

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific"

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Dr. Grant: Good afternoon everyone. I'm delighted to be here to welcome you on our panel on projecting influence and power in the Pacific.

The way the format will work is we have brief remarks from me and from our three distinguished panelists. After that you'll have an opportunity to send your questions forward, fill out the little question cards, and the cadets will be around to collect them. We look forward to a very spirited discussion.

My first order of business is to introduce the panelists, then I'll have brief opening remarks.

In local politics here in Maryland the big question is whether there will be a gambling casino at National Harbor. I sort of wish there was one here today because what I have is three of a kind already, a winning hand with three PACAF Commanders.

General William Begert was Commander of Pacific Air Forces until he retired in 2004. General Paul Hester was Commander of Pacific Air Forces until his retirement in 2008. And General Herbert "Hawk" Carlisle took over as Commander of Pacific Air Forces in early August of 2012.

I think we can all agree that for quite some time the Pacific and the big actors such as China were really on the margins of the defense debate. We knew it was an important theater with some major contingencies backed up by some big war plans, and certainly a theater that has seen plenty of the application of air power and combat in the past.

But there's no question that in the last decade or two it has slipped somewhat to the margins.

Of course all of that changed dramatically in January of 2012 when the administration released a new Defense Planning Guidance that called directly for a rebalancing towards the Asia Pacific Region. It didn't make too many specific recommendations about force structure just yet, though it did point out the need

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

for a new stealth bomber and other types of forces to help us maintain deterrence in that area.

Since that time we've seen some lively activity in the Pacific, the type of activity that has us all far more focused on this critical theater of alliances, partnerships and rivals.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made an interesting remark that reflects the duality and the different levels of our American policy. During congressional testimony this spring she said, "Let's just put aside all the moral, humanitarian and do-good side of what we believe in and talk for a minute about real politics. We are," she said, "in a competition with China."

As we know, great power competitions always have an important military dimension and air power will be central in all its forms -- air, space and cyber -- to maintaining deterrence in the Pacific. The freedom to operate in that theater will be contested. It's something that relies heavily on air power to ensure freedom of action of U.S. forces, of coalition forces, and to provide the broad range of crisis response options, whether those be crises caused by Mother Nature in the form of humanitarian relief operations or whether those be military rivalries of a completely different kind.

What we also know is that the U.S. operates best with air power out ahead.

Our ability to sustain global reach will depend quite a bit on what we can do in the Pacific and will take all types of forces, all types of force elements. I know our PACAF commanders will have a lot to say about that.

But I want to point out to you why we should also think here in Washington a bit more about what the specifics of this competition and rivalry will mean. Back in 1997 a report from the Office of Naval Intelligence talked about the possibility of China acquiring an aircraft carrier. It seemed a bit far-fetched at the time, and a 2002 report from the Pentagon said it simply wouldn't ever happen. Well as we know, that former Soviet carrier, potential casino, is now in fact a Chinese aircraft carrier. It simply reminds us we can't always thoroughly predict the future.

There's another future that has come rushing back in a resurgence of something we haven't talked about in a long time. Most of our defense planning over the last two decades looked at air power in a precision strike role. Yes, air superiority has been very important but it, in a way, like the debate about China was pushed a bit to the margins.

What we see now is a return of Red Air, quickly sketched out in this chart. Look at the number of front-line fighters presented by the Iraqi Air Forces in 1990; by the Serbians nine years later; by Iraq again in 2003. It's a downward track. But it swings right up if you simply take the number from the DoD China report about the potential of front-line fighters. And that doesn't include all the old ones they may have stuffed away.

I think what that tells us as Airmen and those who are analysts and interested in air power, is that it's something we do need to begin to think about and take very seriously and debate among ourselves and bring up the dialogue in the Pacific to a higher level of refinement.

We know that the way ahead depends on being able to shape a force that will provide us that edge of superiority we have long counted on in the Pacific and in other theaters as well. It's simply vital to our way ahead.

Now without further ado I'd like to turn it over to General Paul Hester to make his remarks. Thank you.

