, it's kind of trading ISR, all those things are going to be part of the future fight.

On the air to air side we're going to have to figure out what's next.

**DWG:** Are you any closer to figuring out if you're going to change the objective buy on the F-35? Congress asked you to look at that.

**Gen. Carlisle:** They have looked at it and we certainly owe an answer back to the Congress on that.

I think if you look at the buy for the airplane, one of the things we have done in recent years is done budget reality. We have cut the buys. We haven't reached the numbers that we wanted to buy at the time, which has spread the buy out to the right. It's what's caused these added problems.

I think as we look to the future and what we're going to do, I think there is a decision to be made on how many F-35s we're going to buy. It's way too early to make that decision when we're not even IOC yet.

So I think when we look at long term we have alternative courses of action we could take, but I think the decision on what the final number is is one that now it's too early to make that decision.

**DWG:** Hi General, Philip Schwartz, Air Force Times.

With boots on the ground now fighting the Islamic State, does that change your mission over there, and does it provide greater intelligence for bombing missions?

**Gen. Carlisle:** The boots on the ground number is, I mean I think it's in keeping with what we're trying to do in support of our friends and allies in defeating Da'esh over there. I think it's a small number. I think they are helping in an advise, assist and train role with the opposition over there. The opposition to Da'esh. I think they are, by definition they're on the ground so they are providing incredible information. I think what it does do is, with respect to the role of air power is, we will never put anybody in a place where we can't supply them, support and defend them, and move them if we have to. And in many cases it will be air power that can do those things for them. So the support role I support of those folks on the ground over there is part of our mission. Always has been, always will be, and we'll continue to do that.

If you put more in there, then that's a focus of what we do and making sure that we do all those things for those folks.

**DWG:** Are there any TACPs or anyone going specifically to spot?

**Gen. Carlisle:** We can't really get into the specifics of what it's made up of. I will tell you that our battlefield airmen and our ability to try to get better at targeting is part of that and we are, we're trying to get much better at the targeting, the collateral damage to make sure that we keep it a very low collateral damage. Zero is the goal. Obviously very difficult to do, but minimize to the max extent possible.

So our ability to do those estimates to get the intelligence and then make sure that we do the appropriate collateral damage estimates and get the appropriate targets. But our targeting is, we're working very hard to get our targeting better, which I think General Brown mentioned at the Dubai Air Show last week that our strikes are increasing and that's based on our ability to get better information.

**DWG:** Yes, sir, sticking with ISIS. A while back you spoke of how you were able to put three JDAMs on a target for 22 hours because the bad guys had said something on social media that allowed you to pinpoint where they were.

Number one, can you tell us a little bit about how that came to be? And number two, why did you reveal that vulnerability there?

**Gen. Carlisle:** We can't go into more detail. I think it's taking advantage of what is, I mean it's taking advantage of every tool we have out there. It's using innovative airmen to do things that allow us to get insight into what the enemy's doing. They're very prolific on social media. They're very prolific in the propaganda realm. So our ability to use their hubris in how they use that and take them out I think is something that proves that we are looking at every possible thing we can to help us in intelligence and in targeting.

**DWG:** Was it basically a smart phone kind of thing, like you knew they were there because you could trace their smart phone?

**Gen. Carlisle:** No, it was social media.

**DWG:** And they said we're here.

**Gen. Carlisle:** Yep, they're basically being very arrogant about what they can and can't do. And again, it was a case of just being diligent and looking at everything around us and figuring out, you know, based on something that showed up on social media that we could use what they put on social media in a totally open environment to figure out where they were.

**DWG:** So it wasn't anything sneaky. They truly said we're here.

**Gen. Carlisle:** They were pretty arrogant about it, yeah, and we took them out. And they probably didn't give us credit that we could do as much as we did in the amount of time we did it.

**DWG:** Hi sir. I wanted to ask you about the ongoing strain on your UAV force. The Pentagon recently came out with this plan to help shore you up a little bit, so I wonder if that's going to be sufficient and how long it might take you to get to some state of loyalty and what will normal look like?

