

Audio Interview Transcription
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None of the material highlighted in yellow has been “edited”.

MIKE: Let me talk about air superiority in general, the impact of SAMs on air superiority, and then what we decided to do about them. Now this goes a long way back, but I think it sets the right kind of context. The Army Air Corps, as a matter of policy, called doctrine when this view was established – there was little air operational history, but there was a great deal of study, analysis and debate in the middle of the 30s – asserted that ‘a determined bomber attack could not be turned back’. There was a strong belief in bomber invincibility. And, in the 1930s the focus of the air operational thinking was on the combat elements; priority was on the bomber; attack and pursuit aviation were recognized but discounted; observation, liaison, aerial resupply were recognized as essential but clearly tertiary tasks; air mobility, space operations, ballistic missile defense, etc., and other evolving concepts had not yet entered the vocabulary.

Air forces can engage enemy objectives directly and immediately or as soon as such objectives are within range. These objectives, usually called targets, can be near or far; they can be important in some fleeting, or some lasting, significance. Without getting into the history of, the evolving doctrine for, the analytical basis for, and the command arrangements for, determining the most appropriate objectives for air operations of the day, this discussion will focus on dealing with the attack of objectives however they were selected.

Among the fundamental differences between ground and air forces, ground forces can seize, hold, degrade or destroy objectives; air forces can only degrade or destroy. Another significant difference between the way ground and air forces function is that ground forces fight the first,

the nearest, enemy combatant they encounter; then they fight the next first enemy combatant and then the next first enemy, and so on, all the while attempting to arrive at, and to achieve the designated military objective.

Armies usually – notwithstanding examples of enemy forces that are by-passed – penetrate enemy-held geography and fight, in turn, each of the first enemy soldiers, or companies or armies that stand in the path toward the designated military objective that is to be seized, held, destroyed or otherwise disposed of.

Air forces, on the other hand, developed the philosophy, the policy, the doctrine – and the organization, training, equipment, tactics and techniques – to permit them to penetrate enemy-held geography and to go whenever, wherever and to whatever objectives they were aiming at to destroy or render ineffective – and do it as step one. So-called ‘roll-back’ campaigns were not part of WW II air campaign thinking. In most regards this worked during WWII, although it turned out to be an expensive way of doing business. Everything was new, everything was changing; there were no established patterns. Luftwaffe and Japanese air forces needed to be driven from the sky to minimize their effectiveness. There was a lively internal debate over how best to do this – in the air or on the ground. Enemy aircraft and munitions production facilities were frequently designated primary objectives, as were air bases; anti-aircraft artillery concentrations seldom were.

During WWII the Army Air Corps was organized, trained and equipped around a heavy bomber base with the idea of going directly and immediately to destroy the most significant objectives from day to day. It was called a strategic campaign because Army Air Forces aimed to destroy the core, the strategic heart, the essential source, of its enemy’s fighting capabilities, and thereby accelerate the collapse of the whole ‘system’ of enemy war-fighting potential.

Air leaders learned through sad experience in WWII that bombers, as robust as they were, were vulnerable, partly to anti-aircraft guns – flak – but seriously to enemy fighter aircraft. And so a high price was paid until long-range, friendly fighters became available to escort daylight bomber raids. Ground based defenses were a problem, a serious problem, but the AAF never

lost its focus on the designated primary objectives because of enemy ground based defenses. Throughout WWII air forces from the Royal Air Forces – largely for reasons of revenge – and the US Army Air Forces – largely to sustain a vision – went directly to whatever the objectives were and accepted the consequences and went again the next day: ‘a determined bomber attack could not be turned back’.

As American forces got into Korea, there was little change in the philosophical mindset; air forces went out and attempted to destroy or degrade whatever was thought to be the most significant objectives of the day. People who meant to be our enemies in the future learned from our behavior: they needed to have more and more effective air defenses, and so, they built more capable interceptor aircraft – relatively small, short range, highly maneuverable – and more effective surface based defenses, which ultimately grew into integrated air defense systems of aircraft, flak and Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs).

SAMs started showing up, in the late 50s and early 60s. The USAF did not change its philosophical approach to attacking highest priority targets, but it did, through operational analysis, test and evaluation, decide to deal with radar-controlled SAMs with training and planning techniques for low-level radar-evading penetration and weapon delivery. This thrust was evident in rigorous training for nuclear weapons employment in US strategic and tactical forces and in allied forces worldwide. The USAF and the US Navy, adopted the same approach for the same reasons.

When the war in Viet Nam demanded intensive conventional weapons employment, American air forces turned initially to long held doctrinal views – the invincibility of the bomber, which, in this case, was the fighter bomber. Air operations in North Vietnam proved early on the need to adjust to new a new reality, to develop new approaches, new tactics and, eventually, new equipment. In the meantime, we again paid a serious price. Heavily defended priority objectives – the North Vietnamese knew what was intrinsically important, at least they knew what was important to them and there was significant correlation with American views – were surrounded with dense, optical- and radar-controlled, networked, rapid-fire gun systems. These guns were

the low-level elements of an integrated air defense system that included guns and SAMs; on some days an overlay, not well integrated, air defense fighter force added to the mix that American air forces needed to deal with. That's when the USAF recognized the need for a dedicated force to deal specifically with SAMs: the Wild Weasel concept was introduced, first with the F-100 in 1965. This was a reaction to SA-2 SAMs that proved to be very effective medium altitude defensive systems. Guns drove American air forces up out of the best regime for gun effectiveness and into the teeth of the SAMs. A SAM-killer became the option of choice. There were active and passive electronic techniques that had temporary positive impact on the operating environment, and, they were useful as supplemental techniques; the lasting technique was SAM destruction.

