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DWG: Welcome to our session today with our distinguished guest, General Jeffrey L. Harrigian who's commander of U.S. Air Forces both in Europe and in Africa. We will launch as usual with questions, and as moderator, I will ask the first one.

Let me start, General, if I may. I want to ask you about Agile Combat Employment. But before I do, a lot of us are hunkered over our computers in our basements because of COVID-19 and I think I'd be remiss if I didn't start by asking you how is your command doing in this pandemic? How is it affecting your work?

Gen. Harrigian: First, thanks David for that question. Clearly COVID-19 has had multiple impacts across the command, but I have to tell you I've been really proud of the way not only our airmen have responded but also their families. Just like you all, this has had an impact across the force. But at the end of the day our approach has been largely to take this on just like we would any other threat that would impact our ability to execute our mission set.

So we went off first to take care of our folks and stay closely aligned with our partners. I would tell you we were really fortunate in that we have our wing down in Italy, northern Italy, down at Aviano, so we were able to really stay closely aligned with the lessons that they were learning as they were going through the initial impacts of the virus and then take that and apply it more broadly across our force.

So as we took care of our folks we also understood that we had to really ensure that we could complete our mission critical

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tasks, those functions that required us to be done in a 24x7 fashion. And frankly, I would tell you we were able to do that. Now over time we had to manage the force in a way that we ensured through going to split teams, that we could complete those missions and we were able to do that. I was really proud of the way they did that, whether it was in support of some of our mission sets that required the constant vigilance across Europe or into Africa, and we were able to do that.

But as time went on I think we had to ensure that we recognized there were some resilience issues that we had to work our way through in terms of taking care of our people. We did that, again, while we stayed closely aligned with the different nations that we were working with from Germany to Italy to the UK and even out in our base out in Incirlik, in Turkey. So those different nations and the requirement to stay close to them with respect to the restrictions they were applying were really important for us.

And what I would tell you is the relationships that our wing commanders had with the different entities they worked with all the time were really critical to the ways that we were able to do that. In other words the trust that we had built over time with them allowed us to understand what they were trying to do, apply that to our operations, such that when we had to execute our specific activities, whatever those might have been, we were able to do that in cooperation with our host nations that we worked with day in and day out.

So I would tell you at this point we are largely back to operating in what we would call our new normal. We've taken a lot of the teleworking and IT capabilities that we learned through COVID and are continuing to apply them. Just like today using Zoom. There's a lot of meetings that we used to always get together and we've figured out ways to still have those meetings and keep our operational activities flowing while also ensuring that our folks were in an environment that allowed them to stay healthy and continue to deliver the mission.

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DWG: Have any of your command gotten sick with COVID?

Gen. Harrigian: We have had some folks that came down with COVID and when I say that, that's really across Europe. Fortunately, we've done very well in terms of being able to get folks recovered and back in a position to continue to execute their mission.

So we've been fortunate. I think some of that is due to the types of people that we have both from a military and a civilian perspective that operate in our headquarters and across Europe and Africa. So I think that's helped us a bit in working our way through this.

DWG: Can I just also ask about this concept of Agile Combat Employment, ACE, that I've been hearing about that I guess was started in the Pacific, perhaps under General Brown, the new Chief of Staff of the Air Force. But I gather it's a concept that you're going to bring increasingly to your command. Just give us a short paragraph on how that's going to work.

Gen. Harrigian: Sure. I think the first point I'd bring to you is General Brown and his team were refining the concept in the Pacific area. We saw the application here in Europe. They have to deal with what we would call the tyranny of distance in the large spaces they operate in. We call it operating in the tyranny of proximity in that we're going to be closer, operating very tightly aligned with our partners and allies here in Europe. So while there are some fundamental similarities there are also some fundamental differences in the way that we're going to approach this problem, which would entail both proactive and reactive measures to ensure that broadly we stay strategically predictable but operationally unpredictable.

We developed the concept, General Brown and I aligned and actually have signed a ConOp that both of us are leveraging to provide to the broader Air Force enterprise our view of how we

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would execute this concept. So I think that's very helpful in that it helps the Air Force enterprise understand what we're trying to do so that as we look at those things that are similar we can levy those requirements in terms of training and resources to help us achieve ultimately the goals of this particular concept which is to be, as I said, proactive in terms of distributing our forces in a manner that allow us to remain ready, but also able to generate combat power because at the end of the day that's what we need to be able to do as we deliver this concept.

