

U.S. Army Gen. Stephen R. Lyons, Commander, U.S. Transportation
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Transcript

GEN LYONS: Let me start by thanking Adm. Brown, John Dietrich, and the NDTA team for putting this fall venue together. I tell you, many challenges, and I'd much rather have the energy that the audience brings. But this virtual event has been fantastic and I've watched many of the seminars. And they have been impressive, and I really appreciate the work that NDTA with the support of industry and the support of the TRANSCOM team, Gen. Kotulich and Gen. Mike Wehr and his team with Jack Svododa and his team that put this together. Thanks. I think just a great venue to collaborate and communicate and coordinate together. It's a great agenda.

Let me begin since I don't have everybody physically in the audience and you're not able to physically connect and talk to folks, let me highlight a couple of the key leadership changes that have occurred over the last year since we had this venue last October.

And so earlier in the week, yesterday you heard from honorable Jordan Gillis who's the new Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for sustainment, and a great addition to the team at the department level. We also added General Jackie Van Ovest as AMC commander, just a phenomenal leader, former test pilot, just a perfect leader at the right time. Lt. Gen. Sam Barrett, our own 18th Air Force Commander, stepped up to assume the job as Joint Staff J4, supporting the chairman. Vice Adm. Michelle Skubic was promoted and assumed the position of Director of the Defense Logistics Agency. Major Gen. Corey Martin assumed the director of operations here at U.S. TRANSCOM. Brig. Gen. Heidi Hoyle assumed command of our Army component, the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command. And there's been other leaders but I wanted to highlight that exceptional team, because, for me, it's just a joy to come to work every day to work with this exceptional team at TRANSCOM.

So let me, let me begin, as I begin most of my talks, particularly those that are focused on education as the agenda is for NDTA. And I like to start with just three basic strategic messages that I typically leave senior leader audiences. And they are not surprises to this audience at all. So, first and foremost, I think you can appreciate that with 85% of the force elements stationed in the continental United States, our ability to project military power on a global scale anywhere in the world at our time and place of choosing is certainly a strategic competitive advantage. And this is really the role of TRANSCOM, the ability to do that.

The second thing I typically highlight is that the operating environment that we all grew up in and over the last 20 or 30 years is changing quite rapidly. It's spelled out both in the unclassified and classified versions of the National Defense Strategy. It's being illuminated further in our global planning efforts, as well as their joint warfighting concepts, some of which Honorable Gillis talked about earlier in the week.

And then the third point I always make to senior audiences, which I think is very important for folks to understand is that our ability as a nation to project the joint force on a global scale is

inextricably linked to our commercial industry partners. And so you may ask, just how much are we linked. And so, let me go to the next slide.

I'm going to give you just a quick snapshot of just day to day activity in the competition space. So you see about \$7 billion in transportation spend. I always enjoy when the audience is live because each of the industry partners goes right to their portfolio element and starts doing the math and the division of what their portion of the account is. And that's all very good too. But we couldn't do this without the support of industry and the level of integration. And NDTA, in this this venue, and many other venues throughout the year, makes sure that we've got a steady drumbeat of collaboration and coordination with our industry partners. So that when crisis hits, as it did this year, we know we have confidence and trust in each other.

Let me go to the next slide, and give you a sense for what this might look like in a surge, crisis, or conflict environment. This is one example, there are others, but it's an example I like to highlight to the senior leadership, because this represents the Civil Reserve Air Fleet available in stages, in crisis. And day to day, we use about CRAF-level one and equivalent in our commercial augmentation of both cargo and passenger airlift with our industry partners. So very important capability for the nation. And this linkage with industry is very powerful to enable the Joint Force to deploy.

So, let me go to the next slide. People often ask me, "Hey general, what's changing, what's changing across the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise?" And I always start that discussion, the answer to that question with what is not changing.

The core inherent purpose of USTRANSCOM and the Joint Deployment of Distribution Enterprise will not change. It's like the nature of war; it's enduring. So our ability to project the Joint Force on a global scale at our time and place of choosing to present multiple options for national leadership, and multiple dilemmas for potential adversaries...that is our core and enduring purpose. It is predicated upon an organizational design framework for which we call a warfighting framework.

