

**GENERAL RICHARD B. MYERS****Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff****Change of Command/Retirement Ceremony**Adm  
Jim  
Ellis**Offutt AFB, Omaha, Nebraska****July 9, 2004**

Let me start by saying thanks to the men and women of the new United States Strategic Command standing here in formation, to the Joint Color Guard before us, and to the Air Force Heartland of America Band. You've done a great job in representing your command, your individual Services, and all the members of our joint team serving around the world. You look and sound terrific! Thank you.

It's a great pleasure to be back here in Omaha. This is the third time in three years that I've been on this stage with Jim Ellis. That has to be some kind of record. But this time Jim is retiring, we're not going to change the name of Strategic Command or add any more new missions, at least not for awhile.

You can't be from Omaha, or Nebraska, and not be a Corn Husker Fan. Do we have any fans out there? Well I see a little bit of enthusiasm out there, that's good. As many of you know I'm from Kansas State University, and I'm a really hardcore Wildcat fan. I see that we are going to host Nebraska in Manhattan this October. We welcome Nebraska to the home of the Big Twelve Champions. They say that football has come a long way. So has Strategic Command come a very long way in a very short period of time, due in large measure to the leadership and vision of Admiral Jim Ellis.

As Secretary Wolfowitz said, Jim took command of the "old STRATCOM" right after 9/11 and immediately set out to reshape the roles and missions of that old command to better posture our military forces to defeat existing and future threats against our nation. You did this by expanding the options available to the President, both from a strong nuclear deterrence standpoint and conventional and non-kinetic response options. In this new asymmetric threat environment that also meant taking a fresh look at the strategic bounds of Strategic Command, or perhaps removing those bounds is a more accurate way to put it. And that's what brought me out here for my second trip in October 2002, when we combined Space Command and Strategic Command.

It would have been easy, I think, to default to the position that Space Command would be stuck in a corner in Strategic Command. But we knew that with Admiral Ellis at the helm, and with this great staff, that wasn't about to happen. It was indeed a unique situation. The name stayed the same, the commander stayed the same, but the number and type of missions grew significantly and so did the area of responsibility, now reaching across cyberspace and into outer space. And the President added four previously unassigned missions: Global Strike, Information Operations, Global Missile Defense Integration, and Global Command and Control. Notice the word "global" in three of the four missions. Today we live in a globalized world, obviously. We're at war with terrorists that have global reach, and our military must have a global perspective. It's a tall order. Our Nation depends on Strategic Command for success, and STRATCOM is delivering.

Jim, the President charged you to "be ready to strike at any moment's notice in any dark corner of the world." That's exactly what you've done, and in superb fashion. Within months, you compressed the conventional planning process, and accelerated execution timelines from weeks to days, and in some cases down to only hours. Today we can recognize a threat, develop a plan of action, and execute a mission faster than ever before.

In the months leading up to OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, your C4ISR team analyzed 12,400 aimpoints, and provided Central Command with 1,143 electronic target folders that could be executed by that command.

Then you produced target intelligence and mission planning support for 144 Conventional Air-Launched Cruise Missile strikes on the first day of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, the largest Conventional Air-Launched Cruise Missile volley in history. You also provided the needed Battle Damage Assessment that allowed the Marines to cross the Tigris River into Baghdad, confident in their threat assessment. Your efforts allowed us to wage the most precise and humane war possible, remove a tyrant from power, and as the Secretary [Wolfowitz] said, liberate 25 million Iraqis.

And throughout the war you've defended our forces against cyber attacks and kept the Department of Defense on line for Command and Control of mission-critical information, again ensuring the security of this great Nation. "Global" is much more than a geographic term. It means closer coordination with all the Services, Combatant Commands, and all the agencies of our federal government. But it must also include our allies to be a truly global effort. And you've worked diligently with, among others, our British allies, expanding their role in your missions to include representatives from their Army, Navy and Air Force.

On a very important note, you've moved us closer to a global missile defense system. You've developed the doctrine, concepts of operation, and operational plans in close coordination with the other services and the other Combatant Commands. And the first booster was delivered to Fort Greely last week, marking what I think is a significant milestone in making global ballistic missile defense a reality.

One might ask what Jim is leaving for his successor to do? You've done so much, and your staff has done so much. It's absolutely remarkable when you look at all the accomplishments made during your time here at STRATCOM. But you've been helped along the way. Jim, you've been blessed in many ways. You've been fortunate to live in Omaha, a truly wonderful community that very strongly supports your mission and your folks. And you've been especially blessed to serve with such dedicated and professional men and women from all services including our talented civilians, but you know that as well.

We all know that Jim couldn't do all that he's done without his high school sweetheart and life-long partner Polly, and Secretary Wolfowitz has already honored Polly with the Distinguished Service Award for her tireless contributions as Jim's partner for 34 years. Our families play a very vital role in the well-being and support of our military members. My wife Mary Jo, in fact, likes to say that military families also serve and also sacrifice just like the military member do. So Polly we thank you for your sacrifice and America really appreciates all you've done. Not just for what you've done for Jim and your family, but what you've done for your extended military family as well. We really appreciate all you've done.

Well Jim, you've done it all, and I know you're proud of your time here in Omaha. Knowing you had the watch allowed all of us to sleep much better at night.

And now, a few words about your new commander. He's a Marine Corps fighter pilot. Back when Jim Ellis took command of STRATCOM, people joked about possibly renaming this base Naval Air Station Omaha. Well now it'll either be renamed Marine Corps Air Station Omaha, or perhaps the "Ponderosa," since "Hoss" Cartwright's the new sheriff in town. Soon to be "General" Cartwright brings a wealth of experience and an abundance of talent to this command, and he's been carefully selected to guard our National Security.

He's commanded at every level up through Commanding General First Marine Air Wing. And he's managed acquisition and budgeting programs at all levels. As Secretary Wolfowitz said, his last job was as our resource wizard on the Joint Staff. On that staff he led a superstar team to always make sure that the warfighters and the Services got what they needed to fight the war. He's used to leading the best, so it'll be an easy adjustment here at STRATCOM, as he settles in. This is a great staff out here. And his team helped STRATCOM get the resources they needed to adapt and field these new missions. Perhaps his most important attribute is the way he deals with people. He's very skilled at that. He has another important attribute and that is that he's never been shot as the messenger, no matter what the message is, and that is a really important talent. As STRATCOM's missions continue to evolve and grow, my view is that you're in good hands to plan and execute all the roles and missions that are so critical to our National Defense.

And with him of course is Sandee, his wife of 30 years. I hope that's right, I asked Jim how long he'd been married and he thought for a minute and then said yep, he thought it was about 30 years. I hope you're not in too much trouble. She's been by his side the whole time and she's participated in everything he's done. She's a dynamic part of this team. So the folks here in Omaha are fortunate. They're a very dynamic duo. So Hoss and Sandee, welcome to your new home.

On behalf of all the Joint Chiefs, we bid a fond farewell to Jim and Polly, and we wish you both fair winds and following seas as you start your next adventure.

Now I get to do something that's not done very often and for a reason, when a command like Strategic Command demonstrates the exceptional vision, planning and execution that results in such sweeping changes, transformational changes to our military capabilities, they deserve special recognition. So Admiral Ellis if you would join me. Ladies and gentlemen, it's now my pleasure to award the Joint Meritorious Unit Award to the dedicated professionals of United States Strategic Command.