DWG: Thank you, sir. The first hand up was Steven Trimball of Aviation Week.

DWG: General Harrigian, thank you for doing this this morning.

A few weeks ago in your hat as AFRICOM you released a statement about Russian aircraft activity in Libya, and you said the next logical step is they deployed permanent long range Anti-Access Area Denial capabilities, creating real security concerns on Europe's southern flank. This morning I saw that AFRICOM has put out a new release showing evidence of deployment of a Spoon Rest [PAT] VHF radar.

In the last three weeks has anything happened to sort of validate the warning you made? What do you make of the Spoon Rest deployment? How does that fit into the Russian presence there? Where do you see it heading now?

Gen. Harrigian: Great question. The Russian activity clearly executed by the Wagner Group, their private military contractor down there has continued in their buildup. And as you highlighted, they've moved a Spoon Rest and AFRICOM also highlighted the number of aircraft they moved down there to include the MiG-29s, MiG-23s and SU-24s.

So broadly the concern is that we want to make sure we're demonstrating is being executed by the Russians here is their

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intent to continue to influence the activities down in Libya. And as demonstrated by the release of the photos today, they continue to build out what I would call their intent to have a better understanding of the air domain, look to leverage those fighters in a manner that ultimately could influence the broader outcomes that could occur down there.

As far as any buildup of integrated air defense from a surface to air missile capability, we haven't seen any of that thus far, and as I highlighted, my concern has been that should Russia gain a more permanent foothold as they have demonstrated with what they have done in Syria, that's going to be a significant security concern to our European flank to the south.

So as we have continued to watch that, as I just highlighted, we've not seen any of the surface to air missile buildup but we're continuing to see some of the air domain capabilities roll into Libya.

DWG: Michael Gordon, Wall Street Journal.

DWG: Thank you. I'd like to please follow up on that and ask a related question.

How many aircraft do the Russians now have in Libya? Previously the number was about 14. Do they have more now? Have they carried out any specific offensive operation due to [inaudible] them? And the AFRICOM statement, the concern that these aircraft are being flown by less than experienced mercenaries and that this could cause some issues. How do you know that? And can you expand on that a little bit?

And my last related question is, I have to ask you since President Trump has decreed that 9500 troops have to leave Europe, and that seems to apply to Air Force as well as military ground personnel, how is that going to affect your operations? And are you working on how to do that by September?

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Gen. Harrigian: Michael, are you sure you don't want to ask any more questions no top of that?

DWG: That's it. We don't get a crack at you very often, so I have to take advantage of it.

Gen. Harrigian: No, that's good.

Relative to the numbers of jets. They're in the upper teens. I don't have the exact number off the top of my head but I think I laid out for you the types in terms of MiG-29s, MiG-23s and SU-24s is what we've seen flow down there and I think that's been documented previously.

Primarily what we've seen as far as activity, in essence I would quantify as sorties where they're working on their basic flying skills. I think there have been reported some potential activity up to the north towards Sirte, but we've been unable to confirm specifically that those strikes were actually executed by the Wagner team there and where they were specifically.

So I can't confirm that those were executed. I would tell you that largely what they've been doing is working on what I would call pilot proficiency, and that goes to your third question there in terms of what kind of experience do these guys have and what would that lack of experience mean from a tactical employment perspective.

So I put this in the category of folks that they've contracted in terms of guys that may be retired, guys that they're finding out there who have flown these types of aircraft. So naturally from a professional airman's perspective, that's going to raise some concern. It ought to raise concern in everybody's mind in terms of what's their ability to put weapons on the appropriate targets to ensure that they're getting after whatever the specific target entity that they're attempting to put a weapon on.

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This naturally in my mind raises some concerns, particularly when you talk about civilian casualties and what that could mean, particularly when you're looking at areas where there's city populations. It's a small constrained environment to operate in where it takes precision weapons. And Michael, of all people you know the challenges associated with that and the skill set needed to do that. So when you haven't had potentially the opportunity to operate with precision weapons in a manner that's going to require tactics, techniques and procedures that are a skill set that you know we train significantly to to ensure that we put the weapon where we need to. That's an area where we have concern and I think rightly so, it's something that should be watched as we go forward here.