It's predicated upon a foundation of global posture of routes and nodes enabled by our close allies and partners that expand our logistics network across the globe with access, basing and overflight. And those nodes are connected with mobility capacity - transportation capacity, the conveyances that flow between those nodes.

And then the key, what I would describe for this functional combatant command responsible to the Secretary of Defense for global power projection is our ability to look at a scarce network of resources and apply those to the highest strategic priorities, to be able to shift in time and space temporally across the globe to meet the highest priority. And that is the essence of global command and control.

Not a single operation center, but the empowerment of multiple echelons of command that operate inside this broad global network. It's a very powerful design. And with TRANSCOM, with the authorities that we have operate day to day, with the assigned forces that we have operate day to day, and with the resources that run through the working capital fund and with the

enormous human capital and talent that we have on this incredible team across the COCOM, it is an absolute joy for me to be part of this team.

So, let me take a minute here and go back and answer the question I asked the first place. That's what hasn't changed. And then the question is well what is changing, right? And so this is a pretty decent snapshot I think that the team put together that depicts what is changing quite rapidly, and that's the global security environment. And you can read the unclassified National Defense Strategy and you get a really good sense for that.

But if you juxtapose where we were in the Cold War and the left with where we are and where we're headed, on the right, you can clearly see the increasing demand signals on the logistics architecture. Whether that be from increased consumption, failure damage or destruction in the battlespace, whether that's based on long lines of communications, whether that's based on an adversary that's more capable to disrupt our ability to project the force or any range of activities you can see on the bottom of that slide. That is fundamentally changing the character of how we must approach logistics, power projection, and the need to integrate sustainment as a warfighting function with all the other warfighting functions. Maneuver, Fires, Protection...all that intelligence. And that's essentially where we're headed.

And if you listened to Adm. Mewbourne's panel yesterday you got a good sense from Dr. Friedman, on what that might look like. But he really underscored the strategic value of being able to project a Joint Force that can bring lethal effects to compel our adversary. And that will fundamentally remain our core purpose, but the conditions under which we must be able to do that are indeed changing rapidly, and we need to adapt to stay ahead of our adversary.

So in transition, what I'd like to do is just flip through a video that the team together that I think highlights this last year; a year that I think all of us would say, we would never would have predicted where we're standing here last year. Probably, a year of all years. And many of which we'd like to take back but we're not through it yet. And, and so let me just kind of roll with some highlights from this past year with the TRANSCOM team.

[Video plays for four minutes]

If you happen to see my Command Action Group and Ally and the whole team that put this together, a real pat on the back, I really appreciate all the work that they do to keep us running.

But I'd also say that every time I watch a video like that, you can understand why in my heart of hearts, I believe that I have the best job in the Joint Force. And I absolutely love coming to work every single day, when I think about what happens across the globe, every single day a plane lands every three minutes, just absolutely incredible of what's underway.

So I'll just highlight a few things that you picked up in the video. And I want to start with Defender Europe because that's how we started the year. And what a great workout it began. And it was for, for TRANSCOM with a Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise. A major exercise, 20,000 troops originating from 52 different locations in the continental United States, 24 different states using four different CONUS ports, moving overseas, 11 vessels, multiple

countless aircraft, 1.4 million square feet, and then ultimately ending up in 26 different destinations in eight different countries using six sea ports in the European Command. Now I mentioned that because that's an incredibly powerful workout for us, but it also demonstrates our ability to move the surge, to decisive force when we need to do so, and very successfully. But that exercise I might add only represented 25% of global activity, global mobility activity that was undergoing at that same time, so you get a sense for the scale of what's going on out there and this great mobility enterprise.

The next slide here gives you a sense just for a couple things I wanted to highlight. One is the incredible power that comes with a decisive force. That's not the formation that you want to see being assembled in a port, and a staging area that's directed to your attention. That is not what you want to see.