**Gen. Carlisle:** Yeah, that's a great question. I think you'll probably get an announcement towards the end of this week or early next week from Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force. We're working very hard on it and I'm the one that's taking the lead for the RPA enterprise and getting it better.

We started a program called CPIP which stands for Culture and Process Improvement Program, and we put 50 people. It took them a month. We went around to all the UAV, RPA bases. We spent time talking to them. We looked at the environment, we looked at the demand signal on them. We looked at everything across the board and we came up with some very solid recommendations of things we can do. And I will tell you, in kind of a shorthand, when you talk to the airmen out there that are doing this mission, have been at a surge mode for 15 years, for all intents and purposes. If you think about it, we put an RPA into the air war over Serbia and we haven't come back since. So there has been an incredible strain on them. At the ramp at which we've grown that enterprise, you know, it's unbelievable and I don't think people really realize we didn't give anything up, but we grew that RPA capability rapidly, and it has been a big demand on our airmen.

The three things they really want is they want time, so we have to get to a force structure and an enterprise that they can, they love the, I mean you talk to them, they love the mission, they love what they're doing, they know they're a huge part of our success, but they need time. They need time to do other things like take vacation, go to schools, get different jobs, spend more time with their families. So they need time. So we have to build the force presentation and a force structure model to do that. We have a way forward and again, I think you'll hear from Secretary James probably early next week reference how we're going to do that.

The other thing they want is, they want a strategic plan for where that enterprise is going. The way we came on with the RPAs, the MQ1 to start with, and then we put weapons on it and we've increased the ISR capability and we've gone to the MQ9, and they want to know the long term look of what we're going to do with that weapon system, and we have that. We're looking and we're talking about it. It is a very very capable system and it can be used in a variety of ways.

Unfortunately, because of the surge we've had, we haven't really been able to expand on all the capabilities that it has and use it to its full potential because they're so heavily engaged in the current conflict. So that's the second thing.

The third thing they want is they want to know that we're listening to them. And we are. And I think the proof will be when we start changing things.

Family wise we need, right now we really only have three bases. We have Canon, which is a Special Forces AFSOC RPAs, then we have Holloman where we're training and Creech where we're executing, and then we have Ellsworth and Whiteman, smaller detachments. We have some Air National Guard Units that are spread out. We're going to look at different basing potentially for them to give them different options. More family support. Creech is a tough base. Anybody that's been out there, it's not a full base. It's kind of restricted to some extent. So we are working really hard at taking care of that enterprise and those airmen, and fix those things that we're looking to.

One of the great things that happened was, with the Secretary of Defense, we went from 65 back to 60 to give us a little bit of breathing room to start making some of these improvements.

**DWG:** Hi, I work for National Defense Magazine.

You mentioned ISR and I keep hearing how more important ISR is kind of a high priority for the military right now. So how is that one, shaping requirements? And then two, are we, have we been placing too much emphasis on these more exquisite systems? And what kind of capability gaps has that left?

**Gen. Carlisle:** I guess I would be honest, I don't think the exquisite systems is necessarily what we spend a lot of time and money on. I mean I think the MQ9s are, MQ1s, fairly reasonable cost when it comes to the ISR enterprise.

I think what we need to do is, obviously the biggest challenge we face is how much data we get off the systems across the spectrum, whether it's on orbit capability, whether it's big wing capability, whether it's RPA capability, whether in the future if we have more penetrating capability, it's how do we get all that information. And even the platforms that are not designated primarily ISR but have great ISR capabilities. The F-22 and F-35 are tremendous with respect to the amount of information they suck up. How do we off-board that? How do we get machine to machine capability? How do we keep it being, if you've been to our DCGS and you've seen our distributed ground stations, how

much we're using airmen and how much work it is to monitor all that stuff that's coming off those platforms?

So I think our move on the ISR enterprise is to take advantage of all the information we have. How do we use it better? How do we off-board stuff like F-22 and F-35 information? How do we do machine to machine? How do we do the smarter intelligent look at it that's done by a machine that can look at, change detection and all those things.

