

412 Lengyel

Voiceover: This program is presented in partnership with the National Guard.

(Theme music)

Voiceover: The following is a production of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Bringing citizens and citizen soldiers together through the exploration of military history, topics, and current affairs, this is *Pritzker Military Presents*.

(Applause)

Havers: Welcome to *Pritzker Military Presents* and to a discussion with General Joseph Lengyel about the role of the United States National Guard. I'm your host Dr. Rob Havers, and this program is coming to you from the Pritzker Military Museum and Library in downtown Chicago. It's presented in partnership with the National Guard. This program and hundreds more covering a full range of military topics is available on demand at PritzkerMilitary.org. Today's conversation will be led by the 28th chief of the National Guard Bureau General Joseph L. Lengyel. The United States National Guard is administered by the National Guard Bureau, a joint activity of the army and air force under the Department of Defense. As a communication for state and National Guard to the Department of Defense, the National Guard Bureau also assists with policies and requirement for training and funds for state army and air National Guard units, the allocation of federal funds to the army and air national guard and another administrative responsibilities as assigned. As chief of the National Guard Bureau and member of the joint chiefs of staff, General Lengyel serves as a military advisor to the president, to the secretary of defense, to the National Security Council, and is the Department of Defense's official channel of communications to the governors and the state adjutants general on all matters pertaining to the National Guard. General Lengyel is responsible for ensuring that the more than 450,000 Army and Air National Guard personnel are accessible, capable, and ready to protect the homeland and provide combat-ready resources to the army and the air force. General Lengyel himself was commissioned in 1981 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of North Texas. He served in various operational and staff assignments, primarily as an F-16 instructor pilot and weapons officer. Additionally at the United States central command in Cairo he has served as senior United States defense official, chief officer of military operation, and defense attaché. Please join me in welcoming Chief of the National Guard Bureau General Joseph Lengyel to the Pritzker Military Museum and Library.

(Applause)

Havers: General Lengyel, it's a very great pleasure to have you here on this cool morning in Chicago. Perhaps before we discuss the National Guard I'd like to talk to you a little bit about you and your service. You have a long career in the military, and I was hoping you might be able to recount a little bit about what motivated you to join the air force.

Lengyel: Yeah, thanks, Rob. I tell you, it's--I mean, in my personal case, military service has been in my family for as long as I can remember. My dad obviously was a career air force pilot who actually started his career in the National Guard and did a short stint in the guard and then became part of the regular air force and spent the rest of his career as a fighter pilot in the air force. My mom came from a military family. Her dad was in the army air corps, and she kind of grew up in the military world. And so my dad, my dad's brothers--he had a brother who was a navy fighter pilot and a brother-in-law who was an air force fighter pilot, and it seemed the just kind of things that, it was natural that I was around the air force a lot. I very early on had wanted to become a fighter pilot, thought I wanted to do that. So I took to military service quite easily. And my brother also did a career in the military. He just recently retired. My son's in the military, and we have a

bunch of military service in the family. It's kind of what we do. We're not very original in terms of thinking about career paths.

Havers: Well, impressive familial service indeed. So, sit here today as a four-star general in the air force, looking back to 1981 and just starting out in that long career, did you have a plan at that early juncture?

Lengyel: No, not a plan to become a four-star general. My goal was to become a fighter pilot in the air force and fly F-16s. I was drawn to the dynamic nature of the military service of being stationed all around the world. I would say that, originally I had planned to do a career like my father did in the military, an entire career of active service. But somewhere along the way, at mid-course of the career, I made a choice to leave the active service and become a member of the National Guard. And when I did that I found that I had the option to still fly F-16s as a part-time member of the National Guard and took on a career as a civilian airline pilot as well, flew for a major airline, and I did that for a while. And you know, the career path just kind of maneuvered, and each opportunity led me to other opportunities. I certainly never envisioned that one day I'd become a chief of the National Guard Bureau and a four-star member of the joint chiefs.

Havers: Is there a moment in that career that perhaps on reflection was a turning point or where you learned an important lesson about yourself and about your role?

Lengyel: Well, I think with respect to kind of taking on the ability to serve full-time again in the military, I think after 9/11 happened, as the country became a country at war again, where the nation was committed and deployed and opportunities to deploy again and be part of the nation's fight against the Global War on Terror, that we called it at the time, it did open up some new doors for me and some new opportunities, and I wanted to be part of it. And you know, that was later kind of in my career as a military officer, and I think I learned that maybe I wanted to be not just a fighter pilot, but it was a commitment to national defense, it was a commitment to the United States, it was part of a bigger team that was committed to the safety of the nation that drew me to want to serve again, maybe a little more differently than I had been as an airline pilot and a fighter pilot as a guardsman.