General Hester: Thanks Dr. Grant, I appreciate the introduction. I appreciate the invitation to join you today. And as you were introducing General Bill Begert here to my right and myself, both of us retired out of PACAF as the last job we had, I was pleased to note that you did not announce Hawk's retirement as part of your opening comments. [Laughter].

I want to be brief and really let your questions guide us into what you're thinking about the Pacific and what comes to your mind when you hear about the Pacific. But while you have three PACAF Commanders at the dais, we're not talking about PACAF, we're talking about the Pacific, and yet through our eyes we will discuss what air power and PACAF can do as part of our nation looking at the Pacific.

I think it's important to remind ourselves that we have been here before. By that I mean, if you'll recall now about 12 years ago when we were approaching the Y2K, from 1999 as we were crossing over to 2000. Many of the reports, some of the leading magazines, articles written in all the papers articulated how if this past century was going to be the century where we were Euro centric, the upcoming century was where America was going to turn its attention to the Pacific. We all kind of felt that. I was at U.S. Forces Japan at the time as we were crossing over and I thought maybe we were going to do that. Of course General Bill Begert was shortly thereafter taking over as the PACAF Commander as we crossed over into 2000. Yet 9/11 got in the way. Our

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

attention was diverted and is still diverted by the concentration on two wars that we have in the Middle East.

We now are discussing once again a pivot to the Pacific. We'll find other terms for that as we go along, but nonetheless, as we have seen articulated in articles that there is going to be a rebalancing of the amount of force structure that we have both in our Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, into the Pacific from where they currently are, and we'll leave it to General Carlisle to discuss what he has found as he inherited PACAF, but there's really not been a rebalancing or a movement of forces. In fact the Air Force has always been in the Pacific. It's really never changed away from the Pacific. It is still there.

As in the past, as today, and my suspicion is in the future, that all of our work in the Pacific is going to be based on relationships. Historically that has been bilateral relationships and we're seeing a growing inclination to go into some multilateral relationships and we expect that to grow. Again, I'll leave it up to General Carlisle since it's part of his plate.

But what happens with those multilateral relationships? How do you discuss across the lines of nations what we need to do as individual nations to be able to support each other? Just like our Air Force, you need to look to modernization as an issue. Modernization just means technologies in two ways. One is you can buy new equipment, or you can modernize legacy equipment as you see fit. Both our Air Force as well as nations in the Pacific are doing the exact same thing. That requires a concentration both by us, them, industry supporting them, as to the modernization we all do on our legacy platforms, that they in fact talk to each other, support each other, and are useful to the warfighter should war come in an operation in the Pacific.

By and large, though, my experience was that we live in phase zero in the Pacific theater, which means that we spend a reasonable amount of time face to face talking to each other over issues that are important. These include civil unrest, natural disasters, humanitarian operations, getting to know each other and how we respond to both the smallest and the largest of issues when they happen in our nations. We've seen several of those, of course, over the past ten years out in the Pacific.

We have shared values. What are those? Where do they overlap? How can we support those? How can we make those institutions grow? Those are all part of the pieces and the part that PACAF does every day, and does after you get past that point and understand the shared values, you have shared

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

responsibilities. I'll harken back to the bilateral relationships and the multilateral relationships in the Pacific.

Our air forces will be a significant player over time as they are today and with growing importance in the Pacific.

My friends in the Navy, and I love them to death, used to talk about how big the Pacific Ocean is with the ocean being the central factor of their conversation. I used to remind my good friends in PACFLEET that yes, and this is somewhat flippant, please understand. That yes, while there is a lot of water out there, 100 percent of the Pacific is covered by air. Once we discussed that you got to understand that we're going to operate in all those mediums -- air, on the water and on the land when necessary through our Army and our Marine Corps. There's much to be done. There's much that has been laid as a foundation by those who went before General Begert and I in the Pacific, and there's much that Hawk will prepare for future PACAF Commanders for air power to be an important part.

Clearly to say is there is a lot of discussion left to be done to highlight not only two things. One, that the Pacific as well as air power is very very important to our nation.

General Begert: Thanks, Paul. A couple of other remarks just to hitchhike on that and perhaps provoke some questions from the audience.