So I think our movement in ISR is, obviously more and more and more. It's probably the most in-demand capability we have. Everybody wants more. How do we get better at it? How do we do it with more capability and more intuition? I mean all those things that we're trying to do to take advantage of all the information that we're getting off all the platforms.

**DWG:** I guess so one of the arguments I've heard is that when we're moving to more coalition warfare our allies can't afford some of these, the Reapers, Predators. So do you see a push for more affordable, smaller UAVs? Cheaper, less expensive UAVs or?

**Gen. Carlisle:** There's pluses and minuses in everything. Obviously if you have smaller UAVs you have the capability to have more of them and use them. On the same hand their sensor suite, their ability to off-board information, their range, their loiter time, all those things are affected by size as well.

I think with respect to coalitions, most, I mean we have many partners that are participating in this, in the RPA enterprise with us. I think the key is probably determining how you do on the information sharing with our closest partners and allies. And be able to get the information they need.

In many cases it's a question of how do you take the data you get and make it available at a classification level that they can use and is of value to them, so I think that's the biggest move on the coalition side with respect to RPAs and ISR.

**DWG:** Hi General, Craig Whitlock, [Inaudible].

I wanted to follow up on the streaming of RPA [inaudible]. You mentioned the decrease in the number of CAPs from 65 to 60. I'm interested in the Air Force, who has been using contractors as pilots for the last couple of months. I was wondering if you could elaborate on how that's worked, how much they're used? Are they deployed? Do they just work out of Creech? What are they doing now that they weren't doing before?

**Gen. Carlisle:** We're trying to provide more capabilities so the actual specifics we've got to be a little careful about. But it's called GOCO, so there's actually two different, GOCO and COCO. GOCO is government owned/contractor operated, which are our systems. And COCO is contractor owned/contractor operated. Which are the two different modes.

Right now I think what we're doing is GOCO. There are limitations with how much equipment we have. One of our limitations is our ground control stations are cockpits, as it were, where you control those. In some cases, we're looking at potentially using some contractor owned GCS'.

We are using them. We've used them for a long time. This is not a new concept. We are expanding their use in some different areas. And it is ISR, so we're using them in an ISR role and we are taking advantage of trying to provide more capability to combatant commanders by doing that. Because on the blue suit side, on the military side, and it's not just blue suit. Our Army brethren are doing great work in helping us out. Army's providing some of our cockpits to support the fight. We're doing AFSOC obviously and other things as well. So the idea of going to some contractor operated capability to provide ISR, if we can do that, again, to meet the combatant commander needs.

You know, if you think about it, things have changed, obviously. We're not leaving Afghanistan. That was announced. We're staying another year. The work that we're doing in counter-ISIS. If you look at the work in Yemen. If you look at the work in Horn of Africa. If you look at North Africa and Libya. And you look at all those things together, the demand signal has gone up. And so we're doing – but at the same time with the demand signal going up, we still have to build survivable, sustainable, long term enterprise in the RPA. So we couldn't just stay on the ramp that we're on because it was unsustainable, so the government option was one to provide that ISR, and we're taking advantage of it. And we have been, this is again, this is not the first time.

**DWG:** But it's the first time with pilots, right? Are they being shipped? They're not just actually meeting for training or – They're flying them right?

**Gen. Carlisle:** Yeah, they're operating them, yeah. Between the pilots and the sensors, they are doing that. I'd have to go back and see if we've done it before. I know we've had GOCO operations before. I don't know the exact extent in different areas. I think AFSOC may have done some GOCO before.

**DWG:** And on the [inaudible] talked about personnel. There's been a number of mishaps this year too, with [inaudible]. Has that put any crimp in your ability to operate?