But I also want to highlight the great work on the right and the top that you see by Military Sealift Command, our maritime component. And really, they took the initiative to leverage Defender Europe to collaborate and coordinate with 2nd Fleet, with 6th Fleet to synchronize and coordinate the crossing of sealift ships across the Atlantic. Now this is the first time that we've undertaken this kind of initiative, this kind of exercise in many years. Just great work by Adm. Wettlaufer and the team at MSC as he continues to emerge and grow and evolve that organization into what is really clearly an excellent warfighting component command for this COCOM command, TRANSCOM.

Next, you heard a little bit about the rapid response to CENTCOM as a result of Iranian aggression. And I would just highlight when you think about the 82nd Airborne Division in this case, and you see those paratroopers boarding that C-17. Eight hundred troopers out the door, that N-hour sequence, and having served there myself, demonstrated and validated 18 hours wheels up with a battalion task force. In less than five and a half days, a Brigade Combat Team in the region to support CENTCOM. I can tell you that that movement, that speed that was demonstrated, and the ability to immediately respond to a quick crisis contingency, got the attention not only of leadership in the Pentagon, but also in the White House. And there's only one nation in the world that can scale at the level that the United States of America scale. So I think we can be very proud of those accomplishments.

Now, obviously, this year was different than any other year by an order of magnitude. And I know that's an understatement. As COVID-19 hit, and all of us, all of us collectively as a nation, as well as, inside the department tried to figure out, what was happening, the unknown of unknowns. We knew there was a virus, we knew it was emerging to pandemic proportion, and we knew it was lethal. But we didn't have a test per se. We didn't exactly know how it was transmitted. And immediately everybody in the nation went to work to figure out what it was we needed to do to resolve this issue, and much of that work is still underway.

But for TRANSCOM, and for much of this industry, there was no opportunity to stop movement completely. TRANSCOM and the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise, must and did continue to operate despite this contested environment called COVID. Now, we scaled things back and exercises got canceled, and we truncated the Defender Europe exercise that I highlighted, a couple of ships we bought back without offloading. We did all those kinds of

things. But at the end of the day, we never had the luxury to stop flying planes, sailing ships, or moving the Joint Force. And what we needed to do, though we knew is we couldn't do that recklessly. We needed to appropriately mitigate those mission outcomes, with the appropriate force protection.

And here you can see some of some of what the department and of course the nation had to contend with. As we implemented multiple evolving echelons of health force protection measures – social distance masking, evolving testing – all the kinds of things that you're well familiar with. And in addition, we needed to figure out very rapidly how we were going to move highly infectious patients. Because at the time that the Corona outbreak occurred, the department did not have a highly infectious patient movement capability.

And great credit goes to the Air Mobility Command and the broader United States Air Force in the test community. The first thing they did was they dusted off the Transportation Isolation System from the Ebola outbreak. And that was the bridging strategy. But the Department of the Air Force was able to fill a Joint Urgent Need Requirement. In less than 90 days from the time I signed the requirement, processed it to the Joint Staff and the department to deliver a negative pressure CONEX that can effectively move COVID-positive patients across the globe. And I am very proud of the team to be able to do this and proud to tell you that to date, we have moved nearly 300 COVID-positive patients across the globe, successfully and safely. And so I'm very, very grateful for that effort.

In addition, we needed to figure out that when we were moving troops and passengers, that we had a way to do it that was safe. And so we integrated our means of how we triage passengers loading on passenger planes, for example. Through several questionnaires, we didn't have tests, we're merging the test at the moment. But we also dove deep into particulate testing.

So aerosol testing, in the picture on the upper right that you see, with Adm. Mewbourne on that jet, was an initiative initiated by TRANSCOM and supported by the Air Force in the test community to determine whether it's safe to fly on commercial airliners. And I have to tell you the results, when we looked at this for the COVID-patient movement challenge, are very encouraging on commercial aircraft with HEPA filtration, with a very high air exchange rate of every two to five minutes or two to three minutes with an air exchange rate. In fact, I would tell you, that in my observations, and I've flown commercially since the pandemic has started, being on an airplane and on a commercial airplane, with HEPA filtration is probably one of the safest places that you can be. And those test reports will be out very soon.