Paul's comment about 100 percent of the PACOM AOR being air and space is right on. I used to like to say that the Pacific theater has been about air power since December 7, 1941, whether you take off from a ship or an airfield, it doesn't matter. It's a large AOR, it's a [inaudible] AOR.

The fact is, all the services have a role to play. The Air Force and the Navy as strategic services, very very important roles to play out in the Pacific.

The talk about the pivot to the Pacific is interesting. I have a few cautions there. The number one thing that I think we need to do to remain relevant and to continue to bring peace and stability to the Far East is our economy has to come back. As we continue to deteriorate as an economic power, we will lose traction, lost influence, and not be the Pacific power that we historically have been over the past century plus. So the economy has to turn around.

I worry on the Pacific pivot that we won't put resources up against our words. And by that I mean modernization, force structure, et cetera. You may say that okay, 60 percent of the

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

air power in the Air Force is now devoted to the Pacific, but that may be only because you decreased the air power every place else, not because you increased force structure out in the Pacific. So I think we need to pay very close attention to what is actual power in our ability to project power. Whether it's mobility, fighters, bombers, space, you name it.

The other thing is basing. There will be a strong tendency as we reduce budgets to walk away from overseas bases that don't have congressmen and senators, and that will be a huge error. The basing in the Pacific is very important for contingencies. One of the strategic mistakes I think we made in the early '90s was almost walking away from Guam in terms of force structure and our ability to deploy forces into and out of Guam which is the furthest west you can get and still be on American soil that requires no over-flight or host nation approval to go into. That's an example of a strategic error that I think we may need to be very careful not to make again.

Paul talked about relationships and that's a very important job of all the senior commanders in PACOM is to develop those relationships. When a contingency happens, whether it's a natural disaster or a kinetic fight, that we can get the basing and the places that we need in order to go in there. That's a very important aspect of our ability to remain a Pacific power.

Lastly, just as a side note, we're talking about the Pacific pivot, but I'll remind everybody that PACOM has very large Islamic populations and that has played an important role in the war on terror in places like the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and a large Islamic population in India. And there has been that aspect of it that's just quietly been worked over the last ten years I think pretty well and will continue in the future.

It is a complex theater. It's not all about China. Strategically it's very important, our relationship with China as it develops, and builds over this next century, so I'm just hopeful that this pivot will come with the resources and the economy and the other things that I talked about to make it a reality.

General Carlisle: Thanks General Begert, General Hester. I have to admit I'm honored to be here. I'm sitting amongst two of my predecessors and mentors and a PhD. I feel a little bit like a weapons school sortie with three instructors. So if they all look down and start writing then I probably hooked a ride and I'm out. So I'm hoping my retirement won't be announced, General Hester.

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

I do feel like one thing off the top, I do feel like I have to respond to the Chief. Obviously it was a great speech as we all know. He mentioned my refueling capability with F-16s, and he's right. I can't refuel F-16 because I don't fly them. F-15Es, C-17s, MiGs, I can do all that, so he's right. But just a brief response. [Laughter].

I appreciate the opportunity to talk, and I actually watched our young lady here in the middle collecting questions so I know there are already questions out there so I'll keep these comments pretty brief so that we can get to the questions and get to the things that folks want to talk about.

Everybody knows the statistics. Fifty-one percent of the earth's surface, 36 countries, six of the world's largest armies, a third of the world's trade goes through the Pacific. Obviously the importance cannot be overstated.

We are a Pacific nation and we always have been a Pacific nation and I think that's a key point. The heart of this, when you think about it, is the potential instability in the Korean Peninsula, then how you manage bilateral/multilateral relationships with a current world power, the sole remaining world power, the United States, and a rising world power in China, now the number two economy in the world. And clearly, you could not argue that they are a rising power.

History doesn't have a lot of examples of existing powers and rising powers managing to get along well, and there have been -- Again, it's hard to find in history where those were managed properly.

That's what we face. It's important to understand that as a rising power in the PRC they have an amazing amount of relationships in our AOR as well, that they're managing the way that they see fit. So there is, it's a multilateral/bilateral discussion.

And when you talk at the strategic level, the grand strategy level, you'll hear a lot of different comments. The most common one is engage but hedge. That's a challenge. You want to engage the PRC but you have to hedge with a deterrent capability to respond. So those are kind of the pretexts and the environment that we put ourselves in.