The USAF was driven to SAM-killers through painful experience, not because we had analyzed the intelligence and developed a counter through a planning and requirements process. SA-2s did all those things that intelligence said they would do. The USAF was deep in the urgency executing US nuclear deterrent strategy, focused on planning and training for one-time, below-the-radar, low-level nuclear missions. While I think the USAF is a little smarter now, I believe it is only a little smarter; individuals and organizations are driven to invest time and resources to critical missions; important missions are side-lined. Organizations largely pursue what was a success yesterday, and tries it again today. Until it becomes painfully obvious that yesterday's answer is no longer adequate to the task. So, in the middle of the 60s, we found out that 'gain and maintain air superiority' meant a lot more than just disposing of enemy aircraft, and that there were lots of other effective combat vehicles that could be used by an enemy to make US forces pay a heavy price. The USAF was not adequately prepared to deal with a known threat in expected in a combat arena.

Enemy surface based systems are relatively fixed; they operate within a certain and predictable bubble; they do not roam wherever they choose. The AF and the Navy did some analytical work, figured out that SAMs were attackable, worked at finding the means and the techniques that would give US forces advantages and used both active and passive electronic means to

augment the hunter-killers. In several cases the AF reverted purposefully to 'a determined bomber attack cannot be turned back' policy – 'Linebacker' missions. And while the AF employed Wild Weasels and put active and passive means up, the forces went 'downtown' when and where they needed to go and the national and military leadership elected to pay the price. The price was dear; the results achieved immediate and desired political ends.

The Persian Gulf area, because of flat terrain, absence of jungle and mountainous terrain had excellent ground based radar coverage – a very effective environment for detecting aerial vehicles that might intrude or attack. It was an environment that the USAF and USN had a great deal of respect for. In the meantime, the Air Force had developed the platforms and the high speed anti-radiation missiles that could now effectively deal with first generation SAMs.

Within the Air Force, beginning in the mid-70s, Systems Command had worked on and fielded a number of stealthy vehicles, specifically, the F-117 stealth fighter. This was a planning and requirements based development; it was an example of long range vision brought to fruition through military research and quiet Congressional support.

SWEDE: However, interestingly enough, they wouldn't go in until the Army took the command. They were led in by us, and took these managing radars out with the Hellfire missiles.

MIKE: There were some low frequency search radars deployed well forward by the Iraqis; in what could charitably be described as 'indefensible positions'. Stealth technologies, in general, are more effective against higher frequency tracking and missile control frequencies than they are against low frequency surveillance and search radar. These search radars were attackable, and, they were attacked – in this case by Army Special Operations helicopters, flying nap-of-the-earth ingress routes and firing, I believe, Hellfire missiles. It was evidence of what I think was really good interservice cooperation in planning and execution.

There was solid intelligence on the technical capabilities of the Soviet-produced Iraqi-operated air defense hardware. There were, however, questions about the efficiency of the Iraqi system operators and the effectiveness of stealth technologies in a combat arena. The theoreticians are

prone to report that new technologies are robust and that enemy system operators are shaky; the aircrews who were to fly the initial missions wanted some extra confidence-building measures; the attacks on the search radars helped in that regard.

MIKE: Now let us turn to the Iraqis. Iraq, as a country, was, back in the 60s and 70s, what we would call an advanced country. Iraqis had a good educational system, very high literacy rate, their elites were educated largely along British lines; their military was trained in British traditions; lots of their leaders had gone to the British staff and war colleges. The Iraq military procured advanced weapon systems – air and ground. As I recall Iraq maintained about as many fighter aircraft as USAFE had – some 700s modern, largely Soviet, fighters. There were video images of guided weapon attacks against various Iranian targets shown on Iraqi TV. You will recall reports of limited US support to the Iraqis during its war with Iran.

Iraq had the fourth largest army in the world, and their fighters had been bloodied from having fought the Iranians for the preceding several years. And, by the way, they had proven themselves quite effective in fixed, set piece, defensive warfare. They knew how to establish overlapping, mutually supporting fields of fire and integrated short range and longer range artillery fans. They had dealt attacking Iranian formations several serious defeats. Those who had studied the Iraq - Iran war held some measure of respect for the Iraqi forces. Norman Schwarzkopf was one who had done these studies; he did not mean to give them a fight they knew how to handle.

Back to air operations. Along with Soviet equipment came Soviet training, procedures, tactics and techniques, which meant all the decisions are made very high in the chain of command; there was little opportunity for on-scene decision making. A radar controller would tell pilots when and where to turn, when to climb, when to descend, when to shoot. The Iraqi Air Force was not very flexible; its pilots had trained to be inflexible in the air, and that gave them serious flaws which were breakable by taking out communications, by jamming, by any number of

interventions. On the ground, Iraqis were looked at being an expensive enemy to deal with; in the air, I believe they were regarded as third rate; they had exploitable deficiencies that could be dealt with. Iraqi airmen had a mix of technical capabilities; the question was: what was the operator's ability to fully exploit the technical capabilities?