In addition to continuing mission and protecting the force while we continue the mission, as you might imagine, the department was called upon to support the whole of government effort. And here you can see some of those highlights. It began by, as many of you are a part of this, support to the State Department or American citizen repatriation, the movement of test kits and swabs from overseas rapidly into the continental United States, providing ventilators to partners overseas, and so forth and so on. The trip movements to hospital movements to places like New York and out on the west coast, and all that was involved in that, and even to this day, we stand ready if called to support Operation Warp Speed, and my good friend, General Perna.

Now throughout all of this, we were very attuned to the impacts of industry. And here, you can see the most dramatic impacts of any mode of industry, which was on the passenger airline industry. Just absolutely devastating. Now, and it's not clear how we're going to get to the end of this with a number of planes that are still parked with the amount of debt that's incurring in the airline industry, on the passenger airline industry specifically. And we're watching and working very closely with industry.

I do want to highlight that, in this crisis, one of the things that in the unknown of unknowns, it became very clear, if we had to ramp up significantly our level of collaboration and coordination with our industry partners, to make sure we understood what they were seeing and what they were enduring. To ensure that we understood their viability, to support the department in crisis, to ensure that we understood how we can assist them to make sure that they maintain their viability. And that really resulted in a weekly really drumbeat very early on in the crisis that still continues to this day, and each of the mode sectors. And I have to give great credit to Adm. Dee Mewbourne, who personally evolved himself in collaboration with industry, and chairing these meetings to include other agencies like the Maritime Administration, etc.

And so, again, it just underscores for me how important NDTA and this level of collaboration is with industry. And in crisis, when crisis strikes, that's not the time to be building a relationship. You can't surge trust in a crisis. And so it just underscores how important it is to maintain this level of collaboration and transparency. And we continue to work through this challenge with all industries, some are seeing a mild return. It's going to take years though, in some sectors to recover fully from what we're seeing today.

I want to now transition to just a couple of points to provide some updates. So where I left you last year, and what you might have heard in some of my posture hearings. And I'm really proud of the team that really was able to take some very complex issues for the department, advance them to a point where we're seeing significant progress and promise on the horizon. So many of you recall, last October, when we had this forum, we were just on the heels of a major massive turbo activation of our organic sealift fleet. And that activation did not turn out well, but it was not also a surprise to us, because we knew we had some readiness concerns. And as you can see from that graph, we had been watching for some time, the schedules, and the useful life for some of these shifts, this big dip on capacity gap.

And, again, I just have to highlight where we're at today is not where we were a year ago, and a lot of gratitude goes to Secretary Esper himself who took a personal interest in this issue. The OSD staff, the Navy, and MARAD, as well as other partners that got together and really, and took this issue, and particularly the secretary put in an issue nom team. And they were able to develop a clear course of action and consensus going ahead, with a used-by strategy and focused over the next six years. And I won't get into the numbers because these are still in draft and will hopefully hit the President's budget here soon.

But we anticipate very positive outcomes with the investment department is will to make over the next five years in the five-year defense plan on the acquisition of used vessels off the open market. There's still a bit of work we need to do with Congress on the Hill, we've got time to do

that, and we are working on that as well. So we're headed in the right direction and I'm very pleased with where we're headed here.

Next, you may recall, last year in my posture hearing, the number one issue that I highlighted to Congress and to the department and the issue nom process was really the implications for the delay of the KC-46 weapon system produced by Boeing. And we were in a perfectly predictable train wreck to be honest with you, because we had counted on the fielding of the KC-46, and we had banked on the divestitures of the legacy fleet to bring on the new weapon system.

