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**Defense Writers Group**

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**DWG:** You've been in the country for a few days already.

**General Brown:** Actually I've been gone from Hawaii since last Sunday. We left last Sunday, came to Washington, DC for some Air Force meetings, then I went out to Nellis Air Force Base, presented a couple of Silver Stars to a couple of pararescuemen and then also was the guest speaker at the Weapons School graduation, then we came back to DC. Then we have the Air Force SOCOM [Fighter talks] that will start tomorrow. Then we get back to Hawaii about 2 in the morning on Thursday, just in time for the holidays.

**DWG:** The weather's always iffy when you're talking about December, so thank you all for coming in, and thank you most of all to our guest, General Charles Q. Brown. He's the Pacific Air Forces Commander and also the Air Component Commander for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Appreciate it, sir.

General, I wanted to begin with a question about the Pacific Air Chiefs Symposium that you got out of about two weeks ago. I've heard it described as the largest by far, so I wanted to find out what was driving the interest in the event. What are the areas of common interest that are bringing people together? And how much of a factor is China in that equation?

**General Brown:** Thanks, Adam. Let me just give you a little background on PACS first. This is the 11<sup>th</sup> iteration. It's been a combination of in Hawaii and here in Washington, DC. We've been doing it now every two years. This one, we had General Goldfein come out. This is the first time we had the Chief of Staff of the Air Force come to Hawaii for this.

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I think there's a couple of reasons why we have big numbers compared to the other ones. I have really good relationships with the Air Chiefs in the region. It's probably because I don't spend a lot of time in Hawaii. As I travel around, I get a chance to meet with the various Air Chiefs. So that's one aspect.

I think there is, our intent was not to make the focus all about China, but I do, we look at our theme, it was A Collaborative Approach for Regional Security. When we all come together there's things that we're interested in, and so we had five panels. One of the panels was done by the Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies on regional security. And then the Air Chiefs had various panels on the domain awareness, multi-domain operations, interoperability, and then humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Those are all common areas that I think each of the Air Chiefs had an interest in.

I think the format we laid out was good as well, because it was basically no PowerPoint slides, all dialogue. We got pretty positive feedback from the Air Chiefs. Part of this is building relationships we could actually [getting into the gulf for], there's plenty of opportunity.

**DWG:** What do you feel [at] CNA a better place now than prior to the events?

**General Brown:** Opening the aperture and identifying areas that we can walk together on. I'll go up from the high end to the low end, and I'll start with the low end.

So humanitarian assistance/disaster relief is probably one area that all nations can agree on that we can work more closely together on. There is a piece of regional security associated with that, but it doesn't become a situation where it gets very political and you have to pick sides because what you're doing is trying to help out people. So from that aspect, and you look at the region. We have more earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons,

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volcanoes that we have to deal with, so that was an area that's pretty common.

The other at the high end, we have a number of F-35 nations. So the U.S., Korea, Australia and Japan all are flying F-35s. The U.S. Air Force doesn't have F-35s in the region yet but we will in the spring. The Marine Corps already has F-35s and the other three nations have the F-35s. So to be able to talk about how we operate together with the F-35s was on the high end.

In the middle I would say domain awareness. When I look at the expanse of the ARO and look at the maritime environment, you want to have maritime domain awareness, but I think a lot of that maritime domain awareness happens from the air because we can actually range and see things, whether they be from space or from other systems because many of the countries we're worried about are really interested in their exclusive economic zones and to be able to predict those.

I think because of that spectrum, that actually helped us to at least lay some foundation for continued dialogue.

**DWG:** Let's go to questions.

**DWG:** Thank you so much for doing this.

The exercise with South Korea that was postponed in November was an air exercise. I think some of the other exercises that have been postponed are air exercises. North Korea is now threatening to send the United States a Christmas gift. They have this year-end deadline for a new path. In your opinion is it time to resume the exercises?

**General Brown:** Part of that will be decided by our leadership. I think I look at it from our ability to maintain our readiness. It's readiness at the tactical level all the way up to the operational level.

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The tactical level I'm not worried about. From my perspective. General Abrams probably has some perspective. But because we're able to still fly and operate, it's the decision-making process at the operational level and sometimes we don't get a chance to do. There's still ways to exercise aspects of that, but maybe not to the full extent.

We have actually, as you might imagine based on the rhetoric and the potential Christmas gift, what we do as a military, we plan. We do a lot of planning. So those are kinds of things that we're already kind of thinking about because we want to be able to provide options to our leadership if things don't go the way we would hope.

**DWG:** So what are you watching for in this Christmas gift?

**General Brown:** Well, you go back to May and you've seen a series of short-range ballistic missiles, and the moratorium is for a long-range ballistic missile. So what I would expect is some type of long-range ballistic missile would be the gift. Does it come on Christmas Eve? Does it come on Christmas Day? Does it come in after the New Year? Those are things, one of my responsibilities is to help pay attention to that as the area Air Defense Commander in support of Indo-PACOM and supporting General Abrams as well.