The US leadership did believe that F-117s would be able to penetrate – ‘the bomber could get through’ – go wherever with impunity.

DAVE: You did or did not?

MIKE: I did! But, again, people sit in offices or planning cells with slide rules and coffee cups, thinking big thoughts, always believe the vision. The air crews who are up there going to be hung out ... they're positive about it, but they are less positive than are the theoreticians. In any event, there was an effort to take out the long-range, low frequency radars because stealth does not mean as Time magazine called it: “invisible”. Stealth means that it is difficult to pick up, harder to track. And when you get down to the end game – stealth features are very effective.

DAVE: But not to those low frequency systems.

MIKE: Not to those. And those aren't perfect.

DAVE: These are in the acquisition range.

MIKE: They get a longer look, but not a continuous look. But as you get down the chain or up the chain to where you're going to lock on and fire something, the stealth becomes more and more effective. Although I ceased being Air Force Chief of Staff on the 17th of September 1990, and the war didn't start till '91, I was in the preparation.

DAVE: I'm sure you watched what was going on.

MIKE: I watched the war from the CBS News studios – operations center – on W57 Street in New York City. It was a fascinating place to watch. Let me back up for a minute. Norman Schwarzkopf came to the tank on the 1st of August, one day before Iraq invaded Kuwait. He told us about the disposition of Iraqi forces: they had assembled in various places in Iraq along the Kuwaiti border. He was not concerned about further movement, that they were going to invade. He thought that this was an exercise. In any event, on 2 August, Saddam gave an execute order, and the Iraqis moved promptly into Kuwait and stopped at its southern border. His task at this point was to defend Saudi Arabia.

DAVE: Okay, let's go on to this one. This one again is Jerry's.

MIKE: About planning.

DAVE: Yeah.

MIKE: In general planning for Central Command focused on the defense of Saudi Arabia. It was defense against Iraq; it was defense against Iran, and either of those were possibilities. Iran was regarded as the major threat; that had to do with long standing historical and cultural affinities and stresses among Sunnis and Shias. Iranians were, and are, largely, Shia; Iraqis are largely Shia, but the political and military leadership was clearly Sunni; Saddam Hussein himself was secular. When the 2 August invasion of Kuwait occurred, Iraqi troops moved forward without little interference by the Kuwaitis. Kuwait had a few military airplanes which they flew off to Saudi Arabia. A number of senior Kuwaitis drove south and hid in Saudi Arabia. The Iraqis established themselves in fixed defensive positions. No one knew at that point whether or not the Iraqis stay in place or whether they would continue south into Saudi Arabia. So the first

concern was to protect and defend Saudi Arabia; the United States deployed forces immediately to do that. Naval forces, including pre-positioned sets of equipment in the Indian Ocean for a Marine air-ground team and an aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean someplace were dispatched to the Gulf area. At about 48 hours the first tactical fighter squadrons were deployed into Saudi Arabia. Follow-on forces continued forward from each of the four services.

MIKE: Powell, Schwarzkopf, Horner and others met with the President on the 4 August. The existing "war plan" was a generic and conceptual; it had not been fully developed, briefed and approved, and, it did not apply to the extant circumstances; it did contain a generic time phased force deployment scheme, which was in execution. There was general discussion about available options and speculation about potential Iraqi moves.

Deployment actions proceeded at an increasing rate. MAC (Military Airlift Command, General H.T. Johnson, Commander) was operating at capacity and asked for a small increment of the CRAF (Civil Reserve Air Fleet – commercial aircraft for which the government had negotiated agreements for use during contingencies) to be activated. I made a trip in early August to MAC Headquarters to better understand how this CRAF call-up worked. While I was away, General Schwarzkopf called me from his Tampa headquarters. He was connected to the Vice Chief, General Mike Loh. Schwarzkopf explained that his in-theater forces were postured in a defensive mode. He, Schwarzkopf, wanted a plan from the Air Force. Loh called me, and I asked him to get Checkmate (an analytical cell developed by General David Jones, when he

was AF Chief of Staff, to do special studies) started on thinking about what it is that can and ought to be done.

I called General Schwarzkopf the next day to clarify his needs. He was very clear: he wanted to be able to provide an initiative, if the President asked for an early offensive option. He had a defensive plan to hold the Iraqis if they pushed forward; with few ground forces, he could only hold in one or two attack corridors. What he needed was an air initiative, in case the President wanted to pursue a bold stroke – not in response to an action from the Iraqis, rather as an initiative. In Schwarzkopf's view, Horner himself and a large part of his staff were fully engaged in 'reception and onward deployment' of arriving forces and related defensive planning actions. And so he, Schwarzkopf, was convinced that he did not have sufficient planning capacity to do a zero-based initiative. He knew that the services were not supposed to be involved with operational matters; he could hire a contractor. He decided that he would contract with the US Air Force to do this task and, in any event, whatever came of it would be a recommendation; he and his team would do whatever they chose once they saw the product. Checkmate's task was to develop a stand-alone initiative, not to develop the first three days of a war effort, not to develop a campaign plan to put Iraq out of business. It was to develop, what many would call, a raid.

SWEDE: Buddy was the chief weapons and tactics in spang and got all these TAC guys in. TAC had their own ideas about how to integrate resources and knew safety was a few light years ahead of them as far as putting all the assets... he remembered that.