Havers: You mention the role of your family in influencing your career choice and decisions. Any particular mentors in the military or air force that helped shape where you went and what you did and how you did it?

Lengyel: Yeah, there was a number of people. I think every officer and particularly officers who reach general officer and four-star general have had--nobody gets here on their own. There are so many ways that you need to be guided and mentored. I had several. And obviously mentors that come to mind about being a good officer with integrity first and service before self and the basic things, those kind of came from a natural of my family and their service and watching my dad, how he conducted himself. But other officers--I was fortunate enough to serve with General Danny James, son of Chappie James, who was the first African American four-star general, and he was kind of a mentor to me and helped guide me and lead me and make me think about service not just in the Texas National Guard but maybe in other places. And I had other commanders who were—who showed me ways that you needed discipline to the force, have leadership and provide leadership that motivated people and try to show me how to be a good leader and make people want to be part of the direction that you had set for an organization.

Havers: Right.

Lengyel: So, I've been lucky. I've had lots of good leaders.

Havers: Very interesting indeed. Moving on to the role of the National Guard, the Air National Guard, and I'm sure the audience is very interested to know and hear your thoughts about the way in which the air National Guard, the Army National Guard, state

representatives--how do these state level guards relate to the federal National Guard and the greater military or the military as a whole?

Lengyel: So, I think that--I've watched--I think you're asking me how the National Guard, the army and the air, actually argument the United States Army and United States Air Force--

Havers: Exactly.

Lengyel: And I've watched that change during my time, during my tenure as a member of the National Guard. I joined the National Guard in 1991, after almost ten years in the active component. And at the time I would tell you that the National Guard was a good organization, it was a competent organization, but it was still kind of vestiges of the past in terms of being a strategic reserve, being a force that necessarily wasn't used all the time as part of the regular air force and the regular army in terms of our deployments. And having gone to war in the First Gulf War in 1991 and the beginnings of using the National Guard as part of the wartime fighting force there, they began to use us rotationally all the time throughout the 90s and then in 2000, 9/11 happened, and we ended up mobilizing and going to war again, and throughout the early 2000s the Army National Guard became a big part of the fighting force that was in Afghanistan and Iraq, and it really kind of transformed our National Guard in to kind of what it is today, which is an operational force. I mean, it is a full-op same combat standard as the active duty army and the active duty air force. It's a force that is similarly equipped, and the leaders are all trained. We're very experienced in combat operations. And the two services, the army and the air force, began to rely on and need the continuous support and mobilizations of the National Guard force structure. And so that's where we are today. I mean for the last seventeen years in terms of doing our federal mission, we have really transformed into a world-class part of the United States Army and United States Air Force, and it's really changed us fundamentally. I mention sometimes that the National Guard used to be considered a branch of the military where you would go if you didn't actually want to deploy to war. And people would kind of joke about it. You did your service. But now the people who get in the National Guard, they expect to be deployed to combat zones. They expect to go wherever the air force is or the army is, and we do go. As I'm talking to you right now, about 30,000 members of the Army and Air National Guard are deployed in Afghanistan and Kuwait and Iraq and Kosovo and Sinai Peninsula and South America in training and in the Pacific in Korea and the rest, and we're in every combatant command throughout the world. And that number hasn't changed for the past several years. And so we're a proud part of the United States Army, United States Air Force. That's what we do first, is we practice, we train, we're ready for our role as a war-fighting piece of the United States military, and we're a big piece of it. A little over 2 million people that wear the uniform in all services--active guard and reserve, army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard--about 2.1 million, and the National Guard makes up about 450,000 of that. So more than twenty percent of our national force is National Guard.

Havers: We talk a lot here at the Pritzker Military Museum and Library about the catalyst of war and how it brings all kinds of change--technological change, social change, undoubtedly a catalyst for the guard and changing the way the guard was viewed on what it did and what it does. Is that gonna be the model, the current model of readiness, going to be the model going forward?