But you can appreciate with the delays that that was not going to occur. And so we've gotten some positive momentum and what you see on the chart on the far left, in the active duty side of the house, which is where the divestitures of legacy aircraft were going to occur first, we've been able to whittle that down to a much smaller number. We will still, of course, retire legacy aircraft because it's the right thing to do. But we also know that in the active component, this force element specifically, is the most stressed in the mobility enterprise. And it is the most relevant to any crisis or surge covering all NDS-mission sets. So we're making significant headway and progress in this area to delay the retirement, but more importantly, what I was really pleased to see, is the Air Force's work with Boeing, on an agreement to go forward with a material solution, produce a remote visual system 2.0 that we anticipate being available in 2023.

I also I highlight some progress in the area of cyber resiliency, as well as digital modernization. I won't go into great detail here only to say, I know a number of our teammates out there working in these areas. And we have invested heavily in these areas. And I'm really pleased with where the team is headed. And we're looking forward to getting Joe Logasoni (sp) out here again, in the near future.

And as many of you are tracking, there are ongoing studies, I highlight these studies, because these are consequential. Many of you do know that we have an analysis center that does analysis for the department regarding mobility capacity. So these studies and the outcomes associated, many of which go to Congress, through the Department, have significant shaping impacts on the future departmental investments in the global mobility enterprise, and frankly in the broader Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise; so work underway.

I had a great session yesterday with the industry executives from the defense personal property, the household goods sector. I'm pleased to report significant momentum and progress here. You know, we've put a lot of effort, organizational effort into making the PCS experience for families a positive experience, and ensure that they get quality and sufficient capacity to move their personal property during their PCS's.

And I want to shout out to industry in this particular sector, and offer them a great deal of thanks. Because you can only imagine with stop move on, stop move off, stop, move on, stop move off, there was a great deal of turbulence in this particular industry sector. And I can tell you all away from the secretary on down, expressed direct interest in how we would execute this and do it safely. And our industries and partners were with us every step of the way. And so we have made some marginal improvements here. We're on the cusp, I believe, of making some institutional changes that will really make some fundamental changes in accountability, responsibility and

quality capacity, long term for the department but much more work required in this particular sector.

And then last, I want to leave you with just a bit of a provocative thought. So this year, we've entered a cooperative research and development agreement with SpaceX. We're also working very closely with the Air Force's research lab, Dr. Spanjers and you'll hear from him later, as a matter of fact, on a panel focused on space with Gen. Kwast, and many other experts. And I really encourage you to ask him some great questions.

You ask the question, well, what are we going to do with space? Now think about this for a second. I had no sense for how fast SpaceX is moving, but I've received their update since then and I can tell you their move very, very rapidly in this area. Think about 80 short tons, the equivalent of a C-17, moving anywhere on this globe, anywhere on this globe in less than one hour. Think about the speed associated with that, whether a small force element or other capability. So thinking about movement of transportation of cargo and people and that speed associated with that. And then think about the ability to bypass what traditionally today becomes a real area of friction, which is traditional access basing and overflight, the diplomatic alignment that's required to move very rapidly across the globe. A lot of potential here and I'm really excited about the team that's working with SpaceX on an opportunity even perhaps, as early as 21, to conduct a joint proof of principle. And so we're still evolving and working in that space.

So I'll leave you here, only to say, just a couple things. One is particularly for this audience. And I know I've heard it in spades from my meetings, is a great deal of appreciation, my personal appreciation for that guy in the upper right corner, Adm. Dee Mewbourne, who has kind of this command's face with General Wehr, his whole team, with our industry partner. It has been a challenging year, but this crisis has brought us closer together, and forged I believe, even a closer bond of competence and trust, and collaboration.

The second point I'd leave you with is this. Some of you, I told you this, I mentioned this earlier in the week. People ask me, very senior people in the department asked me when we go through various updates, "Hey general, you know, what do you think? How do you know that you can rely on your industry partners? I noticed dependencies that you pointed out earlier in your brief." And I have to tell you, that I have high confidence, very high confidence in our ability, as a team, as a team of teams, to be able to project this Joint Force and sustain this Joint Force on a global scale, and do it knowing that we are inextricably linked to our industry partners. We have that level of commitment, we have that level of collaboration, and we have that level of professionalism.