**DWG:** Thank you.

**DWG:** Tony, then Lee.

**DWG:** A couple of things. I want to follow up on that and then I want to ask you about the J-20.

Are you seeing indications, launching an ICBM, a long-range missile, takes some preparation? At this point is your ISR picking up any signs of movement along those lines?

**General Brown:** I can't get into operational details, but you

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can listen to their rhetoric and the various tests that have occurred over the past week or two that are all indications that there's activity. There is activity that the North Koreans have actually admitted to. So to match it up with their rhetoric. And there's a pattern that you see with the North Koreans, their rhetoric precedes activity which precedes a launch.

**DWG:** Are you getting the sense that a launch may be from a mobile system or a fixed site?

**General Brown:** That's tough to say.

**DWG:** But you're watching.

**General Brown:** We're watching.

**DWG:** J-20, earlier this year you acknowledge that they're probably going to be deployed, probably going to be operational about seven months later. The breath of China's deployment of the aircraft, can you give a sense of that?

**General Brown:** Pretty small. They're probably getting closer to IOC, but by and large not large numbers that I'm seeing yet.

**DWG:** Not large numbers. Capability wise, is there anything that concerns you about the plane? What's your level of knowledge about it from your various sources?

**General Brown:** Capability wise, there are things that are somewhat comparable to what we're able to do with our platforms, but I also believe there are some limitations to things we're probably better at.

Now I am paying attention to the level of capability, things they'll be able to do and how we might respond and mitigate if there's any advances that surprise us. No surprises so far.

**DWG:** Thank you.

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**DWG:** Lee and then Kimberly.

**DWG:** On F-35s, once they arrive next spring how is it going to alter the ConOps of PACAF? And what are the plans for them operating with Korea and Japanese F-35s?

**General Brown:** From a ConOps standpoint, I guess I would describe it as not much different than how we'd operate. It actually gives us some additional capability because I see the F-35 as a key sensor that will help us move information around in execution. The way I see working things in the region is, we actually, at the Pacific Air Chiefs Symposium we had all four of the F-35 nations in our region sit down at the [SAF] level and talk about F-35. To the level we could. To start thinking about how we can do things in the future. And part of this is Red Flag in the spring. We'll have our first F-35, we've already stood up our first F-35 squadron at [Eielson], the commander's there and they're starting to build out. It's to bring together operators and maintainers to talk about how we do it. Because in Red Flag in '21, we actually want to have F-35s from the U.S. and our partners flying in Red Flag Alaska. So this will set the foundation for how we move forward on being able to share information, how we execute together, how we learn from each other.

The same thing, we're trying to learn a little bit from what's going on in Europe as well.

So I talk to General Regan as well. He ran the Integration Office for the Air Force several years ago and there's more F-35 nations a little bit further along than we are in the Pacific.

Last March we did an F-35 Symposium. We brought all the nations together with the Marines, with the Joint Program Office, with our Integration Office. We're doing that again in May.

**DWG:** Have all those nations accepted [inaudible] in Red Flag

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2021? Or --

**General Brown:** No, not yet. We're not quite there yet. Japan was looking to come in '20, but after their accident that set them back, so they're going to wait until '21. So I suspect they'll come in '21. I'm offering up to the other, well, we'll be there for sure, so the other two to be able to show up in '21 is they can. And even if they can't show up with airplanes, to bring some of their operators and maintainers so we can work through some of the planning, some of the information sharing, break down all those kind of perceived barriers, or think through some of the challenges we might foresee for future exercises.

**DWG:** Kimberly, and then Nick.

**General Brown:** Can you talk about command and control, your needs for that. And also DoD's push for joint all domain command and control, and how you'll help influence what shape that will be based on your region and your command?

**DWG:** For command and control, I'm thinking about several different things. I'm looking at the aspect that we'll be in a contested environment and that our communication will not be fully connected all the time. In the military we have a term called a PACE Plan for Communication, Primary Alternate Contingency and Emergency. I actually don't believe in that now. Particularly when you're looking at my level, because I can't take my entire AOR and be able to switch from our primary to our alternate. I've got to be able to communicate on all those at the same time. I'm not sure who will be fully connected or who will be partially connected.

So from a planning aspect what I told, I've been talking to my staff about this is, our primary plan ought to be that we're disconnected. Our contingency or emergency plan would be that we're fully connected. If we're fully connected we ought to be surprised and suspect, suspect that we're being spooked. So

it's a different thought process.

The analogy I've been using here recently is before I had a smart phone, before I had a cell phone, I would make plans to go to dinner with somebody and meet them at 6:30. I would show up at 6:30. I wouldn't be able to text them and tell them I'm going to adjust it to the last minute of when I'm going to be there. Which means we're going to have to kind of think in that same kind of construct into the future, how do I actually make plans and kind of stick to them, be disciplined to it? It will also drive me to be thinking more than just a single day air tasking order. So I'm working my staff around to think if I had to write a multi-day air tasking order, how would I do that? What kind of information would I require from the Joint Force Commander? What would I need from the other components to lay some of this stuff out?