MIKE: What frame was this?

SWEDE: This was WW Gulf I, your time. He went down, they put him down the black hole. In fact, I think he flew the second night. But, at any rate, he said, 'you know, they're all sitting around, and everything comes down like it does, and they get it, and they're breaking it out and

doing the frag and they all sit back and breathed a sigh of relief and somebody says, "What are we gonna do tomorrow night?" Because of this one sort of raid philosophy, they got all caught up in it, and weren't really looking to the next thing.

MIKE: Well, it was not a campaign plan.

SWEDE: Well, now I know what it is! Cool!

MIKE: The task could have been sent to any number of AF organizational elements. In previous contingencies – Panama and Grenada, for example – TAC had done some planning. The task clearly could have been sent to TAC. I elected to do this consultant work for my good friend Norman Schwarzkopf in Checkmate. The division chief, John Warden was a bright thinker; he willing to have fresh ideas; he was not rigid about force application matters. For example, I believe AirLand Battle is terrific Army doctrine. It was a great template for thinking about and maximizing the contribution of the US Army in combat operations. It was not designed to balanced air and ground force integration to maximize the product of the US government in pursuit of national policy. It is focused on making the US Army as efficient as it can be. Let me skip ahead. I make a visit to the theater approximately 11 – 14 September. Among other activities I received a highly classified briefing given by Brigadier General Buster Glosson, the chief of planning for US unilateral activities. This was a 'big deal'; there was some effort to get permission from the Chairman, JCS, for me to hear this briefing because it was an "operational" matter and a service chief was only supposed to be interested in "organize, train and equip". When the briefing was complete, it was a raid; there were a couple of additional aim points than had been in the Checkmate effort a month earlier, but no significant differences. My reaction: what happens on day 2, 3, and 15? There was no answer: there had been no thought to a cumulative and progressive campaign plan. Intellectually Glosson knew it was going to be more than a one-shot deal, but he just had not spent the energy to visualize the next steps.

SWEDE: You said they focused on the raid rather than on the potential campaign.

MIKE: As we walked out of the briefing, General Horner said to me: "We're here to do AirLand Battle"!

As it turned out air operations went on for 40 days – the thousand hour air campaign – before the ground forces entered Kuwait. General Schwarzkopf had seen good infantry men wasted in Vietnam and he did not mean to participate in that kind of war again. He had a campaign plan in mind that precluded the Iraqi forces from exercising their defensive strengths, degraded their force effectiveness by about 50% before he sent good infantrymen of some 40 nations into the terrain and combat environment of Kuwait. In my view, the greatest joint force commander the US has seen since McArthur is named Schwarzkopf. He and Horner worked very well together; they had worked together for three years before the Kuwait invasion; they listened to one another.

DAVE: Sounds like Chuck.

MIKE: The Checkmate planning effort was largely analytical and it continued throughout the war. Checkmate brought together virtually all of the national and service intelligence players; its key contribution in my view was the identification of some 10 objective (targeting) categories for attack. These target subsets, specific to the Iraq – Kuwait theater, did deal with a cumulative and progressive contraction of Iraqi capacity for command and control over its forces, with leadership, communications, transportation, etc. There was great concern about saying "leadership" at that time. I recall a personal conversation with the Secretary of Defense about this matter. I think we as a nation have subsequently come to the conclusion that if we are going to war, the leadership of other side is a legitimate military target.

SWEDE: I think General Schwarzkopf made a point of the world knowing that, despite misguiding the rest of us down here.

MIKE: Yeah, that's my target.

MIKE: I think that Schwarzkopf did orchestrate all the elements at his disposal at an appropriate level. He did not count sorties; he made sure that the whole team played, and played together. So, the planning at Checkmate took a couple of days. I reviewed the briefing; Colin Powell insisted on hearing it before it went to Schwarzkopf. In any event, after not very many days, Warden went to Tampa and briefed Schwarzkopf. When the briefing is complete, Schwarzkopf says, "This is exactly what I want". This is an initiative that the President can execute if he wants to do something at a time of our choosing. He sends Warden to the theater to give this briefing to Horner. I call Schwarzkopf and say, "If you're going to send this briefing to Horner, you need to let him know that this is your idea, you asked for it to be produced, you have approved it; otherwise, Warden will be eaten alive. He'll probably get eaten alive anyway." And he tells, me he will take care of it. I do not know whether he did or did not, but John Warden was not warmly greeted or accepted. When the briefing was over, Colonel Warden was dismissed summarily.

SWEDE: It was a common base line by the time they did that.

DAVE: Ok, this gets up to some of the stuff that Jerry wants to know how your experience in other things... let's see, as he says it: What experience best prepared you for the duties in what you're doing. And also, I guess he wants to know... walk us through how you influenced the overall operation. But you've already gone through that. I mean, you've covered that question.

DAVE: Yes. You've pretty much answered the next few questions here, in what you've been talking about.