The last thing and the final thing I'll leave you with, and we'll go to Q&A. I could not be more proud, I could not be more proud, of the Airmen, the Soldiers, the Sailors, the Marines, the Coast Guardsmen, the civilians, and our industry partners that make up this power projection enterprise. I am just a proud teammate that stands amongst you. But it is incredible to watch this machine every single day and what you're capable of. And from the other combatant commanders, from the Chairman, and from the Secretary of Defense, let me pass on their personal gratitude for all that you do every day. And with that, ladies and gentlemen, I'm happy to take any questions you might have.

VICE ADM. ANDY BROWN (RET.): General, Andy Brown back here, I'm gonna turn it over to Ron Marselle and Lt. Col. Avery Schutt. There are a lot of questions; we've probably got a little bit less than 15 minutes to go here. But thank you for your inspiring comments there, sir.

RON MARSELLE: General Lyons, I'll kick it off. Yesterday's, one of yesterday's panels talked about what it takes in terms of behavioral change, to get the force and the people to actually embrace technologies that come around the corner. And so the audience would like to know what we as both DoD and industry need to do to spark that behavioral change so that we don't get wedded to the past.

LYONS: Yeah, Ron, it's a great question. And I did hear some of that panel. You know, and I heard Tom Shull talking about necessity is the mother of invention. Here's what I would describe. I don't have any concerns, to be honest with you, of our workforce adapting to change, I see it.

I think what I would always go back and point to, is if you understand, if we collectively understand, our North Star, right, the ability to project the Joint Force – global distances, etc etc. If we fall back on that core purpose, right, and as the conditions change around us, trust me, our workforce, our young Airmen, our Soldiers, our workforce across the globe, they will adapt to the conditions if they are empowered to do so, with the core intent and the resources available to do so. And we'll get some of the best ideas, from what I've observed over time, from the grassroots level.

And so I think I'm very optimistic about our ability to evolve. Do we just switch on a light switch and everything changes tomorrow? Of course not, right? We're going to continue to evolve. But what gives us a competitive advantage is the human capital that we have, that I can tell you that our adversaries do not have – and that's the ability to be empowered, operate and change at echelon.

LT. COL. AVERY SCHUTT: General, thank you for that. I have another question for you regarding future. What are two or three key technologies that TRANSCOM needs to stay relevant for the next 20 years, particularly as we look at the advancements that our peers and near peers are coming up with, regarding possibly even air denial capabilities sea defense?

LYONS: Yeah, well that's a great question. So I would start it this way. The first thing we should be thinking about as a Joint Force, particularly as we invest in the future, is what kind of technology should be investing in, that bring the lethal effects that we need, the combined lethal multi-domain effects that we need to compel our adversary. That's the nature, that's the nature of warfare, right? And so we ought to be doing that with a mind towards reducing the logistics required. So we can do that, whether a smaller force element, you hear discussions about hypersonics, etc etc, we ought to have that in the back of our mind as we invest in future capabilities. Because otherwise, we're going to find ourselves on the wrong end of the cost curve. So that would be my first point.

To answer your other question, though, you know I alluded to one, I think space actually offers a domain for transport that is worth looking at. Would we scale what we can do today in space? No, but we can create a lot of dilemmas in that particular domain, just with small elements and the ability to move that rapidly. And then I think you can appreciate unmanned, unmanned man teaming and the potential that that has, particularly inside of conveyances. We're working a number of initiatives to get us the big data that will hopefully, move us to machine learning, artificial intelligence, these kinds of things. But that's going to take some time too, but those are the things I would mention, as I think about advancing decision making and advancing capability across the Joint Force. Thank you for the question.

MARSELLE: Sir, following up on questions on technology, the audience is aware of the congressionally mandated Mobility Capability Requirements Study. And the question is, are the new and emerging concepts like distributed operations, etc, being integrated into the study? And how is that study looking?