Being able to put it into the cloud that can be reached out to the forward edge. And delegate authorities down to our lower level, so you don't have to come back and ask permission from everything you do from the Air Operation Center. I've got to be able to lay out enough track and commander's intent.

The other analogy I use is World War II, before had the internet. They'd route campaign plans to all these dispersed islands, and very limited communication. You trusted your commanders in the field to actually execute within the bounds of commander's intent. And that's something I think we've got to be thinking about here in the future.

**DWG:** Do you see challenges with that mindset? Because it is maybe [inaudible] a bit?

**General Brown:** It will be a cultural shift. But if we're going to go into a high-end conflict we have to do that. You don't have the same slower pace of operation you have like in a violent extremist fight. The tempo may be driven by the adversary, you've got to be able to respond. So that's where



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you want to trust the commander at a forward edge who may be disconnected to be able to do some things. One, for their own self-defense, but also to create challenges for the adversary. So it is a different thought process.

**DWG:** Nick, then Dmitry.

**DWG:** Nick Shiffron, [inaudible].

One on China, one on Taiwan.

China today commissioned Shandong the second aircraft carrier, the first domestically built aircraft carrier. Along the lines of what Tony was asking on the J-20, how much do we know about it? How much concern is it? And frankly, what do we see it doing, or what do we understand it's going to be doing?

**General Brown:** The thing I'm paying attention to is what kind of reach it's going to have, where it's going to operate and how it's going to operate. As they've been working through their carrier program, it's stayed pretty far north, away from the East China, South China Sea. AS they've started to move further south, as you might imagine we'll be paying a little closer attention one, to how they operate, how they influence, and where they operate will be the things we'll be kind of paying attention to.

**DWG:** How much do we know about its capacity?

**General Brown:** I'll just say I think it's well short of our carrier, just based on capability, what it's going to be able to do. I mean I'm not an expert on carrier aviation, but just based on the little things I do know, I think we have a bit more capability. We know how to integrate better than they probably do.

**DWG:** And Taiwan, we were doing a big series earlier this year. Taiwan just comes up again and again as the issue that the

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Chinese just simply refuse to even want to listen to us about. From your perspective, is there a red line past which we shouldn't be supporting the Taiwanese? Or is it just the goal is to assure that politically and militarily to Taiwan that we've got its back no matter what?

**General Brown:** I have to defer to some of our political leadership. I don't know if you define a red line, because once you define a hard red line, once they cross it you've got to be willing to do something about it. And sometimes the ambiguity is somewhat good because it does provide you options. You don't box yourself into a square.

**DWG:** Do they understand it as far as -- do they understand that the ambiguity has a positive aspect to it? Your interlocutors in Taiwan.

**General Brown:** To an extent. I don't have a lot of, at my level I don't have a lot of interaction with the Taiwan leadership to be able to sense, give you a sense from that respect.

But I think across the region, I think even for the PRC they probably, I mean they're not going to do this unless they think they can actually get it done without U.S. intervention. I think the ambiguity is out there in the discussions we've had over time, but you see their increasing rhetoric as well.

**DWG:** Dmitry, and then [Riota].

**DWG:** Thank you for doing this, sir.

Could you speak a little about an engagement, an interaction between the American and Russian armed forces in the Pacific area? Do you see any, is it professional and cordial? Or does it tend to be borderline hostile because of the current political climate and all that?

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**General Brown:** I see it as fairly professional, because what I see is their bombers when they come out and they head towards Alaska. The forces that I have out of PACAF support PACOM and they'll go out and to, with the F-22s, AWACS, tankers, will go out and do intercepts. So those are generally fairly professional. And we don't necessarily see their fighter force out, and that's where, if you see things that are unprofessional, that's typically where you see it. Having served in Europe, you see that periodically with some of the intercepts. Whether it's driven by higher guidance or you just have a hot-dogging pilot who comes in, or an inexperienced pilot who comes in with a very aggressive intercept. So by and large in the Pacific I don't see anything as unprofessional.

**DWG:** This is the air you're talking about.

**General Brown:** Air.

**DWG:** What about other --

**General Brown:** The same. In the few naval surface action groups, the same. I want to say there's only been just a couple since the time I've been in the job, in about a year and a half.

**DWG:** Thank you.

**DWG:** Riota and then Gordon.

**DWG:** My first question is about the AOC. Could you please tell me where you are right now with the idea of establishing a mini-AOC at [inaudible] Air Force Base?

**General Brown:** We're working with the [COCOJETAI] Air Defense Command on their AOC and it's not so much I'm looking to do build an AOC at Yokota with 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force, but it's how do I actually make sure that we have a good flow of information between 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force, with the Air Defense Command at [COCOJETAI] Air Defense Command and the 6<sup>th</sup> [NT] [inaudible] AOC.