**Gen. Carlisle:** Not really. I think if you look at the program, it is, the MQ1 was, I mean we accelerated it. We got it out in the field pretty rapidly and there are some things in that, there are some challenges that we're working with General Atomics to fix. They fixed a lot of those in the MQ9. And we have lost some. But if you look at the accident rate and the number of hours and how much we're flying them it actually is a very, both the MQ1, a little less so, MQ9 more so, pretty safe systems that have been operating at a pretty good safety record given the amount we use them. I mean you think about how much we're flying those airplanes and how long, you know, 24x7. They're airborne. So they're actually doing pretty well. And we have made some corrections. There's still some things we need to do to continue to get better. And if you look at the evolution and the transition from MQ1s to an MQ9 force, I think you'll see

that safety record continued and improve, especially when we get into later versions of the MQ9.

**DWG:** The ISR community has embraced so many missions pretty vigorously. I understand some classified systems are also making use of them.

I'm wondering how much the fixed wing community, the fighter community, is looking at this as, I know the 35 is software upgradeable. But that doesn't address integrating sensors necessarily if you come up with new ones. Are open mission systems going to be important for this program over the long term?

**Gen. Carlisle:** I think it will. I think software definable radios and software definable. So I think the more that we can do, that's one of the cases, I kind of mentioned it earlier, if we want to off-board some of the capability, some of the information that's coming off that airplane when we look at open mission systems, that's one of the ways to do it.

We all know this, but when things are proprietary it makes it very difficult to upgrade and challenge, and we're stuck with Moore's Law, right? We take seven years to buy something and every 18 months they get better in technology. So we have to get to the point where we can upgrade at a pace that is reasonable with the development of capability. So I think that open mission systems are critical to just about everything we do in the United States Air Force. Everything we do, and how we do that and how well we work with the industry to make it more and more so where you know, it's best of breed, and anybody that has something that is the best and the most valuable to the warfighter we can slap into the system without having to go through a whole rebuild or recompute or change things. It's almost like the app capability.

**DWG:** Have you talked with JPO about this?

**Gen. Carlisle:** We have. Yeah, I talk to Chris Bognan often. I talk to the folks at Lockheed, both Lorraine and Jeff Bavion in Orlando and we're looking at all those things as we move forward.

As a matter of fact we had a meeting, it was not too long ago, when Bill LaPlante was there, and Lockheed basically came out straight and said we're doing, we are going to open mission systems. So they're helping us, and they understand our desire to get there.

**DWG:** I wanted to follow on to the question a little earlier about F-35 [inaudible] reevaluating that. You mentioned that the Air Force is not in a place right now to determine maybe those numbers. Is that what you plan to tell Congress in response to --

**Gen. Carlisle:** No, to be perfectly frank, I don't think that would be fulfilling to Congress as you might imagine. [Laughter].

So we'll look at the study. We're doing wargaming and we're looking at things that, you know, what it would look like.

I will tell you, one of the challenges is today, capacity. Capability is a great thing, and obviously we need 5<sup>th</sup> Gen capability against advanced systems and advanced capabilities of potential adversaries out there, whether it's surface to air capability, air to air capability, electronic jamming, all those things that are out there. We need capability, but we also need capacity.

If you look at the demand signal that rests on our fighter force, bomber force, ISR force, C2 force, we are stretched. So one of the challenges if you look at the size of the United States Air Force and where we've been to where we are today, you know. At the height of Desert Storm, I know you've heard these numbers, at the height of Desert Storm we had 180 fighter squadrons, 160 combat coded. Today we have 55. So if we look, and that's with our current force structure. So if we look at the future and as we work our way through this, as we look at potentially extending the life of our current 4<sup>th</sup> Generation fleet, F-15Es, F-16s, F-15Cs and other aircraft, combined with the F-22s and its life and how long we're able to keep it, and then the F-35. If you look at the procurement plan and how long, you know, how much we moved it to the right a little bit with slowing the buy-down in some cases, I think that capacity is part of the wargaming that we're looking at. And what we need to replace and where we need to go.

The other thing is, this, as we look at the Enterprise Collaboration Team for the next generation, or Air Superiority 2030 is, what's, you know, what is next? Is it another platform? Is it an adaption of a current platform? Is it a different way to approach it? Is it the third offset? All those things are the things we're looking at. But capacity is a factor. F-35, F22 are great airplanes, but they can only be in one place at a time. So the capacity discussion is one we have to have as we go forward.

