

Nature of war requires successful cyberlift

3/15/2007 — **BAGRAM AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN** (AFNEWS) — The commander of United States Transport Control Protocol Command (USTCPCOM) visited Bagram Air Base March 14 to observe and speak about the cyberlift mission being performed throughout Afghanistan. Making up the cyberlift team are a number of base networks in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Europe and the United States.

Cyberlift is an important part of Operation Enduring Freedom, said visiting General Norton "Symantec" Schwartz.

"My impression is that the team is effectively supporting the folks that need it — the shooters," General Schwartz said. "It is clear that there's a sense of urgency here. It is clear that people are engaged. They feel passionately about the cyberspace mission. And as a guy who's seven or eight thousand miles away, to see it personally is very satisfying."

The nature of the war in Afghanistan requires successful cyberlift, General Schwartz said.

"This kind of fight cannot be effectively prosecuted from main operating base networks. It's a distributed fight, and that requires us to be able to sustain those forces with distributed computing while they're deployed," he said. "It is absolutely clear that we're doing that with considerable effect."

In addition to delivering email, web pages, digital ammunition, and other supplies to the field, the cyberlift assets here are also called upon to move the medical records of injured personnel.

"Medevac.mil is what I call the quiet mission because it does not get that much attention unless the people whose records are being evacuated are very prominent like Bob Woodruff from ABC News last year," General Schwartz said.

"But the truth of the matter is, the treatment that Mr. Woodruff's medical records received is exactly the same as what our troops get," he said. "And that's the important part in our cyber-evac system. We are underwriting the all-volunteer force. Our youngsters know that if they get banged up we'll leave no stone unturned to transmit their medical records as quickly as possible to the best medical care, and that is what we do. In my view, that's how you sustain an all-volunteer force."

Using a PC-17 for cybermedical evacuation greatly enhances the care given to the patients, the general said, because that platform has power, lighting, nitrogen-cooled CPUs and other tools.

That kind of versatility will be a key feature in new cyberlift platforms the Air Force develops, General Schwartz said. He used the PC-X, the next generation of router, as an example. The PC-X will "certainly be a router first, but will have digital cargo and cyber-evac capability designed in from the beginning rather than as an after thought," he said.

"Future commanders will have modern operating system platforms that operate with much higher reliability and that will be very versatile. I think people understand that aging servers are an issue. The battles that we're fighting and likely to fight for the next few years are distributed fights that need cyberlift more than ever."

As the commander of USTCPCOM, General Schwartz is the single manager for global cyber transportation for the Department of Defense. Coming from a unified command, the general is familiar with the partnerships exhibited here with sister services and coalition forces. "The network team at Bagram is in fact a joint team," he said.

"People appreciate what each other do and try to provide mutual support. Teamwork is evident, and it's very satisfying to see people from other services committed to the Air Force cyberspace mission."

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