As we look at the rebalance, I would concur 100 percent with my mentors here. The Air Force never left. I think that's a key point. So when we talk rebalance, and you'll hear our Navy brethren talk about how much of the fleet's going to be on the West Coast and in the Pacific. I Corps is fully dedicated,

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

they're off the patch chart for the Army and they're fully dedicated in the Pacific again. So there are things like that.

With respect to the Air Force, we've always been there, as everybody knows. Fifty percent of the Air Force is fifth generation capability in F-22s stationed in the Pacific. The only C-17s that aren't in CONUS are in the Pacific. Three tanker squadrons between the 909th, the 154th at Hickam and the 168th up at Eielson. The only E-3s outside the continental U.S., U.S. owned, are Kadena and Elmendorf. So clearly, we have never left. And to be perfectly frank, when we talk about force structure, I do not see an increase in the force structure stationed in the Pacific. It won't go down, I don't believe, but I don't see it going up in big numbers. On the margins it will go up, but it won't be a huge focus of putting a lot more airplanes over there permanently.

I think a term that you'll hear us use a lot is places not bases. That's the first tenet of what we consider the focus on the Pacific and that is expanded engagement. We've been engaging for a long time there. Obviously Red Flag Alaska. We have an exercise ongoing now, Valiant Shield, which will come up later in the discussion. We have Cope North that's trilateral now that we execute out of Andersen. Commando Sling in Singapore. Cope Tiger in Thailand. So we have a lot of engagement.

We have Pacific Angels where we take doctors, nurses dentists, engineers, and we go to countries, and we bring their local government and their local military with us and we work on humanitarian assistance in communities. It's hugely valuable. We do it in conjunction with our Navy partners that do Pacific Partnership which is the same thing with the naval hospital ships.

And we have HARRT, the Humanitarian Assistance Rapid Response Team that's actually been used and employed, folks with engineering, medical, set up hospitals capability They're on call, the C-17s, C-130s can be just about anywhere on the Pacific in a matter of hours.

So the engagement has been there. What I see in the future as we go forward certainly in the next few years, and with Admiral Locklear in step, is increased engagement by rotational force. We continue bomber presence. It's been there since 2004. That will stay in and in some cases may increase. We have theater security packages rotating through there today. We have 12 F-22s deployed to Andersen, 12 deployed to Kadena. We have some on the pin. We'll continue that and rotate even more through.

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

We will continue to engage, but will engage more. The humanitarian side will do as well. We will bring more HARRTs out, we're bringing the C-130s engineering and medical capability and expand that engagement.

So what you'll see, and I'm going to date myself a little bit here, but if you remember back to the days of the checkered flag where you had rotation. Everybody in the CONUS rotated to a forward operating base or a collocating position. I see a lot of the forces in CONUS rotating through the Pacific to get that experience, familiarity, understand what the environment's like, and work TTPs and continue to expand that engagement.

That's the first tenet I see is expanded engagement.

The next tenet is improving warfighter integration. AirSea Battle is certainly a tenet of that. We're practicing Valiant Shield today with our Navy and Marine air forces, working together, multi-domain, cross-domain, the ability to take space-based capability and support service combatants, sub-service combatants, to support air capability. All those things are part of the improving warfighter integration. A key component of that is integrated air and missile defense, which to be perfectly frank, as the area air defense commander for the Pacific, that's what I worry about when I go to bed at night and wake up in the morning is IAMD. How do we integrate the THADs the PAC-3s the Aegis? You have to have the sensors, the C2 and the shooters. How do we do that to cover the Pacific to be a deterrent force as well as respond if we have to? So improving that integration and working those. Again, a key component of that is taking the concept that is AirSea Battle and putting it into practice day in and day out in the Pacific as we do everything we do in the Pacific day to day.

The third tenet is improving warfighting capabilities. That is the 5th Generation capability with the F-22s. It's the aerial layered network that we're working on with things like this MBI and BACN and beyond line of sight C2, all those things that are key ingredients of the net centric capability to engage also as part of warfighting integration. That's an improved combat capability.