But the short answer to your question is we will do more wargaming, we'll, part of it is, the other question that you have to ask is to do what? So are we going to, you know, what's the national military strategy in the 2030 timeframe and where are we headed?

But we're going to look at wargaming, what kind of capacity we need, what combination of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Generation capability. What Long Range Strike Bomber does with respect to the ground attack or the precision attack capability. We're looking at all those things as part of it. And I think the requirement is 180 days after the enacting of the NDAA we owe them a report. And we're working on it.

**DWG:** You mentioned earlier that it doesn't look like now would be the time to [inaudible] that number. When do you think you'll be in a better place to make that [inaudible]?

**Gen. Carlisle:** One place I think that jumps to my mind is when we're fully operationally capable in the airplane. Our IOC is sometime between August and December of 2016. When we look at the Block 4 airplane which is our IOC jet, it's going to be 2021 or so. And if you think about it, at that point it's going to be pretty small

numbers still. I mean not small, small, but it's going to be, you know, we're going to have an operational wing at Hill. We'll have an operational capability at Eielson. Burlington will be an operational capability. But we'll still not be filled out size wise. So we'll still have time to make that decision.

**DWG:** Sea Power Magazine.

Throw in some jointness here. You talk about capacity. How much is your wargaming and you figure what you need in F-22s, F-35s, figure in what you can do with the Navy/Marine Corps who will also be flying F-35s in addition to their legacy aircraft?

**Gen. Carlisle:** The joint fight, you need only look at it today. I mean the joint fight, we're all in this together. So obviously we're taking advantage of advantage of that.

But I would caveat though, when you talk about numbers and capacity, it really is the Air Force that brings capacity for theater air war. If you look at the last 15 years in Iraq and Afghanistan, reference the fight, ISR, tanking, mobility, strike, about 75 to 80 percent of the sorties are flown by the United States Air Force. The Navy, Marines and our coalition partners certainly add a lot to it, but the capacity rests with the Air Force. Just look at the numbers and how many F-35s the Marines are going to buy and how many the Navy are going to buy versus what the fighter force is in the U.S. Air Force.

But no, I mean we are incredibly close in integrating together and working together. We have a great relationship obviously with our Navy and Marine brethren.

Right now the F-35s that are operating out of Yuma and the ones that are going to be on their way over to the Pacific, we're working very closely with folks out at Nellis in training those folks in what capabilities exist and where it's going next.

I think, and there's a lot of reports out there about the joint program and how it went and the challenges that it's faced with respect to buying a single aircraft for three services.

What isn't talked about enough I think is the incredible interoperability, cohesion that it will build between the three services. So I think there's a plus side of it that probably hasn't been realized yet, but will be increasingly so as all three services buy more of those airplanes.

**DWG:** You mentioned earlier, like warfare, the Air Force has gone back and forth as to what kind of EW platform. You were looking at dedicated EW and you've kind of backed away from that. Are you basically counting on the F-35 to be your EW capability in the future? Particularly strike warfare jamming, you know. The Navy will still have the Growlers that can go off. But basically look at the F-35 as your electronic warfare jamming platform.

**Gen. Carlisle:** I think that's going to be a big part of it. I'll tell you to begin with, the Growler's a fantastic airplane and its support to the warfight is incredible. So I'm a huge

huge fan of the Growlers and what they're doing in support of the fight. They're, across the board they're amazing.

Having said that, they are a 4<sup>th</sup> Generation platform and they will face some challenges as the threats get better and better and better with respect to survivability. I think for all three services the combination of the F-35 fleet and its electronic warfare capability is going to be a big arrow in the quiver of electronic warfare, because it really does, and if you've looked at what the F-35 can do with respect to electronic, ECM, ECCM, and its capability, it's pretty impressive.

There are some new technologies out there that we're looking at as well with reference to new apertures and broad spectrum electronic warfare, out of band electronic warfare. And if you look at when we talk about the family of systems for the long range strike bomber, some of that includes where we're going with respect to stand-in penetrating electronic warfare capability, F-35 being part of that and other things being part of it as well. I think it's a combination of all those things.