MIKE: Helpful experiences. I read books that were helpful – General Kenney Reports was particularly memorable; Kenney understood MacArthur and his role in helping MacArthur to defeat the Japanese throughout the Southwestern Pacific Theater. He was not there to teach MacArthur air doctrine. He used heavy bombers as cargo carriers; he used medium bombers in the strafing role; he did whatever he could with the assets he had to make a success of the campaign as a whole. I recall a Blue Flag exercise that was very realistic, incorporating commander's guidance, analyzing available intelligence, developing priorities, applying resources available to the tasks at hand and developing the daily frag order. Another useful event I recall was a high level command and staff exercise conducted in 1990, while I was at USAFE and AAFCE. General John "Jack" Galvin was the SACEUR; he organized a major Allied Command Europe exercise called ?????; it included CinC South, CinC North and my NATO commander, CinC Cent, General Hans-Henning von Sandrart, German Army. He was Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Central Europe – all of the NATO committed air and ground forces of Germany, Belgium, Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States within the central region.

General Galvin had done a great deal of personal homework on air forces and their capabilities; he had studied in some detail USAF doctrinal publications and knew what air forces were supposed to do. He made careful and pertinent inquiries about how various air ops were organized, integrated and executed. He was highly informed as a result of his own efforts. General von Sondrart was less well informed, skeptical, inquisitive.

As the exercise developed a serious problem developed in the North German Plain; we put 1600 sorties per day into that area. Air Forces do not fight like the various Army Corps in European planning environment. But air forces go, within range, where the major problem is today, and they attempt to help solve that problem; the next day they turn the fire hose to the new day's problem. In any event, this was a week-long computer-controlled simulation exercise. The computer took command plans and intentions and played off opposing plans and intentions;

it assessed force movements and force attrition. While it was not accurate to the satisfaction of any of the players, it was helpful in presenting operational problems and posing an 'order of magnitude' assessment based on competing moves. It was a useful tool to get higher level staffs and commanders to think about integrated solutions to joint and combined problems in a fast moving large scale scenario. It was terrific. The simulated exercise, much of which was driven by the Warrior Preparation Center; they had a very highly-integrated system that could play out expected results. And, General Galvin could get his colonels and general to make decisions as opposed to worrying about where the troops were and who was active today, and whether or not they could drive tanks through the various villages.

DAVE: Yeah, question six.

MIKE: So one thing sticks in my mind about senior officers in the US Army. Officers start their careers as infantrymen, artillerymen, engineers; as they got older and uglier, they were required to develop broader responsibilities along with the attendant authorities, especially when they became small 'g' general officers. They were expected to be "general" officers. They were expected to become broader tactically, operationally and intellectually. In terms of leadership skills, they were not supposed to be deeper into their own functional stovepipe, but interested in and capable of integrating lots of stovepipes. Some did that gracefully and some never escaped their own smoke.

Recall when we became an Air Force the leadership decided that the USAF would not separate ourselves into functional branches; the officer and enlisted corps would all serve without institutional boundaries wherever needed. And then we created boundaries, based largely on cost of training, that were and are, much more rigid than those facing anyone who was in infantry, armor or artillery. The USAF enlisted force is somewhat more flexible than the officer corps, let me focus on the officer situation. Infantrymen served in armor units; artillerymen are in infantry, armor and artillery units; engineers serve throughout the US Army; there is an

institutional framework to foster institutional values. In the Air Force, on the other hand, missile officers serve in missile units and in the Pentagon, never in fighter, bomber or airlift units; airlift officers meet their compatriots from bomber or fighter units at professional military schools or the Pentagon. "Acquisition reform" has created yet another stovepipe of specialist, who are largely prevented from learning how the rest of the USAF works.

SWEDE: It looks from where I sit, sir, a lot of times like its sort of a sine wave. You know, we get a little bit purple and then all of the sudden we re-trench and get tunnel vision pure light blue and it's, I thought we were there. And mostly driven by budgetary constraints, I think.

MIKE: Cost of training is certainly a legitimate... but someplace along the line provision needs to be made to help people to think bigger thoughts when they get bigger responsibilities because you make the sine wave go like this if you don't do that. That was one thing that was very obvious from dealing with the Army, and is not nearly as obvious in dealing with the Air Force. How did senior types influence the overall operation plan. So, the requirement for air superiority really dealt with the SAMs. The Iraqi fighters were just of no consequence.

DAVE: They actually flew into Iran, didn't they?

MIKE: Well, they didn't when F-15s were up. They only did when the F-14s were up, and that's because they couldn't fill their time block. They fled to Iran, or they buried them in the sand, they parked them next to schoolhouses, they learned quickly that they just were not in the game, and they became just no factor. The SAMs on the other hand were a factor. They were not a factor for the 117s. though we lost one 117 in combat in Kosovo.

DAVE: Yes in Kosovo, it was probably because he had his bombay door open, and he was

barraged with the SA3, because the flat face was able to see through the stealth.

MIKE: Once again, we were doing old style tactics.

SWEDE: We're so predictable; we do the same thing every time...

MIKE: We're following down the river.

DAVE: And the A6B was off in the wilderness somewhere, not where he should have been.

SWEDE: That was one factor when I talked to a lot of the 117 drivers, more kind of a squadron, or one-on-one level. They had a personal kind of an ROE, that if there wasn't at least one around, they didn't have to be on station and jamming, but if there weren't any F's available or Weasels in the area, whether it was the Weasel police or whatever configuration. That wasn't an abort item, even for them. However, they said, "We might be invisible, but we're not stupid."