We have really good dialogue right now between the 613<sup>th</sup> AOC and the Air Defense Command's AOC. We've been working together as they started to build these out. We have an exercise after the first of the year, we'll have a chance to work through some of this.

5<sup>th</sup> Air Force, their staff is pretty small, so to be able to set up an AOC, and the goal is not to stand up a bunch of AOCs all over, but it's able to have elements that can actually help support. So we typically, the doctrine we have is called a Joint Air Component Coordination Element, a JACCE. So we'll have a small team of people that will go and align with our components. We do that with PAC Fleet. PAC Fleet in particular. And we're going to do a similar concept when we have the exercise after the first of the year. So it's a small team, usually led by a general officer or a colonel with a few folks that can reach back into our AOC. We'll do all the planning for them. They're the ones that actually defend our base on a day to day basis, so that's more the approach we're looking to do with Air Yokota.

**DWG:** My second question is about China and Russia. They have conducted joint bomber operations in the East China Sea in July. Have you seen any indications that those two countries are strengthening military cooperation for [inaudible], the cooperation in the region?

**General Brown:** If there's any strengthening, it's more to push back against the West. I don't know that I would characterize Russia and China as strategic partners. The event in July, and then they've exercised together a couple of times, but it's not -- I wouldn't describe it like the exercise that we do that are fully operable. I would describe more they're exercising in the same location, disconnected. We're much further along.

It bears watching, though. We don't want to be put in a position that we push those two, it's written in our National

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Defense Strategy not to push the two of them together. So it's important we pay attention to what's going on and watch over time, so it doesn't drive a wedge between us and our partners in the region.

**DWG:** Sir, have you seen a trend in that regard? Are they becoming more integrated? Or do they seem to be static in that sense?

**General Brown:** I think it's pretty static. The question I ask sometimes is who's the junior partner? Both of them have a sense of pride. Based on that, they have a different aspect. Russia has combat experience that the Chinese don't have. The Chinese have actually probably more, officially are probably in a better place than the Russians are. So when you look at that aspect, there's a balance between who's sitting at the head of the table and to decide how we're going to do this as a strategic partner, and I think that's why they probably don't work well together. They don't like the West. It's an arrangement of convenience maybe.

**DWG:** Gordon, then Sarah.

**DWG:** You mentioned [inaudible] strategy. Secretary Esper's kind of struggling with China. [Inaudible] behind the NDS in your region, but the enemy is [inaudible]. Recognizing that it's not necessarily one for one, like what the Middle East gets, you don't get, there is a strain on resources that can be put to your region the more they go into CENTCOM.

What do you wish you had that you don't have? Can you talk broadly about capabilities that you kind of wish you had or the vision [inaudible] realized under the NDS from where you sit?

**General Brown:** If there's one thing I wish I had that I don't have right now is the same funding that Europe had when the European Defense Initiative after the Russians went into Crimea. So from a funding perspective, there are things that are moving

that direction, but we don't get that big pot of money.

**DWG:** You're talking about like a designated fund of money. What would that do for you?

**General Brown:** It would actually allow us to do things like improve different areas we go, be able to preposition equipment, increase some of our exercises. I say that kind of tongue in cheek, because I was in Europe when the Russians, I got there a week after the Russians went into Crimea. I spent a lot of time in CENTCOM. I like to say [inaudible] deep.

But what I look at though, if you look at the National Defense Strategy, it does talk about dynamic force employment. So there's a matter of balancing the combatant command requirements and readiness of the force. I'm between a rock and a hard place because I've got to watch out for readiness as I talk to my Air Force leadership, General Goldfein. At the same time, I've got a demand signal from my combatant commander, his air component, from Admiral Davidson. So I have to take a look at, what I actually have to do is communicate to the Air Force the requirement for the Joint Force. So I'm more focused on the joint requirements, but I am interested in the readiness aspect.

I think the key part with dynamic force employment, particularly for the Air Force, we can move to a location fairly quickly. Presence does matter. You just can't be completely devoid of not being there because that presence helps to build that relationship, builds the access to be able to execute, builds the interoperability. But we can flex pretty quickly. I think whether it's CENTCOM or the Indo-Pacific, we can flex capability from the Air Force fairly quickly, and that's the thing I'm thinking about.

As you watch what's going on in the Middle East at the same time I'm watching what's going on with DPRK, we've got to be able to flex fairly quickly and not have all our eggs in one basket where you're trying to bounce back and forth. And then also

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maintain a level of readiness for the force. As I talk to General Goldfein, that's one of the things he's concerned about, is that if we have folks gone all the time, burning up readiness, then you don't have the capacity when you might need it.

**DWG:** And like [EPI] for you guys would address, I mean is readiness like half the issue you're trying to address? The core issues, [inaudible] like if you have a designated pot of funding for --

**General Brown:** It would support readiness but it would also support some other investments that Admiral Davidson's just trying to look at, in how we, our posture in the region at different locations. And readiness based on being able to exercise and those kinds of things, working with our partners. That's where that funding comes in.