To be perfectly frank, one of the things I think the Air Force, and it's understandable given what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan, but one of the things we've kind of lost a little bit of focus on and that's interdiction of maritime targets. That's another increased combat capability that we need to work on. We need to be able to have that from our B-52s, our B-2s and our B-1s, as well as our F-16s and F-15s.

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

So the three tenets that as we look at this, we focus is really that expanded engagement. As we get more and more capability to rotate forces through the Pacific into places, and we'll expand those places from Northeast Asia all the way through South Asia and into the IO is our intent. To increase that engagement, get more forces, more capability rotating through there, throughout the spectrum, from humanitarian assistance to combat capability. To increase our warfighter integration, AirSea Battle, actual practicality of putting those things into use out there with integration of the naval maritime, air, sea and land component in fighting.

I do have one response, the standard response I get from the Navy when we say 100 percent is covered by air, the one response I get sometimes from my Navy brethren is that the Navy can go someplace the Air Force can't. I always ask where would that be? That is under the water, which is true, when you think about it. And it does give you, when you talk about an LO capability that we have and we're extremely experienced in, the part of our sister service, the Navy, that has experience in LO is the submarine force. Again, that is an incredible capability in multi-domains to take that submarine force and use it to benefit the fight.

So increasing those integrations to include working with the submarine force as well as obviously all the other domains as we work cross-domain.

Then improving combat capability with increased, 3.1 jets re up at Elmendorf. Those are expanding. The KC-46, early on out to the Pacific would certainly be my boat. F-35s early on to the Pacific. I think again, the Marines are going to have them out there fairly soon, the Air Force needs them out there fairly soon as well. As well as the Navy.

With that, thank you again for having us here, and my two mentors, I'll get my grade later. But I appreciate the opportunity to chat and answer any questions.

Dr. Grant: Thank you very much. Judging by the questions I think you've all got an A. I've done a lot of these panels and I've actually never seen so many questions. We have about 15 minutes, so let's go right to them.

The first set of questions focuses on ISR. It's got two parts. What is the role for ISR, how will it function in an A2AD environment? And linked to this, what is the future of RPAs in the Pacific theater?

General Carlisle: I guess I'm closest to the mike so I'll start. ISR obviously, as I mentioned, in everything we do the sensors, C2 and shooters, the sensor part of that, the ability to surveil the planet. It's one of the core competences of the United States Air Force. Clearly it is integral. It is the lifeblood of what we're going to do is knowing what's going on.

The future of ISR is that network that I talked about, it's the ability to take national technical means, on orbit capability, air-breathing capability, HUMINT. The entire spectrum of where you get intelligence from and diffuse it to a common picture so that you can use that for command and control of the air forces. So clearly ISR, and as I talked about a little bit, but that network that I talked about, beyond line of sight, C2, combined with stuff like this, MDI, the ability of the off-board systems. If you look at F-22 and F-35, their ISR capability is phenomenal. How do you take advantage of that? In many cases in a potential environment they may be the only thing that's there, that can get there. How do you off-board that information? Those are the things we're working on with respect to the future and where we're going.

Clearly, you can talk all day about ISR as you might imagine, but those are the things we're working on right now and that is a key component. Our service brethren in the Navy certainly count on that now, especially when you look at beyond line of sight, C2 and be able to get on-orbit systems as well as air breathers and get that real time to the service combatants where they need them and when they need that information. So that is the key to that network that I talked about.

I think the future of the RPAs in the Pacific is, there's obviously the tyranny of distance. We are uniquely capable as an Air Force with speed, range and flexibility. The RPA force will have to have that, take advantage of those inherent qualities. One of the primary ones obviously being range and persistence. I consider that if you look at again even what our Navy's doing with respect to the RPA force, I see that continuing to ramp up and again, I think the future of the RPA force, I think the Chief mentioned it this morning, is RPAs are just going to continue to explode in importance and utility and ability to use the min the AOR, so I see them as a huge part.