MIKE: In any event, the 117 functioned as briefed; they went to the assigned targets, and they dropped one weapon or two weapons on high priority objectives. That highlights one of John Warden's thoughts that came through, and I believe has lasted: the USAF needed to develop the capability and operational philosophy to execute attacks against multiple priority objectives simultaneously. There has been talk for years and, indeed, a book titled, "Shock and Awe." There was certainly shock and awe in Baghdad for the first several days of Gulf War One. After several days of that kind of punishment there arrives a point where the recipient learns they can live through some of it.

MIKE: The very worst thing one can do is to offer a dose of gradualism – “stun and amazement” – an enemy learns early on that he can live through a lot of that. After that, it becomes an exercise, and it's not an overwhelming psychological impact.

Soviet SAMs did take down a few airplanes; the leadership responded with ‘no fly zones’ for conventional aircraft and attempted to deal with the SAMs with F-117s and jamming. And, every once in a while we paid the price for leaking through wherever the boundary was from day to day.

DAVE: Were the capabilities of the SAMs any surprise to you at all? As you said earlier, you pretty much knew the level of capability and what the systems were.

MIKE: The SAMs merited respect regardless of what the efficiency of the operators. The equipment merited respect on its own. And the operators, if they could work with some specialized capability and integrate, they could be effective. Iraqi SAM operators learned to use network effects quite quickly.

DAVE: That was, as you went back, you said earlier, your objective was to go in and hit integrated capabilities so that they couldn't operate.

Dave: Did you find it challenging to educate non Air Force authorities how to...[mumbling as reading question] Some more difficult than others. Colin Powell said a couple of nice things about air power, but they were exceptions.

Mike: Schwarzkopf, I think, ‘got it’. And part of the reason he got it is because I think he was very good personal chemistry between himself and Horner.

DAVE: So what was your class? '59?

MIKE: Another thing is, and this is probably more for Hoblit. So, our class was the last class to put 25 percent of its graduates into the Air Force. That was the deal when the Army Air Forces separated from the Army in 1947. The Class of '59 was the first class to graduate from the US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs. West Point and the Army did a terrific job in orienting the whole class of 1958 on how the Army lieutenant would see his new life: infantry – Fort Benning, we saw and participated in typical days of a new infantry lieutenant, jumping out of parachute towers and practicing PLFs; armor – at Fort Knox we drove heavy equipment, fired tank weapons; air defense artillery – Fort Bliss familiarized with the equipment and language of Nike and Hawk systems; artillery – Fort Sill we learned how to 'lay the battery' and fired howitzers and cannon. And we went to Eglin, Maxwell, Wright Patterson, Maguire and others. In any event, there was a very good orientation about all of 'branch' choices to permit informed choices at graduation. I give West Point and the Army high grades for the classy way they informed all cadets.

DAVE: Okay. Now, the one question we all want to know. Because we all knew Chuck, cause Chuck was an IP when I went to the Weasel school. He and I... no I was already a major and he was a captain down working for Bill Kirk. How was he selected to take over that air component?

DAVE: Well, I was around the corner in the EW group. But Corder and Kirk and Stanley...no Stanley came later. Jack Donovan was in there for a little while. But Stanley replaced Jack.

SWEDE: That was critical.

DAVE: I know! We had a good group all around the purple water fountain.

MIKE: The purple water fountain is enshrined.

DAVE: I know, I saw it a few months ago.

MIKE: How did you get in the Pentagon?

DAVE: I was actually escorted by some... I went to the fighter barn. Dana Morrell, who is our local active force CinC in DC. She brought me in.

MIKE: It is so painful to get in.. it's harder to get into the Pentagon... well, anyway. You know when they retire and they get the thing out and it says "Long and distinguished service", "Grateful nation." All bullshit.

DAVE: Dickie Guild and I, Dana picked us up because that was the re-opening of the fighter barn?. So she picked us up and brought us in. Yeah, we had a good group down there in that basement.

SWEDE: With all due respect to the departed, there are a couple interesting stories about the various generals in the Black Hole area, including Corder and Glenn Proffit. Proffit had an idea most of the working class didn't think it was much of a good idea. Shows up in a briefing. He goes hunting for him, for this major who's some Wild Weasel guy...

SWEDE: He came back to Ramstein after he retired. "Sudor, how ya doin'?" He was sitting in

the bar, smoking and drinking or whatever. "Sir, good to see ya." Took my hand back, looked at my ring and said, "You're slipping!" And apparently, General Corder... or, General Proffit's walking down the hall gunning for this major. It's like, the major's here, the general's here, and Corder steps out and says, "Glenn, can I help you?" It was really interesting from my standpoint 'course watching that from the smelly bunker up there, because I had... you can't ask a general to sit there all night, so they took ??? we had duty colonels up there, and I had a stew 3 and a stew 2. And I got especially in the Turkey Air Defense thing we did a lot of swapping and mixing and missing and matching what was a NATO sortie, what was a US sortie. And one of the guys out in one of the forward air control areas in Turkey, we're launching a strike force, and it was the third night, fourth night. And the Turks come up to Rocky and "What are you guys going after, they got nothing left! You bombed the lights out, their electrical grid's down, they're living on candles." Rocky looks at me, says, "Tonight, we're getting the candle factories!"

DAVE: Ok, let's go to the next page here. I think you've covered a lot of this with Schwarzkopf. Your planning was done by the consultant, or the...