One of the things, you're in the Pacific, other than Hawaii and Alaska, we don't have a congressional district or a congressional delegation that actually pays attention to our MILCON. We work with our partners with the Host Nation Funding Construction, but it's not, we don't get the same kind of attention.

I will tell you when I meet with certain staffers and congressional members, they do pay attention overseas military construction but maybe not to the same level that you might find if you were sitting in fill in the blank state. And that's an aspect we've got to pay attention to.

I think the other thing I look at is, I just went to Kadena. You look across all of our Air Force bases, you look at the corrosion, Kadena, Guam, parts of Florida are probably the most corrosive places that we have bases. So if you use a model that you refresh things at whatever cycle, five or ten year cycle, but you don't account for corrosion, you're going to be sliding behind and that's the way Kadena is today. So those are the

kinds of things I'm paying attention to. How do you ensure those different locations you plan to operate from are up to speed? And then, oh by the way, they have a number of typhoons. So when they have typhoons, some of those facilities now are not rated as high for wind rating that we have to worry about as well.

**DWG:** Sarah, then Marcus.

**DWG:** China has some pretty advanced capabilities in some emerging technology areas like artificial intelligence, hypersonics, [inaudible]. How do you perceive their capabilities in those areas? And what are you doing to try and counter them?

**General Brown:** There's several things. First of all, I do pay attention to increasing capability. I think we have some capability as well. There's areas that I think we need to move faster on, whether it be hypersonics or other things. But where I think we have a real advantage is our experience and our ability to delegate down to our lower level and have people execute. So from that aspect, that's an area I'm looking at.

I think the other thing I'm looking at is, we will not, if you look at our budgets. I don't know that we'd ever be able to, from a number standpoint, be able to buy our way to go toe to toe from a numbers standpoint, so we've got to look at other ways of how we do things from a capability standpoint.

I really believe that the PRC will not actually go to war unless they feel confident they can actually win. So their approach is very analytical, very mathematical. The analogy I use, it's like an algebra equation where they're trying to solve for X. When they solve for X and they actually feel confident, they would actually go execute. I think one of my jobs is to actually keep changing X to make it challenging for them to understand our capabilities, so it decreases their level of confidence that they'll be able to be successful if they did



want to go. This is kind of the win without fighting approach, to be thinking about how we do that.

Some of it may be some less expensive type things, when you start talking about deception, decoys, things like that to actually challenge their decision-making process is the areas I'm thinking about as well.

**DWG:** I don't suppose you'd be willing to tell us a little more detail on any deception or decoys you've already --

**General Brown:** No. Well, it's something we've done in the past. What I really believe, it's just something we as a department probably need to start paying more attention to. Essentially when you start talking about it sometimes, the first thing we do is we start going to whatever platform, weapon system we're going to buy, versus what's a different way to look at this? Again, this maybe another of the cultural type shifts. We've done some of these things in the past, like in World War II for example, but it's not something that we think about as much anymore. We're more a gadget, we're interested in -- and I think the other aspect of that is we've got to, it's really thinking differently about how we do these things. As soon as you start talking to somebody, sometimes you get a sense of okay, what platform have I got to buy? I go well, understand your adversary. You may be able to do something else versus a platform. There may be other things you can do from the EW, electronic warfare standpoint, to provide confusion. Those kinds of things that may not take as much money but may have the same effect.

**DWG:** [inaudible] 16<sup>th</sup> Air Force, on EW [inaudible]?

**General Brown:** I am to an extent. General Haugh before he took command came out to see me and we spent about an hour together. I know him from the past. It's not only the EW, but it's also the information operations aspect of this that I think is important. It's not only what we do, but it's the message you

send. Whether it's just by your action or what we say and how we influence decision-making.

I think the key part of that is having a good understanding of your adversary. The Chinese are not the Russians. The Chinese are not extremists. So the approaches we may have used in the past, and I think sometimes, like [inaudible] mirror image. What we do, you know, if we do this this should have an effect. I'm not so sure. And this is why you've got to have people from our intelligence community that can actually emulate and give us feedback on the things we're trying to do. What can actually change their approach or change their decision-making or is it something we're doing that makes us feel good but doesn't deter. And that's another piece. It doesn't always have to reside in the Department of Defense, it can be think tanks and others that actually spend a lot of time studying various, not just the Chinese, but if you look across the National Defense Strategy, the other nations we're dealing with.

**DWG:** Marcus.

**DWG:** Sir, I was hoping we could get your assessment of the Chinese Air Force, specifically also of the J-20, which plays a major role in [canceling] the F-35, that data. Is that going to go? And has there been anything surprising just in terms of the way the Chinese are training or operating with their Air Force that's caught your attention?

**General Brown:** Not necessarily. There's nothing that really has surprised me that they're doing. I guess what I would say is they've actually watched us and they're trying to learn from how we do things. That's the thing I have seen. Is that a good sign or not? I think we're the gold standard. They're a few steps behind us in executing tactically. That's a part they're going to learn, so we've got to continue to stay one step ahead. Those are things, I don't know if I have a good answer to say here's the one step ahead I'm thinking about, but as I work with my intel community, work with our operators, what are the things

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we need to be doing, to be thinking about. Not only the platforms we need but the package we'll use and how we'll operate in the future to give us more of an asymmetric advantage.