DWG: The troops in Germany, do you have to reduce some of your forces by September per President Trump's order?

Gen. Harrigian: Right now, yeah, thanks for reminding me on that one. We have to at this point refer you back to the White House and the National Security Council. I have not received any specific guidance directing me to do any specific planning on that at this particular point.

DWG: Thank you.

DWG: Kimberly Underwood, Signal Magazine.

DWG: Good morning, sir. Thanks for taking the time to speak with us.

Could you talk a little bit more about Agile Combat Employment and the ConOp you all signed? And you mentioned some of the similarities that might apply across the whole Air Force, maybe talk about that a little bit more and kind of some of the differences that you're facing in your region, kind of what considerations do you have. You mentioned the tyranny of proximity, but what do you face in particular to your region? Thank you.

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DWG: Thanks, Kimberly.

In the ConOp, one of the areas that General Brown and I both focused on in terms of similarity across the Air Force enterprise is the need to have multi-capable airmen. That's the term that we're using. We acknowledge the fact that as we move our force packages around the battle space, we can't have these large numbers of airmen that we have to deploy to a location, have all the different functional areas at that location because that footprint will just get too large.

So as we've worked with our teams together what we've tried to do is identify those skill sets that an airman could execute. For instance you have a weapons loader who previously only did weapons loading, but we could also use that individual to, for instance, refuel an aircraft. So this is expanding in a smart manner. In other words, we don't want to buy an excessive amount of risk by having airmen doing something they've never done before.

So the goal would be to train them in a way that allows them to do more than just their specific functional expertise, therefore allowing us to move them into these locations where we would need them to help us generate combat power by leveraging multiple capabilities that that airman would have. So that would, I would offer to you, be the largest similarity that we have. Although I would highlight to you another area that we know we have to have the capability to execute is the command and control at that particular location. That's going to require specific communications gear, the ability to not only communicate internally to that smaller operation but also back to the Air Operation Center or to aircraft that would be generating out of that particular location.

But then as you look at the differences and that we know we've got to work through, particularly in the logistic environment. As you know here in Europe, we're going to rely on rail, on

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road. Whereas in the Indo-Pacific largely they're operating over vast areas of the ocean where they're going to need air for a broader support requirement.

So for us, this goes back to our need to work closely with our partners because they're going to manage, when we've got to cross borders, they'll support the road infrastructure. Those are areas where we've got to be closely lashed with our partners to understand what the constraints are and how we can work together with them to support these distributed locations that we would generate from.

That's how I would kind of lay out for you the key differences and what General Brown's been doing in PACAF and what we're doing here in USAFE.

DWG: Thank you, sir.

DWG: Can I just ask, General, while we're on this subject, what are some of the places that are austere and obscure and may be interesting that you might have aircraft under this new plan that you couldn't have previously. Give us a few examples.

Gen. Harrigian: Some of the places we're looking at, and I hesitate to use the word austere because really, if you could envision in your mind's eye, we've got to go to, we have the potential for incoming attack so we disburse some of our airplanes. So if we're going to disburse them, we may disburse them to a location that we just need to go get fuel. We may disburse others that we need to go get fuel and weapons. [Inaudible]. -- we went up into Estonia, we operated from there. I can tell you our team down in Aviano has been into Slovakia and some of the other countries in the Balkans region to again put our airframes on their concrete, operate with our partners in an environment that allow them to see how we envision the ConOp working but also at the same time to build that trust and confidence in each other that allows us to see where we could have an opportunity to build that closer

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partnership with them as we execute these operations.

DWG: Dmitry Kirsanov of TASS.

DWG: Good morning, General.

I was hoping you could walk me through your current interaction and cooperation with the Turks in light of the S400 upcoming deployment. And their announcement that they are, I think, going to purchase another battery or whatever. Another batch of the S400s. That's my first question.

Secondly, I just wanted to ask you if the pandemic, has the pandemic affected your plans to deploy the F-35s at Lakenheath in 2021 I think you said last year.

