

General Eberhart  
3/1/04

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- NORAD Commander since February 2000.
- Past experiences that most prepared him for 9/11?
- Air Defense experience during the 1970's overseas
- Prior commands on operational and strategic level
- As Air Combat Command (ACC) force provider for NORAD air defense

#### Evolution of the NORAD mission:

- Gen. E's priorities upon taking command in 2000 were: 1. Increase radar capabilities (against the cruise missile threat); 2. Ballistic missile defense; 3. Find a "way-ahead" for cruise missile defense.
- Post Cold War threat was determined to be ICBMs vice long-range aviation.
- Alert sites and air assets decreased accordingly. "I've argued both sides of that." (Staff note: Gen. E was the Vice Chief of the USAF 1997-1999) Interestingly, wasn't familiar with the "four corners" air defense plan advocated by the 1997 QDR.
- Air Superiority was important, though there certainly was a "raging debate" during the 1990's over the mission's relevance.
- Staff note: Gen. E seems to have been in favor of using regular Air Force assets, vice the Air National Guard, for alert duty (performance of the NORAD mission). His comment was that it would have been "cheaper and better" to do so and would assist with the modernization of the force, which is always expensive.
- Asked about statements made pre-9/11 by General Myers that America had air sovereignty in "name only," Gen. E said that he did have some concerns about that, namely with the fact that the radar picture available to the FAA was in a steady state of atrophy (FAA thought the future was going to be "all squawk and talk" and therefore wasn't very concerned about the radar capability situation).
- Pre-9/11: "We had a hard time conveying the threat, or at least the need for situational awareness."
- North American Air Surveillance Council (dates??? Pre or post-9/11???) was established to come up with shared funding solutions to the radar problems. Gen. E stated that NORAD went on record, via the NASC, for the need to share the burden across the DOD and DOT. "Without 9/11 we would have likely lost that fight. Everyone agreed, but didn't want to pay for it or thought that new technology would come online" to fix the problems.
- "We (NORAD + FAA) grew too far apart, but now we're back."

#### Asymmetric Threat:

- It was still the "away game" pre-9/11, and all of his and his predecessors' speeches, briefs, etc. reflected such assessments.
- It was natural to think of the asymmetric threat because it was clear that classic attrition warfare was not likely.

- Regarding the fact that pre-9/11 asymmetric threats in CONUS were considered a law enforcement issue, Gen. E stated, "We were wrong, sadly we were wrong."
- Gen. E wasn't aware of General Arnold's RAM study.
- Gen. E did speak to Gen. A about the cruise missile threat, as it was seen as the threat that NORAD was "least prepared to deal with."
- NORAD was focused on trying to rally support and "solution sets" regarding the cruise missile threat. As such, they conducted several exercises (CONR) to show the vulnerability of that threat.
- Did Posse Comitatus prevent awareness of the emerging threat? "I wouldn't say that, maybe it complicated it a bit." The number one reason was not having a documented threat briefed to him (something like the 9/11 attacks).
- What were the perceived threats on 9/11? Russia (ADIZ violations and probes) and to help law enforcement with drug trafficking (follow a/c and pass off to relevant departments).
- Any pre-9/11 speculation within NORAD of the HJ as weapons threat? NORAD didn't postulate terrorists actually controlling the a/c (always left it likely that the pilot in control wouldn't ultimately comply with a 9/11-type attack).
- Where a/c as weapons were considered, it was always from an "external approach" perspective that were less time sensitive regarding NORAD response (not originating within CONUS). (Staff note: the importance of good intelligence and warning are usually coupled with the "external approach" comments, though Gen. E didn't expressly mention it).

#### Training and Exercises:

- Involvement of FAA? "Tough to get them to participate, they're not manned to participate."
- In Gen. E's opinion, the FAA had a minimum role in national security pre-9/11.
- He stated that there were pre-9/11 exercise scenarios that "worked" the ROE against commercial aircraft up the National Command Authority for shoot-down authorization – but always in instances where they had a lot of time to make that decision (and with the a/c squawking its location).
- Air defense training for the National Capitol Region (NCR)? No, the origin of the threat was perceived to be external, and thus they focused on pushing out their defense zones.
- Air defense for NSSE's wasn't an "assigned mission" (ie. NORAD didn't participate in them).

#### 9/11

- CMOG was fully manned on 9/11. It made things more coherent, but probably didn't affect the outcome of the events as they were fundamentally time-distance problems.

- Gen. E was jogging at home early in the morning. Upon finishing, he got a call from the Command Director at CMOC notifying him of a real-world HJ. He recalled that he wasn't too excited over it – was certainly thinking traditional HJ.
- Drove into the office shortly thereafter.
- Saw the WTC burning on CNN. Called the CMOC and was told that the reports indicated that a light a/c, not the HJ commercial a/c had hit the WTC. Information coming into NORAD was only as good as what the FAA provided.
- After seeing the second hit on TV from his office Gen. E doesn't yet know about the second HJ a/c, but does immediately know that it was a coordinated terrorist attack.
- Gen. E immediately tried to contact the CJCS, but he was "out." Tried the DCJCS and did get in contact with him while he was on the Hill. General Myers was going to return to the Pentagon.
- Gen. E then focused on whether to stay at the HQ building or go to CMOC. His thought process involved the fact that CMOC was already fully manned and that he had good communications from his office (and knew that while the comms in the vehicle that would drive him to CMOC were good, there were likely going to be some dead spots and he didn't want to lose connectivity to the NCA).
- 0930 is the best that NORAD can estimate Gen. E left the HQ building for CMOC. He left during a perceived lull in transmissions on the "net" (telecon.)
- He recalls getting calls from General Arnold enroute CMOC regarding an a/c in the vicinity of Washington D.C. and also some information regarding the Langley scramble – though he doesn't recall the two being linked.
- When Gen. E arrived CMOC (Time???) there were HJ "issues" going on. He later learned that they were Delta 1989 issues.
- Gen. E doesn't recall ever being notified of a report that AA11 was still airborne (nor its connection to the Langley scramble).
- Gen. E stated that he did not know until recently about AA11 being reported as airborne (after it had actually struck the WTC).
- He wasn't aware of Andrews involvement on 9/11 until "recently."
- Gen. E was asked if the failure of the FAA to notify NORAD of the HJ's bothered him. He replied, no, that it doesn't cost anything to scramble a/c and that command-by-negation can always be used to turn off a scramble if necessary.