**DWG:** Are you seeing them build J-20s in the numbers that were predicted? I know it kind of appears back with the China Report split up operational capability for that. Are you seeing areas where they're struggling in building the plane?

**General Brown:** I'm not tracking that as much to be able to give you a good answer on that one.

**DWG:** Jeff and then we'll open up to round two after that.

**DWG:** Thanks very much. I wanted to follow up on something you mentioned just a few moments ago about not being able to go toe to toe with the Chinese from a numbers point of view, and trying to think different in countering them. At what point does the technological gap, technological edge that the U.S. has held for a long time, when does that disappear? At what point does it swing in China's favor to the point that you have to start trying to compete with the numbers and other ways of [inaudible] and changing how they're solving threats. When does that stop working?

**General Brown:** It would be tough to give you a date or how many years out that might be. But I do think about the things that we have to be thinking about to go forward. I just look at as I work with the Air Force and look at our budget, you're not going to be able to buy, and really for the department, you're not going to be able to buy equivalent numbers. So that's why really we've got to think differently about how we do some of the things to have that advantage.

I'll also tell you the other thing we have is we have our partners. They don't have. When we talked earlier about Russia and China, I don't know that they would go to war for each

other. But we have a number of partners in the region that is a force multiplier for us as well. In execution, but also in the mode of deterrence as well. It's almost must like in Europe with NATO. If you go to war with one you might be signing up to go to war with others as well. That's got to be part of their calculus as we do this. And in particular when you start looking at the number of F-35s you're going to have in the region over time between the four nations that have already bought F-35s, the fact that some that already have F-35s may buy more, and then we have Singapore, for example, that's interested in F-35s. So increasing capability in that regard.

**DWG:** Do you see a point, though, where the, in the near future, perhaps, where the technological edge is swinging clearly in favor of China? And is part of China's calculus also a weakening of those partnerships where they're looking at what the White House is doing and some of the strains that have emerged that have been reported on between the U.S. and key partners in South Korea and Japan?

**General Brown:** I think that's one of their goals, is to drive a little bit of a wedge, more so, I mean to a lesser extent some of our larger countries in the region, more so some of the smaller Pacific Island countries.

But I'll tell you, one of the things I see now is the light bulb across the region is starting to come on because there's more dialogue. It's making it tougher for the PRC to use the approach they've been using.

I was just reading yesterday, I was in Vietnam in August, and of the nations in the region they're probably more vocal about what the PRC is doing than a lot of the other nations. They take the chair of ASEAN in 2020. So you see that there's opportunities in some of the dialogue and some of the press reporting that, it's almost like they're comparing notes. So you start to see that it would be harder I think for the PRC to drive wedges between different locations.

**DWG:** What about the technological edge shifting? Is there a point where you see that happening?

**General Brown:** Well, there's always a possibility. I don't know if I can tell you there's a point where I'd say here are the facts that I'm looking at to be able to say here's when the shift would occur. I think there's some areas they have gone maybe a little bit further. Artificial intelligence is one of those that we talk a lot about. I think we have capability. We also have a little more ethical, maybe. So when you look at our approach we may have the capability but we also have authorities to be able to use it and how we might use it and how we might use. Which may be different from our adversary. Those are the things I'm looking at as well.

In execution, we've got to really be thinking about, we may have the capability, but also getting the authorities very quickly, and thinking through that aspect of it before we get to a conflict. I think that's the one thing I would offer with the discussion about a space force. There's been more dialogue about how we do tabletop exercises at senior levels to talk about space. That's the same thing I think that needs to happen across the board. If you get into a conflict like this you're going to have to be able to move at a faster pace.

**DWG:** Vivian, then Valerie.

**DWG:** I wanted to ask about tanker capacity in the Indo-PACOM region. Earlier this year Japan said they are [say] additional KC-46, I think they brought it up to six aircraft that they want to eventually buy. Would you like more tanker capacity from the outliers in the region than that? How much more? And how much benefit will these six aircraft initially bring to --

**General Brown:** More is always better. I don't know if I can give you a hard and fast number, but the fact that they're looking at more tanker capacity gives us more flexibility with

our partners to be able to operate from different locations. And in some cases further away from the threat if need be. So there's real value in the tankers because it provides a reach for us and for our partners. That's why I think just our day-to-day training and operability wise, when we're operating our airplanes and us with theirs, will give us the opportunity to work with this. So between them, Japan, Australia, although their tankers are different partly because of their F/A-18s, but they also with their 330 can do both and with the F-35 they will be able to do both.

So the more and more we operate together the more opportunities we have to take advantage of those capabilities and have a good understanding of [inaudible]. The key point is look at allies and partners so the U.S. doesn't have to do it all by itself. Be able to work with others. One, their capability, but two their local leadership decision-making that will allow them to participate based on whatever the contingency might be.