Gen. Harrigian: Thank you for those questions.

First off I'd highlight to you that Turkey remains a critically important NATO ally for us that we have continued our very close cooperation with them primarily at Incirlik Air Base where they have done some incredible work to continue to support our efforts in Syria with the tankers that we fly out of there in support Air Force Central Command.

At the same time you may have seen just a few weeks ago they supported one of our bomber task force missions as they operated in the Black Sea. Those operations have included a couple of B-1s and they supported us with actually a formation of our tankers and Turkish tankers. So that cooperation has remained really important in terms of embedding the ability to continue the interoperability that we demonstrate with each other. So that's been important to sustain that over a period of time.

I think it's also important to recognize that we still have said that the S400 is incompatible with the F-35 and that position hasn't changed. While we have continued to sustain our relationship I think that's an important part to remember as we

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go forward here in that we've still got to work through how that applies to any operations that they would try to sustain with that.

As far as our F-35s going into Lakenheath, we're still planning on getting them in 2021. The infrastructure buildout and the work that we're doing with our British partners to ensure that that timeline stays as we had set out over the course of the last couple of years. We remain on a good flight path to ensure we're ready to bring the F-35s into theater.

In the interim though, I would highlight to you we've continued to operate with our European F-35s really across the region. In fact right now you're probably aware that the Italians have their F-35s up in Iceland as part of the NATO Air Policing Mission. And we just executed today some F-35s out of Norway to support our B-2s that flew on a mission up in the High North.

So that interoperability and sharing of F-35 tactics, techniques and procedures has been ongoing while we've continued our buildout over at RAF Lakenheath.

DWG: Thank you. Chris Woody of Business Insider.

DWG: Hi, General. Thanks for speaking with us today.

I wanted to ask you about the Arctic. Back in November some airmen went to Jan Mayen Island in the Norwegian Sea to do a landing zone survey and to see if that airfield could accept C-130s. Could you elaborate on what you see as your basing needs in the Arctic? And say whether you [inaudible] other installations or bases in the region up there.

Gen. Harrigian: Thanks, Chris, for that question.

As you've seen us talk about over the last several months, the Arctic remains a key area for us to continue to best understand how we will operate up there. And key to me for that is how we

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operate with our partners. In particular the Norwegians, the Swedes and our Finnish friends, and understand and learn from them how we can best leverage what they've been doing for years to support operations up there. And as you identified, we work closely with them to understand their basing construct, where they operate and how they operate, recognizing that when you talk about communication infrastructure, basing infrastructure, the requirement to be able to defend yourself from a base defense perspective has its own unique challenges up there.

Fundamentally it is crystal clear to us that our partners have the best understanding of how to do that so our reliance on them and the interaction as demonstrated by our visit up there to learn from our partners is really going to be key to our success.

So as we learn from them that also supports our broader Air Force understanding of the environment up there. And I think any day now here, you're going to see coming out of our Air Force kind of our broad strategy for operating in the Arctic. I'm not sure if that's been publicly released, but I think that's going to be published here in the very near future. That will more broadly inform our way ahead for operations in the Arctic.

DWG: Thank you, sir. And if I may just quickly follow up. Late last year we saw B-2s in Iceland for the first time as well as the first B-2 flight into the High North above the Arctic Circle. Already this year we've seen B-1Bs fly over Sweden for the first time. Are there any other operations like that that you're looking to do for the first time to establish a capability or [gain experience]?

Gen. Harrigian: I wouldn't say any new first time activities, more along the continuing to refine the way we do business up there. Like I just highlighted, we've got B-2s up with the Norwegians today and we will continue to execute -- I just have to highlight the great teamwork we've had with Polish [High]

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Command. The B-1s, B-2s, B-52s, whether that be in the Baltics, the Black Sea, the High North. When we think about deterrence, that's exactly what we're executing, and we're doing that with our partners.

As I talked about in the Black Sea we had everyone from Turkey through we actually had Ukrainian 227s also were part of that activity. Then when we've gone into the Baltics we're getting support from the Danish F-16s and it's really a long list of partners that have participated so that we can refine not only the TTPs but more importantly the interoperability, making sure that as we [inaudible] through the com infrastructure, the datalink architecture, that we've got that built into how we do business and everybody has built in the muscle memory such that should we need to expand to anything broader we've already practiced it and we're ready to execute.