General Begert: I think this is one of the areas that the pivot does make a difference. Where CENTCOM has been able to get the RPAs and a lot of ISR assets here for the past ten years, and rightly so. It went to the right place. And as we now move to the Pacific I think it's an area on General Carlisle's watch that will increase in terms of real resources and real capabilities that happened during my time and Paul's time. We had plans. We

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

wanted to plan for the future, but now I think it has an opportunity to come to reality.

General Hester: One last thought on that because I didn't hear it, some great planning that General Begert, both he and his staff had done when I came to PACAF.

You'll recall from the Chief's comments this morning, he talked about Airmen and innovation. There were some great innovative ideas and plans, all it needed was the application, the technology physically on the ground in Guam to be able to apply it.

Just to give you an example of that. I'll use Global Hawk as the expression since it has a longer range and a higher altitude, endurance, than other platforms at the moment. We're excited about that. But we're also looking at the limitation of being able to take our Global Hawk out of Guam, fly it to Destination X and then turn around and come home.

The innovation of our staff found and started looking and talking with other countries about what is the opportunity for us to take that Global Hawk off and go and fly routes of necessity, shared by countries who wanted to have routes done over them, land in another country simply for the refueling process and then take off again. Go fly another route, further into the Indian Ocean as an example, and come back and land once again and refuel. Then take off and fly one more mission before they recover back into Guam. That does not require an inordinate amount of personnel to do that. What it does is it shares the responsibility because that information that you're getting off of each one of those sorties is then downloaded and shared amongst the nations that want to participate. Just an idea. Now General Carlisle is going to inherit the equipment that he can take that as a stepping stone and make it even come alive in a much broader way than we even thought about several years ago.

Dr. Grant: While we're on force structure, the next question is about bombers. What role do you see the Air Force's bombers, all of them -- B-1, B-2 and B-52 -- playing in the Pacific? And what investment is required to keep them mission ready in the anti-access environment?

General Carlisle: The good news for us, obviously, is my current PACOM Commander is Admiral Locklear, who was the Commander of Odyssey Dawn in Libya. He is probably one of the strongest proponents of bomber capability of any naval man I've ever met. He obviously had the benefit of the B-2 and the B-1s in response to Odyssey Dawn in Libya. They're tremendous.

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

I think long-range strike is key. You will hear Admiral Locklear talk about that. It's the key to success as we move forward as a deterrent capability and obviously it's required.

The B-2s obviously still hugely relevant in the Pacific and hugely a player in just about anything we would do there.

B-1s and B-52s as well. Going back to the air interdiction, maritime targets. I think the capability of the B-52 as well as the B-1 in a standoff role or not in the actual contested environment but in the standoff, I think they have a huge role.

We did need to go back to that capability of AINT. We had it in the B-52. It's kind of waned a bit. We need to bring that back on board.

The family of systems is the key to success I think if you look at everything that we're going to bring to bear with the long range strike system from the ISR perspective, from the standoff capability, from the com capability. So all of those are integral and I truly believe that the place where those requirements will be vetted and they have to be applicable to is the Pacific because of the environment we're in and the potential out there as well as having that capability as a deterrent factor.

Dr. Grant: Let's broaden the discussion just a little bit. A pair of questions that go nicely together. One is, Sun Tzu stresses strategic deception. How much do you in your roles worry about strategic surprise? And let me broaden that question by asking you to discuss what you see as the evolution of your relationship is with your PLA and particularly your PLA Air Force counterparts?

Maybe we should start at the end of the table with General Hester this time.

General Begert: If I might go first since I went before Paul and I was a little bit more constrained. This has evolved since I took over.

In 2001 when I arrived I had had an invitation from China to visit them and then the P-3 incident happened and all of that was off the table and I was prevented from going to China and engaging with China by the SecDef for the next three years.

I think it was a terrible mistake. I believe in engagement with everybody. I don't see a downside to that. I think having them understand us and us understand them better is very

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

important so that you prevent miscalculation. And the more access that you can get, the better off you will be.

I think it evolved a little bit on your watch, Paul. And it's evolved even more. But this is going to be a bumpy road for decades. It's going to wane and flow and be what it is. But I believe in the engagement. I believe that it helps to prevent surprises, and if surprises do occur, and they will, it helps with the communication in the aftermath of a surprise like the P-3 incident.