*which telecon*

#### Delta 1989 + UA93:

- "We possibly might have gotten those two interchanged, we were confused."
- "I think the text supports that." (Staff note: reference to transcripts of NEADS floor)
- On two separate occasions during the interview, Gen. E firmly stated that their (NORAD writ large) focus was on Delta 1989 (Staff note: and not on UA93).

## ROE and Shoot Down Order:

- Gen. E thinks the shoot down order occurred just before he got into CMOC.
- He believes that Gen. F told him of the VP's direction. He recalled telling Gen. F that he wanted more specificity, and that he wanted to see hostile intent of any a/c TOI's.
- "I still wanted to see a hostile act, hostile intent," before authorizing action. Gen. E recalls put such guidance out to everyone in the system.
- According to Gen. E the pilots that day were likely going to be "trigger hesitant, not trigger happy."
- Asked what authorities the pilots had to act on their own, following the VP direction, Gen. E stated that it was an issue of timing, but that the pilots could have taken action if they saw hostile intent and didn't have time to run up the chain.
- Communications (or lack-there-of) with all TOI's would have been critical.
- Gen. E assumes today that the VP direction was in fact passed all the way down to the pilots – and that would be "most important" for them to have known.
- *Folder 5 around the 16 minute mark contains a very good discussion by Gen. E on the difference between FAA ATC controlling actions and NORAD's "command and control" of fighter assets.*

## DEFCON 3:

- Gen. E recalls debating the advantages and disadvantages.
- Pentagon made the call (Staff note: believe it was Gen. Myers himself).
- Gen. E said it wasn't a big deal to him regarding NORAD's response as it was designed for other things.
- "Transition ROE didn't change what we had already told them (pilots)." (Staff note: I'm not sure this is accurate. And, according to the Langley pilots' interview the T. ROE certainly had a significant effect on their thought process and that it was a "big deal." This miss-match of viewpoints is significant).

## Post-9/11 Reconstruction effort:

- Gen. E started out by saying that there are tactical, operational, and strategic levels to the after action effort.
- On the operational level, he said they were focused on the question "What really complicated the day?" And that it was obvious that the answer was lack of communication/liaison with the FAA.
- Gen. E stated that the timelines were put together "as best we could" and that "initially, they're always wrong."
- He was very clear that they focused forward on what needed to be done to correct the glaringly obvious gaps in capabilities, and that their timelines "served us well to help decide what we needed to do."
- Asked if he ordered a reconstruction of the events immediately afterward, he replied "No, I/we didn't focus on that. I was fighting the war."

- Gen. E was asked directly if he's aware of, or has participated in, any 9/11 spin. He responded "No, never."
- The timelines were intended to determine FAA notification times and areas surrounding ROE guidance, and less so to definitively reconstruct the attacks and the response to them.
- Gen. E stated that in no way where/are NORAD's efforts an issue of "falsification."
- Gen. E provided an analogy regarding the timing of events: "Say I call you at 0700 and you write it down as 0705." (Staff note: clearly to imply that the inaccuracies in NORAD's timelines are merely a result of nominal time differences).
- Regarding the newest NORAD timeline (received by the Commission late February 2004), Gen. E stated that he did not specifically order it and it was likely the result of his "standing order" to correct the record of events whenever possible.

\*\*\* Geoff – need to ensure we capture his exact comments regarding whether or not he knew that the timeline was being revised, or even if it existed prior to our interview.

- Regarding Colonel Marr, Gen. E stated that he knows him to "tell it like it is, even if you don't want to hear it. JF asked if there would be any reluctance or fear of admitting that a scramble order was given on a threat that turned out to be a false report – Gen. E said no.

#### May 2003 Hearing:

- Gen. E did review the prepared statement prior to it being given to the Commission.
- He has reviewed a transcript of the hearing.
- He said he had no role in creating the timeline presented at the hearing.
- General McKinley called Gen. E following the hearing, and wasn't exactly happy with how things went.

#### Recommendations:

- The biggest challenge is identifying the next threat.
- A complicit crew of a commercial a/c is his biggest worry.
- The radars and radar issues are funded for 04' and 05' but not for the "out years."
- Datalinks are needed.
- Communications can always be improved.
- Modernization efforts within NORAD are a priority.
- Transfer the mission to the regular Air Force? "No, the ANG does it the best and no one could do it better."
- On Posse Comitatus: "People wanted me to say that PC doesn't need to be changed. Though we know of no changes that are necessary now, we're taking a look."
- Never forget 9/11.

- Win the war, but be at peace with the Muslim world.
- Killing terrorists is a goal-line stance, it's the minimum. But for every one killed, 100 return, and you just can't do it fast enough.