DWG: Colin Clark of Breaking Defense, and then next will be Eric Schmitt.

DWG: Good morning, sir.

As I understand it there is a sort of Mediterranean Working Group for the F-35 where the various countries share operational, maintenance and other details. I was wondering without giving us too many operational details what you can tell us about the importance of the Israeli contributions at those meetings given the fact that they are flying a great deal against the Russian systems in Syria.

Gen. Harrigian: Thanks, Colin.

First off as you know from when I started the F-35 Integration Office back in I guess it was '14 or '15, we, the collective we, F-35 users, felt that it was important we continue to pull the Air Chiefs at the Commander level and then additionally at the working level at the lieutenant colonel/colonel level, pull the user group together to have discussions about how the aircraft

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was coming along, what were the tactics that were being used, how we could learn from each other both in ops, maintenance, and then more broadly the sustainment of the aircraft.

So what I would tell you is the discussions in these meetings, and I've been fortunate enough to see how they've matured over the years, particularly inside the European environment. And I will highlight to you, Colin, that General Brown stood up the same type of users group over in PACAF. But importantly what this has allowed us to do is for the nations to come in with their lessons learned. What they've learned about not only operating the airplane but also sustaining it.

Then it also facilitated discussions to highlight areas that we needed help from the Joint Program Office because each nation saw the same type of issues.

So what I would share with you is that the Israelis have also brought in their lessons learned, clearly from the activities that they've been involved in in their neck of the woods which is always challenging. And that has fostered, I would offer to you, the increased desire to get after some of the common issues that we've worked on.

You've heard General Goldfein talk about some of those very issues, whether it be the way in which ALIS operated. You've heard the discussions on the mission data files and the associated challenges with those. Each one of those, all these Air Chiefs, whether it was the Italian, the RAF, the Israeli, have seen some of these common problems. And this user group allowed us to share at a very frank level some of those challenges and then feed that back into the system to drive activities to get those fixed. I would offer to you it's been very powerful. It's driven the type of activity that we needed to have happen to get these capabilities into the airplane.

DWG: Can we take it then that the Israelis have shared useful operational tips in these meetings with --

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Gen. Harrigian: Yes. They have been able in the manner that they can without going into all the tactical details, talked about some of the things that have been very helpful to their execution in the airplane.

DWG: Eric Schmitt?

DWG: Thanks, General.

If I could take you back to Libya, obviously General Haftar has suffered some setbacks in recent weeks largely due I think in part to the assistance of the Turks and their drones and all. What is the interaction that you see now between the Turkish military, be it on the ground or in the air, and the Russians? And perhaps even Emirates? What's the dynamic there? How do you assess the possibility for conflict between those two as they're backing opposite sides? Thank you.

Gen. Harrigian: Thanks, Eric. That's a great question. It's fascinating to watch.

I would offer to you there's no real desire I think to go state on state. They don't want to escalate. I think they want to drive it into an environment that gets to the point where somebody has got enough of the territory to drive some type of diplomatic discussion to get to what I would categorize as a win/win for both sides.

I don't know what that will look like but from an air perspective it's pretty clear to me that they have been able to deconflict in a manner that allows the LNA supported entities to get after the specific targets that they want to support, and then the GNA entities to target those specific areas that support their grounds scheme of maneuver.

So given the lack of air domain awareness that occurs down there, that's why I see, we see this buildup particularly from

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the Russian side in terms of their capabilities and that will inevitably drive I think at some point an environment that will see who, if anyone, gains an advantage. And as you rightly highlight, I think what we've seen thus far is that the GNA has been able to gain some momentum and some traction here over the course of the last several weeks to move the fight farther to the east.

DWG: Do you anticipate a partition of Libya? If so, and in all this is the U.S. providing any intelligence, tactical or operational intelligence to the GNA?

Gen. Harrigian: We're not providing anything at this particular point, and it would be I think an interesting discussion to try to sort out what the political end states that are desired here and how that will play out.