LYONS: Well it's a great question. I'd say it's a work in progress, right, so we still have some work to do. We're emerging in that area very well. But as a joint force, we still have work to do to link what we do in warfighting modeling and gaming outputs, to the implications that address sustainment requirements and logistics requirements. But gradually we're certainly moving in the right direction. Would I say we're there? Would we check the block and say we've got this completely? No, because some of the concepts are still emerging and the concepts start to drive force designware, the force designware starts to drive some of the global innovative planning efforts, and at the back end of that, then you need to superimpose your logistics concepts and execution plans. So, it's a continuous evolution, but I am confident that we are looking in those areas today, in the current study. Thanks Ron.

SCHUTT: With the recent global pandemic that we've been talking about and the support that TRANSCOM has helped push forward throughout the different combatant commands, we know a lot of medical forces were deployed and to key cities to help make sure we were able to support who we needed to. So, with that in mind, sir, I'm wondering how the lessons learned from the global response have translated to changes in working with industry moving forward. And especially as we look at those critical industry partners that are still not seeing recovery in the present time.

LYONS: On that scale, which we saw, and to some degree still see, based on the pandemic, it validated our linkages with industry. We were able to rely on industry in many of those examples, whether it was a movement of American citizens from overseas locations to support the State Department, or whether it was, as you were alluding to, moving medical capability into New York or the West Coast. I think that, you know, that worked very well.

I would say, you know, the one area that that did catch my attention, more broadly, it didn't have to do directly with force elements, but at USNORTHCOM, in this particular crisis, they were able to leverage, you know, a team of artificial intelligence experts and big data experts in ways that I thought really accelerated their global options, CONUS Ops center. And so that was actually exciting to see when I talked to Gen. O'Shaughnessy about that, because I think there's direct application to where we're headed at USTRANSCOM. But thanks for the question.

MARSELLE: Gen. Lyons, sir, piggybacking on that, the audience would like to know, do we have a vision of what the new normal is going to look like, based on what we've been through over the last six months? And what is it going to be like to, to work with industry to meet this new normal?

LYONS: Ron, none of us have a crystal ball on this. We're all, we're all asking the same question and it's an excellent question. I think to some degree, we're in a new normal. I don't think it's indefinite. I am confident the people that I talk to that there will be a vaccine, and that we will adapt and a vaccine, but that that's not an overnight solution, just to be clear.

So I think we're, we find ourselves in this new normal, of, you know, how do you continue to operate, but do it so you're not putting people at high risk. And I think, I've been very impressed, more so than I expected in our ability to move to a teleworking platforms, and our ability to collaborate, virtually. So that's working, it is a good mitigation measure, but I'm not gonna lie to you, I miss the energy that comes with a crowd coming together. Whether it's in a sports stadium, or whether it's at NDTA, I miss the interpersonal connections. I know that human beings were designed to be with human beings, and telling them to be separate is not inherently natural thing.

So we're going to continue to work through it. I think we got a, we've kind of normalized to some degree, we'll continue to improve testing, we will get a vaccine. I'm confident of that, and we'll work through this. But in the meantime, I think there are around the globe, and particularly here in America, there are some, some of our great citizens who are under severe duress; physically, financially, psychologically. And all I would ask is that all of us as fellow human beings look to each other, and just check, right? Because that's what's key to keeping this whole thing going. But, thanks Ron, no crystal balls, but that's kind of my insights.

BROWN: Hey general, this is Andy Brown coming back in and we're gonna have to wrap it up, and I would offer you any final thoughts. You've really given us some key insights this morning. Thank you, from NDTA, and on behalf of the Chairman, thank you for everything you do to bring us all together. And in your command team that's been very valuable in all this. But any final thoughts, sir, before we have to go to our next speaker?

LYONS: Hey Andy, just again, thank you for your leadership. Your whole NDTA team, all our industry partners, our TRANSCOM teammates that worked really hard to adapt to this virtual environment. I really appreciate it.

And the last thing I would just leave you with, is a very sincere thank you. I couldn't be more proud of this team and our great warriors across the globe, just doing the heavy lifting. So thanks, I look forward to the rest of the day. I think there's been some great panels and some great academic seminars, so very much looking forward to it, so I'll see you on the high ground. Thanks Andy.