**DWG:** I was wondering if we could get an update on Combat Rescue Helicopter.

**Gen. Carlisle:** It's a great program, we've got to keep it on track.

**DWG:** Is it not on track?

**Gen. Carlisle:** It is. We have to keep it there. There's threats every day to every system we have, financial mostly.

Right now the program looks to be on schedule and on cost which is you cannot ask anything more than that with respect to where we're headed.

We have to get to 112 of them, which is what our buy is for the CRH. And everything, where we're at today, again, it's on schedule, on cost and on track. We have to keep it that way because it is a moral imperative that we have a PR force that can do what we're asking them to do.

**DWG:** Can you tell me some upcoming milestones?

**Gen. Carlisle:** I don't have those with me. I can get back to you if you'd like.

**DWG:** Sure. Thanks.

**Gen. Carlisle:** I don't have them with me right now. I don't have them with me right now. I haven't checked recently. Sorry about that.

**DWG:** Hi, General. Piggybacking on Craig's question on contractors running these missions. Are they doing just takeoff and landings or are they also running ISR missions?

**Gen. Carlisle:** They're doing ISR.

**DWG:** And what's, is there limitations on that? Can they engage a target?

**Gen. Carlisle:** There's, yeah, there is limitations on it and I can get you the specific language that we can talk about here. But yeah, there is limitations on it. They're not combatants and [inaudible] with respect to how they can engage or use the platform.

**DWG:** Was this an outcropping of bringing the CAS down from 65 to 60?

**Gen. Carlisle:** It was.

**DWG:** Going back to what you're describing on Creech, do you see Creech expanding? Or do you see Creech's role maybe some of the missions that are being run there being expanded to other bases?

**Gen. Carlisle:** Again, this will be an announcement that I think the Secretary will make, but one of the things we're looking at is new bases. Different bases. Not new. Different bases.

Obviously, the ability to put an MCE squadron, Mission Control Element squadron over a group at different bases requires an equipment piece, the GCS and things like that. And we are looking at moving and opening up some other opportunities and basing options for the RPA enterprise.

There's also the discussion, and one of the ones, and we haven't really figured out exactly, but one of them is, one of the continuous shift work the in-garrison combat operations is potentially to move them in different parts of the world so you can get different time slots as well. So we're looking at all those things for the future.

With respect to Creech, again I think it's probably, you know, the demand signal continues to go up. The opportunity to open up some other bases may, you know, we'll look at what Creech looks like in the future. We can't, we don't have the specifics yet. We have some work to do with respect to where we move them, what the future size looks like. Right now we're at 60 CAPs. And so I think there's a couple of different variables that would be part of that discussion.

We are looking at, I think the most important thing to take out of this is we're looking at opening up other bases with RPA capability and the [remote split MCE squadrons].

**DWG:** And lastly, one of the things that comes back from the RPA guys is recognition and kind of perspective in terms of the wars and things like that. This has been tried in the past. Are you going to make another go at this?

**Gen. Carlisle:** Yeah, and I was the OpsDef for the Air Force when all those discussions, so I sat through many Tank sessions on the METL discussion, some of those things.

Part of it is the wave of the future, and we talked about it a lot recently at our meeting out in Colorado. In-garrison combat operations is something that, people say reach-back. They don't understand what reach-back really means. But if you look at space, if you look at the RPA enterprise, if you look at the DCGS, the intel processing of information, if you look at cyber, there's a whole bunch of reach-back in-garrison combat operations we're doing.

I think certainly as an Air Force, I believe as a department we have to recognize what in-garrison combat ops looks like and how we recognize those people for what they're doing in support of those missions. Because increasingly, we are relying more and more on our capability to get synergy by reach-back.

What we've done with the RPA enterprise with respect to how remote split ops enables us to do so much more with those systems and move, you know, again, part of it's the flexibility of RPAs, but move the process of how you do the PED for it, how you change CAPs, how you put different GCS' against different airplanes in different parts of the world. I think that's where we're headed as a nation and as the Department of Defense. We have to come to grips with it.