I think the answer here is to try to get everyone to the table and diplomatically have a discussion. I mean we are talking about a nation here, and we ought to acknowledge the sovereignty of Libya and give them an opportunity to solve what has been their challenges, and hopefully we can find a way to, from a U.S. perspective, to allow that to happen.

DWG: Sara Sirota, Inside Defense.

DWG: Thank you very much.

I have a question for you about the RPA mission. As there are debates happening in Washington about potential divestments from the Global Hawk and Reaper platforms, I'm curious if you can say what your thoughts are from an operator's perspective on the need for the capabilities that those platforms offer. And also are there conversations here about potentially expanding export opportunities of those systems, what your thoughts are on the potential benefits and risks of increasing exports. Thanks.

Gen. Harrigian: Thanks, Sara.

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First off from a broader perspective, I think it's important as our Air Force goes through the budget drill and we look at where we want to invest, we're going to have to make some hard decisions as we look at the broader portfolio of ISR, strike capabilities, tankers, et cetera. So as we look at Global Hawk and the Reaper, clearly there's still a demand signal out there from the combatant commands to have those types of capabilities, but I would offer to you we need to make sure as you look holistically at what each of the capabilities bring to the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance portfolio, that we do all that we can not to duplicate and take those capabilities that are now a bit older and look to go, as General Goldfein has highlighted, invest in those capabilities that will really lead us into this joint all domain command and control environment that we envision.

And we acknowledge there's going to be some tough decisions in there, but I would tell you from out front, there's still going to be a need and in our Air Force we understand there's a need for in particular the MQ-9 capability, the Reaper that you highlighted. And I would offer that we have largely over the last several years thought of that capability as most applicable in the counter violent extremist environment like we've been fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. But what we've seen, particularly when wearing my Air Force's Africa hat is that it also can play a role in exposing and helping us compete in this great power competition environment.

As some of the capabilities that we've placed on the Reaper and we think about how we, from an operational perspective, can employ them to help us compete, a good example being exposing some of the malign Russian activity, there are still venues and operations that that capability will be helpful to us. Not in the numbers that we've had previously, but as we look at it holistically across the globe there are certainly realms that that capability is applicable for as we go into the future here.

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And when we talk about exporting that capability, again, you've got to look at it in the context of who are we, what nation are we considering, what are the potential uses of that, and do they have the right types of skill sets and understand what it would take to operate that capability in the environments that are typically ones that require a certain skill set that you have to be trained, prepared and understand the dynamics of ensuring that you can employ it precisely to achieve the effects that you're looking for.

So all those I think are an important part of the discussion. I would tell you in some of the situations that we're looking at exporting it, it makes great sense to me.

DWG: Let me see now whether some of our colleagues have questions or not.

Brian Eberstein of Air Force Magazine. Do you have a question at this stage?

DWG: Yeah, I'll jump in. I was hoping to follow up on the RPA conversation. Recently you moved the detachment to Estonia. I was hoping you could expand a little bit on the capability that brings to you.

Also it's been a while since we've heard much about Operation [OGADUS]. What is the pace of operation down there? Thank you.

Gen. Harrigian: Thanks, Brian.

The Estonia MQ-9 deployment really is one of our initial steps in demonstrating the agility of our MQ-9 capability from an Agile Combat Employment perspective. So as we looked at what was frankly a runway closure that was happening in Poland where we typically operated, I wanted to use this as an opportunity to quickly move the capability to another location that would afford us opportunities to not only bed a system down in a rapid fashion, but at the same time allow us to gain exposure in

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operating up in the Baltics. While we do that typically by flying up there, I wanted to be able to launch and recover it up there and understand how that, what that environment is to work in. That's really why we want to do it I think at the same time. It provides us great assurance to our Estonian partner up there in that we're operating there with them and frankly gives us a bit more capability to provide the overwatch and the ISR that we're looking for up in the Baltics.

So for us it's a great opportunity to provide the insurance, demonstrate some Agile Combat Employment, and at the same time increase our collection. So to me it's another great opportunity for our airmen to build that partnership.

As far as Operation [OGADUS], operations continue at a good pace down there. We've been able to execute ISR missions out of there. Frankly with no issues. I would tell you our airmen down there continue to work through the COVID situation with frankly minimal impact. So it's proven itself to be a facility that's got the appropriate force protection, the ability to project power from there in a manner that gives us some great flexibility and agility.