**DWG:** And with that as sort of laying down the plan to cooperate between Japan and Australia and the U.S. for the tanker specifically?

**General Brown:** I will tell you, we haven't really sat down and talked specific like tanker lay-down plans, at least I have not.

**DWG:** Valerie?

**DWG:** I wanted to ask, there have been persistent reports for about the past year and a half about Japan's interest in an F-35/F-22 hybrid. So I was just sort of wondering is PACAF talking to Japan about that capability, you know, what is the status of those discussions, and just broadly what are your thoughts about this as a solution for the Air Force as well because there's reports out there for interest. U.S. Air Force.

**General Brown:** I've talked a little bit to the Air Chief. He's brought it up. But it's more so he's providing me, forwarding

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that information to me just as a, here's what their intent is. Most of that discussion's gotten with OSD and [SAF/IA] because they'll do the foreign military sales aspect of this. Really, I think what they're looking to do is be able to look at what the replacement's going to be for their F-2 over time. My sense is there are some things they want to be able to do indigenously, which is why a little bit of the hybrid and be able to work some of that. So I know Lockheed Martin's talked to them. But I don't have any specifics on -- there's a level of [inaudible] they're trying to do as well. Not just within the Air Force but with the rest of the Self Defense Force. That's a discussion I've had with the Air Chief. Producing this hybrid may give them additional opportunities to work some of their own interoperability.

**DWG:** What about the U.S. Air Force? Is that something that you as Commander of PACAF would be interested in? Would that have any, would there be any benefit for that sort of an aircraft in your area of operation?

**General Brown:** Not so much for U.S. Air Force based on our procurement path. For Japan, potentially. I can't really speak for them on what it's going to do, but more F-35s or other platforms, maybe start a new hybrid. How quickly can you be able to produce it and get it out in the field, those kinds of things are things that would be -- and I can't really give you good information on the life span of their F-2s and kind of what their replacement plan is.

**DWG:** Diana then back to Riota.

**DWG:** I wanted to ask a little bit about the Host Nation Support Agreement that the U.S. has with South Korea. I know that [inaudible] last month said the Trump administration was pushing for South Korea to contribute almost five times as much in host nation support as they did last year. So in the event that no deal is reached by December 31<sup>st</sup>, how do you believe that the readiness of troops in South Korea will be impacted?

**General Brown:** Not so much the readiness of the troops. Part of that funding actually helps support some of the host nation programs with its employees and construction type projects. So no immediate impact, and I'm hoping for the best.

**DWG:** Any insight where the \$4.7 billion that [inaudible] reports are saying came from?

**General Brown:** No, I'm not in any part of that conversation, so I can't really answer that one.

**DWG:** Riota?

**DWG:** Can you please tell me about the plan to develop a cheaper version of the Link-16? Like poor countries, or relatively poor countries in Southeast Asia can have those Link-16s [going into] aircraft so that we can share information with them?

**General Brown:** I'm not really familiar with a cheaper version of the Link-16 that we're trying to --

**DWG:** Okay. That's what I heard from [inaudible].

**General Brown:** The idea is actually to provide, there are nations that are interested in Link-16 that I realize because of the costs they can't get there, across their entire fleet. It's no different for us. Once we make a decision, how do we actually outfit the entire fleet, and that drives our decision calculus of whether we're going to be able to do, maybe not Link-16 but upgrades to our various platforms. They're in no different a situation than we are sometimes.

**DWG:** Tony?

**DWG:** Increased lethality in the region, NDS talks about increasing lethality. Can you give some examples two years after the thing was published, increased lethality in your AOR?



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I mean the LRASM missile, is that something now that's active in your inventory? Other examples?

**General Brown:** It's not only LRASM and things that we're looking at, but it's JASM-ER, and then other, as we do hypersonic. The Army's looking at land-based anti-ship LRASM missiles. So to me there's a couple of different parts to this. It's not only the weapon itself, but it's also the sensors so that that weapon will reach out and touch a target, but you've got to have the sensors to actually make sure you're hitting the right target, and then be able to see out with the small amount of latency, particularly if you're shooting a hypersonic missile at range with a flight time of ten minutes or so. Your intel's got to be pretty good. So that's an aspect when you start thinking about the value of space, to be able to provide information, how that connects and how you get the information from whatever sensor to a shooter in a timely manner so it's not -- information will be perishable taken from those long-range weapons. So that to me is also, and then also the other aspects.

We often talk about a kill chain. I'm thinking about a kill web. The reason I say it's a web is, I've got to be able to get the information from various areas, not having a single path. Particularly if we have com issues and I'm able to still get the information, maybe get there a little later but not much later would be the vision, to be able to make sure you're able to take advantage of the long-range weapons.

**DWG:** Today if you had a conflict with North Korea, it would be largely standoff, I would imagine. Do you have the JASM-ER and do you have the LRASM in theater right now?