General Hester: I'm not sure you can add a lot to what General Begert said because there's so much hidden in just those words that he mentioned. And yes, we moved the ball slightly forward during my tenure. You will probably remember, those of you who were in service at that time, we and our own individual commands and back here in the States hosted the Chinese on an extraordinary number of visits as they came through Hawaii and on back to the States to observe Air Education and Training Command, ACC, and even back to the Pentagon.

So to say that we didn't have an opportunity to engage really does not focus on those trips. We did. We sat in the conference room, we sat around lunch and dinner tables, we had conversations. We were very open with them about what we were doing in the Pacific and what we thought we wanted to do in the Pacific.

The opportunity for a return visit did not come for me until the last couple of months of my tenure as the PACAF Commander, and even then Admiral Keating as the PACOM Commander had to intercede and make a special request that I could come because the Olympics got in the way. Remember we were 15 months away from the Olympics and therefore the Chinese were going to shut down all official visits.

So as General Begert mentioned, there are going to be starts and stops and bumps in the road. You can never predict what those bumps are going to be. I would certainly not have thought that the Olympics would have been interfered with the opportunity to continue the conversations that we had. Yes, that is true.

I think going to the strategic surprise portion of that question, Dr. Grant, it highlights the importance of the relationships and the constant communication and the ISR that helps us to avoid strategic surprises in the Pacific with as much opportunity as there is for distances between the land masses out in the Pacific. So ISR will be, I think General Carlisle's great assistance in helping make sure there are no great strategic surprises.

General Begert: If I could tell one more quick vignette that I think is illustrative of what I was getting at and what Paul said. I was Vice Commander in Europe when we did Kosovo, and you may remember when we were hitting [inaudible], we mistaken hit the Chinese Embassy and killed a bunch of people. The Chinese were hugely upset. About a year later when I was stationed in the Pentagon I did a trip up to Harvard to address some Chinese colonels and one stars. It was a pretty lively session and they really challenged me on what happened because they believed their own propaganda and drink their own bathwater all the time because they don't have access, at that time, to much outside of that.

I was very forthright with them and just pushed back really hard on what happened. It was a true screw-up, and how this screw-up happened and it wasn't any intent on our part that was against China.

Flash forward three years, the Minister of Defense from China comes to visit Hawaii. We have a nice visit in the office. He does his usually 15 minute harangue on Taiwan and then we have a decent conversation and doing a little tour after that. And one of his two stars sidled up to me quietly and said I was at Harvard and we all talked about your remarks afterwards. I just want you to know, you made an impact on us internally, which was really interesting to hear that. You never know when you're going to make an impact like that. That's why I'm so strong on doing engagement for just those kinds of reasons.

General Carlisle: I won't add a lot. I've had the good fortune in my previous job as 13th Air Force, I got to travel to China and spent about ten days there. We just had the three star PLA Chief of Staff, Director of Staff there. He was an Army officer but we just got to host him.

I couldn't agree more with my two mentors here. I think engagement is critically important. The one part that I worry about and I think we need to keep pressing is reciprocity. We invite them a lot. I think we need to see the same thing in reverse. We have a tendency, we by nature have a tendency to be more open. Invite them out, give them rides in airplanes and all these things. It's not the same in reverse.

So I think one of the things we have to continue to work with the PRC is reciprocity moving forward.

The other thing that I think is key to this, and what many of our friends and partners in the AOR is if we can have multilateral engagements. The PRC has a tendency to resist those

and I think there's a lot of value in those. Certainly with some of our closest friends to include, obviously, the Aussies and even the Kiwis and the Japanese and Singapore. So I see one of the ways that we need to work on this reciprocity part, I would see us moving towards multilateral if at all possible. I think that will be a tough hill to climb.

With respect to strategic surprise, it bothers me every day. I think about it every day. We're in the process of leadership transition in the PRC. It should transition in the United States one way or the other. There are things, like for a while their heir apparent, Shi, was nowhere to be seen for a couple of weeks. There was concern about that, what's going on. So it is a secretive society. The Great Wall of China is real and in more ways than one it's real. And they have been a walled community and society for a long time. So knowing what's going on in strategic surprise is something that I think about constantly.