DWG: If I could follow up with one separate question.

After a really intense pace of airstrikes in Somalia at the beginning of the year it's really slowed. I think there's only been one in the past month or two. Can you attribute to what's the causes of that?

Gen. Harrigian: I would attribute that to the enemy gets a vote, and when you put enough pressure on them, they're going to adjust their TTPs and look go drive a problem set that will either decrease their operational momentum or force them to reassess how they're doing business.

So we're continuing to ensure that from an indications and warning perspective we remain very vigilant and look for further

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activity. But I would attribute the slowdown here because we put significant pressure on them and they felt it.

DWG: Sir, can I just as one of the generalists on the call, ask you what a TTP is?

Gen. Harrigian: Sorry, Tactics, techniques and procedures. Sorry about that.

DWG: No problem.

Marcus Weisgerber, Defense One. Do you have a question at this stage?

How about Sean Naylor of Yahoo News? Do you have anything you'd like to ask right now?

DWG: Sure. General, if I could ask you to sort of step away from your operational responsibilities and think more as a very senior leader in the Air Force and in the military, as you're no doubt aware, there have been some significant tensions in the civil/military relationship here in the States over the last several weeks. From your conversations with your peers and from your own observations, how much damage has been done to the civil/military relationship? And what steps are necessary to repair any damage that has been done?

Gen. Harrigian: Thanks Sean, that's a really good question.

Clearly from our senior leadership viewpoint there's been a fair amount of discussions about this, and I think as you probably saw, General Milley provided his lessons learned and that was done in a manner that I thought was really helpful in terms of laying out the challenges of being a senior leader and our job, you know, is to execute our military mission, to provide our best military advice, and recognize that we work for civilian leaders and our job is to provide that advice and then execute, given that it's a legal direction that's given to us. That's

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our job.

I think it was a good reminder for all of us of the challenges associated with doing that as you rise to senior positions, and one that while I certainly won't speak for the Chairman, it's one that it was a difficult situation and one that I think, frankly, -- [inaudible] -- need to recognize that we're all fallible at times and we're not perfect and the way in which he managed that situation I think is one that all of us as senior leaders took, you know, proud of the way that he did that and proud of the way that he managed what was a very difficult situation.

DWG: Are you concerned at the moment about the state of civil/military relations?

Gen. Harrigian: No. No, I'm not. Again, we're a bunch of military professionals that have been doing this for a long time. I think our job is to understand that the world is a very dynamic place and these unfortunate things are going to happen and that we need to be able to understand what our role is, accept that that's our position and what we need to do to offer our advice and then recognize that it's all about people. We've got to continue to communicate with each other and work our way through it.

DWG: Valerie Insinna, Defense News. Do you have a question you'd like to ask at this stage?

DWG: Everyone already asked the questions I was thinking of, so thanks.

DWG: Okay, how about Michael Glenn of the Washington Times? Michael, do you have something you want to ask?

DWG: Thank you. Asked and answered.

DWG: Wonderful.

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How about Jeff Seldin, Voice of America? Do you have anything, Jeff, you'd like to put to the General right now?

DWG: Just one question. Taking a step back, you've talked a little bit about the Russian war planes in Libya and the Turkish drones. But looking beyond Libya, what impact are these moves having on the battlespace across Africa? Especially give that there are a lot of unstable countries, there's a lot of concern about the spread of terrorist groups, both ISIS and al Qaeda aligned groups. How is this changing how different players are going to start preparing for fighting or how they're already carrying out whatever operations, whether terrorist groups or governments, U.S. partners, or those that may be aligned with U.S. adversaries?

Gen. Harrigian: That's an interesting question. What I would offer to you that we're seeing play out in Africa is really more along the lines of global power competition. When you look at where the Chinese are, who they're engaging, how they're engaging, the destabilizing activities they've generated, and then you look at where the Russians are, who the Russians are engaging, who they're selling military goods to? And then you look at the broader violent extremist organizations that are operating in Africa, and I think it's imperative that as we look at it holistically, it's a really dynamic environment out there and it's important that as the U.S. we remain engaged at the appropriate level, to look for opportunities that allow us to compete in a manner that supports our partners.