MIKE: The Checkmate planning was for a raid. Glosson took that and, in large measure, executed the raid. By the time he got to where he was going to execute, he had twice the number of forces that was in the Checkmate plan. We had little insight as to how many forces would be available in that first, second week in August when Warden was putting his plan together. He made some assumptions, which were pretty good for what was in place through the 1990 Congressional election. Once the election was over, the force was doubled. Glosson had twice the forces and, consequently, he selected additional aim points. Conceptually, the first night was the Checkmate plan.

DAVE: Okay, and then the initial target priorities, you covered those. We talked several times. It

was the integration units that basically tried to control the air war, as far as the air power is concerned.

MIKE: There was some significance about 'what was excluded'? There are, I am sure, better sources than me; however, in the Checkmate plan we were careful to avoid anything that produced or moved oil; we were careful in downtown Baghdad to hit military targets; we tasked only precision munitions; we avoided schools and housing areas and so forth. You recall relatively early on there was a big bunker that was hit; apparently, it was full of civilians. So it was some kind of a personnel security thing that we thought was a command and control bunker. Good intelligence is never good enough.

MIKE: We talked about Horner.

DAVE: Yeah, and we talked about the first 2, 11 and 12 (questions). What was his decapitation thing? Was that one of...something?

MIKE: That was one of the ten 'objective' categories – leadership targets. But I would tell you that, again, when it came to execution, I'm on the outside looking in.

DAVE: I understand.

MIKE: The Secretary of Defense was giving speeches about 'assassination is not in our policy'. The problem with that is confusion among the majors and the tech sergeants – they are the most likely participants to pick up a stray signal or conversation that merits immediate action – their unit commander is telling them to go out and do a good job: destroy leadership targets...

and the Secretary of Defense is giving speeches about how we as, a nation, do not do this. The majors and sergeants get confused about whether or not they really want to be involved

DAVE: So nothing has changed in 19 years.

DAVE: Okay. All right. Essentially, the answer to question 14, I assume is that really there weren't any surprises. Because you were well aware and you practiced the stuff. MIKE: If there was any surprise, it was how weak the Iraqi pilots were.

DAVE: Their pilots.

MIKE: Their pilots that did get shot down. It was how weak their leadership was.

DAVE: Okay, now we get to the important questions, which are the ones I asked about the Weasels. Only, you didn't fly the Weasel, this goes back in the south. You flew what used to be the Sandy? The A-1.

MIKE: I was in Viet Nam in '65 for about a month and a half. I flew out of Ben Hoa; most of the missions were in Camau Peninsula. I went back in '67. in March, I was flying a Gravel mission. Gravel was a munition, a mine, a pie shaped mine, bathed in lithium hydride that becomes active when the lithium evaporates; if one steps on it or drives over it it blows a foot or a tire off.

DAVE: Okay.

MIKE: So we dropped it just south of the Mugia Pass on the road network. And the idea was to

pull off, get a mile or two separation from the target, drop off the containers in case something was left in the container because it would be unstable. Anyway, before I got to pull mine off, the wing blew off. It may have been a golden BB, but I am convinced that it was a defective munition.

SWEDE: I think they redid the dispensers before the phantoms started carrying it. They made us very aware to make damn well sure that the thing's empty and if you don't know, go ahead and clean off the jet....

MIKE: They can't be reused, you know, clean it off.

SWEDE: Exactly.

MIKE: I spent a night in the jungle. Jungle is noisy. It was really loud. There's animals, and there was people sawing and hammering not far off. You don't hear through a heavy thick jungle very far.

DAVE: Okay, so the weasels essentially didn't interfere in the areas where you were.... it was the SAMs.

MIKE: No, so I was...

DAVE: There was no need for Weasels before...

MIKE: Later on, when we got into the 70s, there were some SA7s down.

DAVE: But the Weasels couldn't do anything about that.

SWEDE: 72' there was never quite really... Intel might have known. We had something down in pack one at Bat Lake that we thought might have been an SA3 but it never really got confirmed.

DAVE: We found out what that was. It was always back at five o'clock or seven o'clock from where ever this guy was. And it was a screw up in some of the equipment that was on board. That was basic. We used to get that stuff and start doing all the checks, and we found out that...

MIKE: It would always be down on the left hand corner.

DAVE: One, I can't remember now if it was five o'clock or seven o'clock, but it was always back there, and it was never...

SWEDE: There were a few missile sightings that would seem to be, and they were smoking, that they would seem to be a little bit too slow in maneuvering to have been like a shoulder fire. So we weren't really sure where they were coming from and there was conjecture that maybe they'd brought in 3's or even a 2. But, never confirmed.

DAVE: Alright, when you were CinC USAFE , you had the Weasels under you.

MIKE: Yup.

DAVE: And you had your attack plans. Was the Weasel a major part? I mean, still using the first in last out?

MIKE: First, for major operational planning USAFE is imbedded in AFFCE and USAFE was, in my view, stuck with the inertia of having to deal with six nations to move any concept, any idea, any plan. So one of the first things I wanted to get out of, was that, you know, the F-15s all thought that they were going to fly over France, because they were going to be behind all the missiles.

SWEDE: And to protect Big Bird, so they had someplace to land.

MIKE: The missile fountain might not. And yet they didn't want to fly over a friendly missile belt because they just weren't sure. And they didn't want to fly over the enemy missile belt, because they were sure. And so the European environment in 1989 was roll back. And it was...

SWEDE: That's right! We did that Integration of the Air Space Control and Air Defense plan under your watch!