**DWG:** General Carlisle has agreed to stick around a little bit at the end.

**Gen. Carlisle:** I'm more than happy to stay for a while longer. I apologize for being late.

**DWG:** Thanks, General, Christina Wong with the Hill.

The Air Force has tried to retire the A-10 for several years now. We're just sending them out to Incirlik and Europe. [Inaudible]. Do you think that sends a mixed message? Will the Air Force try and retire it again in 2017?

**Gen. Carlisle:** Tough question. [Laughter].

I will tell you I'm the one that's sending them. If I have them, I'm going to use them because they're a fantastic airplane and I'm going to take advantage of them.

I mentioned it earlier, one of our challenges is today is capacity. If you look at the demand signal that's placed on the United States Air Force across all of our mission areas, the demand signal has gone up. Things have changed a bit.

Obviously we're in Turkey now, which we weren't before the fight against ISIL and Da'esh. What's happening in Yemen, what's happening in Horn of Africa, what's happening in Libya, combined with the fact we're not leaving Afghanistan, the

announcement for at least one more there, has all put a greater demand on the capacity of the United States Air Force across all the mission areas.

So I will tell you, I have A-10s and I will use them because they're a fantastic airplane. The guys are incredibly well trained and they do fantastic work in support of the joint warfight.

I think that if, you know, if you look at what we would like to do, I think there's a bunch of things that I just mentioned the demand signal has changed. The procurement rate for the F-35 has changed. The numbers are not where they were originally planned to be. So I think, and again, this is Secretary James, General Welsh's call along with Secretary Carter, I think we would probably move the retirement slightly to the right. Eventually we will have to get there. We have to retire airplanes. But I think moving it to the right and starting it a big later and maybe keeping the airplane around a little bit longer is something that's being considered. Based on things as they are today and what we see in the future.

**DWG:** Especially with troops in Syria now. You need --

**Gen. Carlisle:** Yeah. And we have many platforms doing close air support. The F-16, F-15Es, the A-10s obviously, coalition aircraft. They're all doing very good with respect to close air support, but the A-10s are a fantastic platform and it's doing fantastic work.

I was just over there, so I just spent some time with them and they are at Incirlik and they are doing fantastic work as a matter of fact. So we're very proud of them.

**DWG:** General, it's always good to have you in. So I want to say thank you, and we'd love to have you back again soon.

**Gen. Carlisle:** I would love to, and I'm more than happy to chat for a period of time. I apologize again, seriously, I apologize for being late. I did not plan adequately.

The other thing I'll tell you is for everyone, anybody that's spent any time with me, I mean I believe in what you do. I believe that we have to be open and transparent. And I believe we have to get the message out and we have to talk. So at any time if there's things, and [Tadd Schultz] is my Director of Public Affairs for Air Combat Command, will tell you I'm open to having these discussions any time and telling you what I'm thinking.

Tanks.

**DWG:** Do the A-10s require ATACs operating [inaudible]?

**Gen. Carlisle:** Airplanes can operate, all of our airplanes can operate either with or without JTACs. So there's a variety of ways to do targeting, to determine intent, to do collateral damage estimates. Obviously JTACs are incredible when they're there. That

is not always the case. So you can, the A-10s can be used with or without the JTACs. So you don't have to have a JTAC.

**DWG:** So you are using --

**Gen. Carlisle:** A-10s, they're part of the fight, yes.

**DWG:** -- the JTACs.

**Gen. Carlisle:** They're on the ATOs. There's different ways to take advantage of them with respect to what they're seeing. So there are JTACs that are TACPs that are engaged in this fight. How we're taking advantage of them, how we're utilizing them is not, we have a variety of ways we can take advantage of our Tactical Air Control Parties and they don't have to be right there. They can be a variety of places.

Thanks.

# # # #

---

*Transcribed by: Professional Word Processing & Transcribing (801) 556-7255*