And as you look at it beyond just the military perspective, there are plenty of opportunities for us in Africa to support our partners as they look to find that stability that allows their economies to flourish for them, to take care of their people. And at the same time, doesn't put them in a position where they're in significant debt to the Chinese or buying equipment that ultimately will not allow them to be interoperable with us or their partners in and across Africa.

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So I think broadly, as I look at the activities there, you look in West Africa and what the French are doing and their international model for operating down there, the leadership they're taking and the role that we're doing to support them, there are some real tight partnerships that are occurring that are important for the longer term stability of Africa. And as we look across the continent, it's going to be a little bit different across the different regions, but importantly, we need to recognize that there is competition occurring down there and we need to be in the game.

DWG: Thank you. Vivienne Machi of Defense Daily. Do you have a question at this point?

DWG: Hi David. All my questions have been answered as well. Thanks.

DWG: This is good. How about Jack Detsch, Foreign Policy Magazine? Do you want to ask something?

DWG: Yeah, I do have a question.

General, I just was curious, as the Libyan campaign has gone on how much of Haftar's air capability have you seen survive this? And what is the role of Russia and sort of any other players in the region -- the UAE, Egypt -- in supporting their air power?

Gen. Harrigian: That's a good question when it comes to Haftar's air power. So when we talk about the LNA and you look at the different nations that are supporting the LNA, that requires what I would offer to you, there's another layer there. As you highlighted, what the Emirates are doing, what the Russians are doing versus Wagner. All those operations, from my opinion, are not well synchronized in support of Haftar. Without getting into all the reasons why that's happening, but I would tell you that the impact has been due to that lack of synchronization you've seen what has been an effective effort by

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the GNA to move farther to the east. That has put Haftar in a difficult situation right now which I think is driving him to want to have discussions on getting to a ceasefire, getting to some political agreement which we talked a little bit about earlier.

The challenge you really have there is the challenge of trying to pull together a coalition and as many of you know, I was fortunate enough to have a very strong coalition working for me when I was over in the Middle East, and the ability to do that is frankly one that takes some work and it's not, for me personally, but broadly as a government to be able to do that. I would offer to you that's been the challenge he has with the different entities that are operating in there as external influences on what's going on in Libya. That's difficult and hard to do.

DWG: Just to follow up really quickly, would you say it's safe to characterize that all these different actors are sabotaging each other's efforts? And then just with the Wagner component that's in there, are they helping out with Haftar's air power in any way through maintenance or any other support?

Gen. Harrigian: Sabotage is an interesting word. I would say they're not synchronized, and the manner in which they're trying to support the LNA has not achieved the objectives that they've been looking to achieve.

And relative to the Wagner group, again, I've seen nothing that would demonstrate them providing significant support to help Haftar's objectives.

DWG: We've just got a couple of minutes left. Let me just open up for any questions from people who have not yet, for any question from someone who has not yet had a question. Is there someone on the line who has a burning question they'd like to ask?

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Failing that, I'm going to go to Steve Trimbball who has another question.

DWG: There's been some reporting in the last couple of weeks about reducing U.S. military presence in Germany. Can you say anything about what you're planning to do at this moment for USAFE? For the USAFE component of it? And how much it could reduce this year.

Gen. Harrigian: Right now we're referring all those questions back to the NSC in DC. We are not doing any specific planning on that at this point.

DWG: Do you think there's a scope for further reduction in USAFE? Or do you think you're at the right level?

Gen. Harrigian: It's probably not worth trying to go too deep into that right now. We'll let it get sorted out at the political level and we'll stand by for orders once we get some guidance.

DWG: General, thank you so much for this very interesting hour of conversations with journalists of the Defense Writers Group. I hope we can do it again in the future. It's been a real pleasure.

Members, can I just mention to you that our plan is, our belief is that we may be able to get to both the Ranking Member and the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee in the days just prior to the markup, and as you know, the NDAA markup is July 1st. So the last couple of days of June we're hoping to have both those gentlemen. Stay tuned for invitations.

General, again, thank you so much for spending time with us.

Gen. Harrigian: Thanks everybody for what you're doing. I appreciate it. See you.

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DWG: Bye everybody.

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