MIKE: Well, I tried to get it changed, and it was just painful.

SWEDE: Like pulling teeth.

MIKE: So the Weasels were the clear tip of the spear. And most of the USAFE and AFFCE aircrew wanted Weasels in front of them – all the time.

SWEDE: We were working that integrated triad thing with the...

DAVE: So they played a major part in your penetration.

MIKE: There was one wing of Weasels at Spang, and no other NATO nation had Weasel capability in USAFE. It was a very small force compared with the overall force they were

supposed to protect; and, the Pact had a huge investment in SAMs and the integration network to make them effective.

DAVE: Okay, these are already the Gs. F-16s hadn't started coming in yet.

SWEDE: We did some hunter killer stuff at Spang.

DAVE: Alright, so the tip of the spear was the G-models.

MIKE: The F-16CJ terminology was not invented yet. They were probably in design. There is a question in here about what do you think about dedicated vs. generic. Dedicated beats generic every time!

DAVE: Ok, because what they're doing now with the CJs, they're making them do everything else.

DAVE: The reason I asked the question is, two different times, I've met with Fingers Goldfin when he was the OG up at Mountain Home. And he told me they were starting to carry the two thousand pounders, which the Weasel can't really carry, because if he's carrying arms, he can't put a two thousand pounder. And the same with Bounce Strawther, when he had the squadron at Spang, it was the same thing.

they were giving the F-16 other missions than Weasel missions.

SWEDE: Some of that had to do with the situation at hand, that way it came down. If in fact, you had this much covered, and the threat didn't demand this many Weasels, they could go

ahead and move mud like any other Viper. I don't think it was ever to the exclusion. Their primary was still the Weasels.

DAVE: Ok, let me get back to one here, because this has always been a controversy in the EW world. Those of us who were Weasels vs. all the electronic weenies. Did you feel that there was an integration requirement for using the F-111s and self-protection?

MIKE: Absolutely.

SWEDE: That's what we were doing under him.

DAVE: Okay, so it was a synergistic thing.

DAVE: Alright, and so you really prefer the specific mission airplane rather than the generic.

MIKE: Otherwise, you're shooting in the air hoping that somebody flies through it. Whether you're shooting electrons or whatever.

DAVE: Then the other question, the last question I had was... because I remember talking to folks over the past 15 years, that there's not going to be another dedicated Weasel airplane. Maybe we'd turn the UCAV into that.

DAVE: Does UCAVs make sense in your mind?

MIKE: Weasel UCAVs –yes. First of all, the politicians are more likely to use them. Secondly, UCAVs become mission-specific. And dedicated Weasel UCAVs won't do CAS; they won't do interdiction, they won't do road recce. If they are equipped and trained to do the Weasel mission, that's what they will do; and, a specific and dedicated kind of platform always whips a generic platform.

DAVE: Ok, I wanted to hear that from you, because you've been up there where you see all this stuff. We have parochial views.

DAVE: Okay, the next group of questions were the ones that Ed Balanco put in there. And I think you've pretty much covered that, because it was basically a roll back, roll down philosophy. And Victor flew the Gs so, what did he have? Eleven SAM kills?

SWEDE: In fact, I called him. He was the DO at the WPC and I was already a slimy contractor working down in what we called the dungeon, where the black op stuff was in the basement of building 201 at Ramstein. I called him one day, and I'm looking at the number of kills and shit, and I said, "Well, I think we're about half way through the Kosovo capers." I said, "Victor!" He said, "What?" I said, "If they have a real good day today, the whole force will tie your record."

MIKE: By the way, I thought the Warrior Prep Center was a terrific idea and I think it's still in business.

SWEDE: It got real watered down. The agreement, when you get...

MIKE: Again, we got very good at training, you know, buck privates, sergeants, lieutenants and

captains. We don't work at training colonels and generals.

DAVE: Okay, I think we've pretty much covered these as well. And then of course, Anything you want to bring up, or ask us about, then we'll go into rules of engagement on how we handled this one. But I think we've pretty much, as we've discussed this, we've covered all these things in here.

SWEDE: The general made a real good point on the fact that whether you call it seed defense suppression, I don't care, it's air superiority. And doctrinally it has to be, but it's still, even in US circles in places, it's still, 'well, no, it's not really...' Yes it is!

MIKE: It is, it is. You don't own the air, if they've got a bunch of two digit SAMs all over the place.

SWEDE: Yeah, some of these long white flowing scarf eagle drivers that says, "Now air superiority is killing airplanes."

MIKE: Air superiority is killing airplanes

SWEDE: Yeah, even if they're unmanned airplanes.

MIKE: No, no, those SAM guys are killing airplanes.

SWEDE: There you go.

DAVE: Well, that's in 3-1, isn't it? Because I remember Jim McInerny and I were out of the loop,

because we were in the FMS business. Something came up when I was working with him, or working for him, in which we gave an input, because Jim was a Weasel as well. And we said, the Weasel defense suppression was part of the air superiority. I mean, you know, you lined up. Somewhere I probably have the paper buried in my archives somewhere, but I don't know that it ever got in that way.

SWEDE: Doctrinally now, and in Air Force doctrine, whatever the number is, because they changed a lot of that, it is there under air superiority. The problem is the side discussions as to whether or not they should be, and I know you were very strong and very clear... [End]

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