**General Brown:** The LRASM's more of an anti-ship. So less there. JASM we do have.

**DWG:** Can I ask a quick tanker question? In theory of how delayed it is, two or three years behind schedule. What impact

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does that have in your AOR? Which seems to me pretty key for your AOR.

**General Brown:** Not any specific impact right now, partly because as we acquire the new tanker we haven't done a whole bunch of retirements of tankers. So once you start retiring tankers, there's not a bathtub right now is the way I'd describe it.

**DWG:** Nick?

**DWG:** I want to go back to DPRK. You said at the top, I don't know if there's any more meat on the bone that you want to put, but you said some kind of long-range missile. We asked about activity, activity is a pattern, you see rhetoric it will actually be launched. Can we tell the difference between another engine test and an ICBM test? Is there anything more you can say about the level of concern or how much time you're spending on this right now in this moment as we get toward Christmas and the New Year?

**General Brown:** I don't know if I could actually describe and tell you okay, here's what type of missile it's going to be. If you look at what's happened over since May, there's been short-range ballistic missiles from liquid fuel to solid fuel to the sea-launched ballistic missile. So I think there's a range of things that could occur. I think there's also the possibility that the self-imposed moratorium may go away and then nothing happens right away. He announces it but then doesn't shoot.

So I think we're paying attention no different than we were paying attention in 2017. Maybe not as intensive as it was in 2017 where there was a lot more tension, but our focus is increasing. It's been something that we've always known and I've always looked at, our job is to backstop the diplomatic efforts. And if the diplomatic efforts kind of fall apart, we're going to be ready. I can't be studying the problem. That's the thing, we're already thinking ahead of the potential.

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And if you go back to 2017, there's a lot of stuff we did in 2017 that we can dust off pretty quickly and be ready to use. So those are the things we're doing. Partly because I wasn't in this job in 2017, and a lot of the folks that work for me weren't. There's a number of folks that were there. So really, how do we actually ensure we are -- we go back and take a look at it. Because some of the facts and assumptions may have changed.

**DWG:** So have you been dusting off, so to speak and then readjusting them based on--

**General Brown:** We're looking at all the things we've done in the past.

**DWG:** -- flights, right? The deterrence patrols are very visible. B-2s. B-1s. Is that one of the things you're looking at?

**General Brown:** Without getting into operational details, we're going through all the complete options, so we're looking at different things we can do. And then also with that, we've got to get the authorities to do it. So my job is to provide this military advice and then determine, then our leadership will determine which ones, which levers they want to pull.

**DWG:** Our final questions, Jeff and Dmitry.

**DWG:** I just wanted to follow up on some of the countries in the region and China. Something reported first by the Journal about China and Cambodia signing a deal for a military base, a naval base in Ream. And then about 70 kilometers to the north there's also an airport that the Chinese are constructing. You said the light is going on for a lot of these countries. Do you have any concerns about what's going on in Cambodia? And any update on what the Chinese appear to be doing there, and what type of threat it represents?

**General Brown:** The light bulb's not come on for everybody.  
[Laughter].

The Chinese come in throwing money at various countries, and then they respond a certain way. So it is not only for U.S. but I think some of our partners are very concerned about the growing potential presence there in Cambodia. So that's probably the best way for me to characterize it. You can't really, I don't have a relationship with the Cambodian Air Chief. I've never met him. So it's hard to get a sense of kind of where they sit, where they stand, but then you can tell just based on some of the dynamics that they're probably a little closer to the PRC than other nations in Southeast Asia.

**DWG:** Let's finish with TASS.

**DWG:** Is the United States already in discussions with its partners and allies in Asia over potential deployment of short-range and intermediate-range missiles now that the INF Treaty is gone? How do you see the discussions with that regard going forward?

**General Brown:** I really can't answer that because I've not been involved in any discussion related to the INF or missile capability in that regard.

**DWG:** Do you know whether such discussions are occurring?

**General Brown:** Not that I'm really aware of. I mean I know right after the announcement there was a little bit of press about discussions, but it was, I haven't seen much since then or, you know, discussion or --

There was a test last week, but that's about the extent.

**DWG:** And that was in your area.

**General Brown:** It was.

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**DWG:** If there were those discussions you would certainly be part of them, right?

**General Brown:** I would probably be aware. Not necessarily in the discussion. A lot of this would be policy directed so it would be more of OSD. But I would probably be aware if we were actually going down a path to --

**DWG:** Is a missile like that something that, when you talk about capabilities and such that you need moving forward, now that INF is gone and the military is testing those type of weapons. Is something like something that could be valuable?

**General Brown:** It could help, for sure. Because actually it holds targets at risk and it changes the calculus of what's going on in the region. It makes it something that our adversaries have got to think about. Whether we fund a few or multiple.

**DWG:** Okay, sir, we are out of time. I wish we had more, but unfortunately that's it. Again, thank you for coming in. We appreciate your thoughts and your insights today. We'd love to have you back.

**General Brown:** Thanks, I appreciate it.

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