Freedom of navigation, international law, international forums, to continue to get at that is the way forward in my opinion.

Dr. Grant: We're almost to the end of our time but I want to throw one difficult question and see if you all can just give some quick answers here. That is the question of [inaudible]. What role if any is the Air Force prepared to play in resolving territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas should tensions escalate?

General Hester: I think without totally focusing on the Air Force, I think you have to look at all elements of national power to help resolve any kind of tension that spills over into any kind of conflict. So the Air Force will play a huge important part of that by taking the assets that we have and the technologies we have and the mission sets we have, to fill in to places that PACOM Commander's going to need, and obviously blend that in through the JFAC out in the Pacific.

The Air Force will not play alone. We've already had that conversation. But without focusing, and I notice that Rebecca you did not say the U.S. Air Force. I think that air forces of all of our countries are going to play. General Begert brought up the notion that one of the greatest challenges in the Pacific as well as anywhere in the world is the economy. As our economy continues to both grow and contract as we try to pull our way out of this problem we are seeing for obviously the past several years, it is going to require a new look by all of our air forces as to how to in fact stay up with the [defenses] that we see and provide some modernization. Whether, again, it is through buying new pieces of equipment or taking new technologies and then

implementing them into legacy equipment, that is not just a U.S. Air Force approach of which we are looking at across our fleets, but it is also an approach that our friends in the Pacific are looking at with their air forces, flying similar pieces of equipment that we fly. It's one, because of the scale of economies of the modernization effort, requires us to look at that and ensure that as we modernize both legacy and with new pieces of equipment that we can in fact work together in that issue that formed the question that Rebecca just mentioned which is how do you take air forces to apply and help solve any problem in the Pacific.

General Begert: What I would say on this subject is if you take a look since World War II, what the United States has brought to the Asia Pacific region by virtue of its presence in lots of ways -- military power, economic power, robust foreign policy, bilateral, multilateral alliances, what we bring is not threatening. We bring peace and stability. You take a look at what's happened in South Korea, in Japan, in Taiwan, Singapore, I would say that a lot of what has occurred might not have occurred had we not been there.

For the future, it's very important that we have real power, that we have a foreign policy that is not feckless, that people realize that we are willing to use our power. And I think what that brings is not threatening to anybody, but it brings peace and stability and allows disputes to be resolved in a way that doesn't result in unintentional war.

The converse of that is if we're not there, if we don't have real power, if we don't have good strong foreign policy and relationships, then I think really bad things will happen out in the Pacific. There's a long history, a lot of disputes that are just simmering and could be an excuse for war.

General Carlisle: I couldn't agree more. I think there are a couple of things you need to keep in mind. One is, if you haven't seen what Scarborough Shoal or Spratly Islands of Daio, Senkakus look like, you need to look at them. You kind of go, it makes you think, would we really fight over that? It's literally a rock in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, but there are fishing rights and mineral rights and those things that are a part of that.

But I couldn't agree more. I think two things is, one is security and stability of the U.S. being there and being there in a way that's visible as a deterrent and as a stabilizing factor; and then the other part that we bring which was brought up earlier is information sharing and ISR capability. We have, again, even as a deterrent, if all nations know that they really

"Projecting Power and Influence in the Pacific" - AFA - 9/18/12

can't do anything without everybody knowing what they're doing, that acts as a deterrent as well. So I think those are the two things, both as a deterrent in ISR and as a deterrent because of our capability to add security and stability to the region.

General Begert: Rebecca, one last thought if I could, please. I hesitate ever to not use this quote when we're talking about the Pacific. Gosh, I wish I had said it and said it first. But we need to compliment Commandant Jim Jones for having said in the discussions here several years ago about how we in fact save money in our military budget by reducing our presence forward and keeping just a small occasional return to places in the Pacific and into Europe, and that we are connected so well through the internet that we can in fact keep up those relationships. He came up on-line and said, "Virtual presence is no presence. It absolutely screams for what is important in the Pacific that you must be there sitting across the table, sharing and talking to each other to in fact build the relationships which we're going to be able to stand on in the future."

Dr. Grant: Wonderful. Please join me in thanking our tremendous panel.

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