Lengyel: I do. I think, given the needs for our nation to execute this new national defense strategy that Secretary Mattis has put out, it says a couple fundamental things. One is, we're now in a new situation where our nation militarily has to compete with peer competitors. So we realize that we're no longer the only nation in the world that can bring intense military power to a scenario. We still believe that we're the strongest

military in the world, that given our need to use the military to defend the United States, we can do it. But that there are now countries--Russia and China--who have developed new technologies and capabilities that can challenge us. So given the need to compete again, Secretary Mattis, now Secretary Shanahan, have directed a couple things. One is that we must continue to make the force a ready force. We have to be ready to fight and defend our nation's--for our nation's interest around the world at any time. We have to be, the word is lethal; our enemies have to fear us, and we have to be able to bring lethality to the battlefield. Second, in addition to that is, we have to reorient our investment that we're making inside the Department of Defense. We have to no longer think about just fighting a war like we've been fighting in the Middle East of counterinsurgency operations, but we have to pivot to the scenario of a high-end fight in a war with a China or a Russia, a peer competitor. And that requires allocation of dollars, so we need to maintain the capacity, the size of the force so that we can respond to our nation's needs while simultaneously finding the money and the investment to buy the new weapons, whether it's the hypersonic weapons or artificial intelligence or new modernized nuclear enterprise--all of the things that we have to do to modernize the force for the future. So in order to do that, in order to maintain a force that's big enough to do all of this, you simply can't afford an active duty, everybody's-fulltime force that does all of those things. You have to maintain a large part of that in the reserve component because we are less expensive. So, they're gonna have to continue to use us, to continue to deploy us, to continue to--when they use us the active component can come back to the US and reset and build its readiness and go to school and do all the things the force needs to do. So, I don't see a scenario any time in the future where they will take the reserve component, the National Guard component, and set it back into the strategic role it once played. We're gonna stay part of the operational force for as far as I can see.

Havers: And that being said, is that an aid to recruitment to the guard?

Lengyel: I think it is. I think because of this new National Guard that we have, people want to go and do new and exciting things. They want to be part of the mission of the United States Army and the United States Air Force. I just got back over the weekend, and I was in the Middle East. And the old thing about you can't tell the difference between--when you're there--between someone who's National Guard or reserve or active component. Everybody's the same. They're trained to the same standard. They bring the same skills to the war fight, and they very badly want to be part of it. And it's given us a bit of a challenge, because as you know the men and women who serve in the National Guard, they have this other life which is a civilian life, and that employer who is supporting them while they're gone has had to make up for that person not being there while they're actually deployed doing their military role. So we have to watch that. We have to manage that carefully so that employers get the proper notifications when they're employees gonna be gone and gonna be deployed. And it's a challenge for us to make sure that we don't overuse the reservist, because he's predominately as civilian, he or she--predominantly a civilian and then can mobilize and go when they need to go.

Havers: When we look about across the world at likely competitive states--China and Russia--is the National Guard and that arrangement a uniquely American endeavor? How do countries like China and Russia deal with the needs for a well-trained reserve in that fashion?

Lengyel: Yeah, you know, I've never seen in my travels around the world and with all of our partnerships that we have in the National Guard--and we have many--I've not seen another country that has a force like our national guard. We're a very unique part of the Department of Defense. So I think most people know that we're the only part of the defense that, we train, we control, we organize, we equip under the command and

control of our governors in our states, which we're able to leverage because there are two people that can be our commander in chief. Day in and day out it's the governor in your state. And then if he needs to mobilize you for our secondary missions--well, the war fight's the first one. The second one is our homeland mission. I've not seen another system where there is a non-federal use of a military component like we have. We can be called to be come work about ice storms or worry about floods or hurricanes or fires or any domestic issue. And those issues are expanding. We're training now to deal with cyber attacks and very different kinds of ways our system can be attacked. So there are other countries that have institutions that are called the National Guard in their states, but there aren't any other countries that have a dual-use nature like our National Guard, which is the militia construct that goes back to the founding of our nation, before that. Havers: And I quote it in my script, it goes back to Massachusetts in December of 1636, so that's some longevity and constant evolution, so something must be going quite right, I think.

Lengyel: It is. So, December 13, 1636 the court in Boston created the militia. You know, and then three regiments to come together for the common defense. And we've been doing it now for--just past our 382nd birthday. And you know, it's like I talked a little bit about our iteration here as this world-class fighting force that we've become. There's kind of three eras of our National Guard that I talk about, and our first one was that original militia construct. It was, bring your own weapon, bring your own uniform, come together to the common training ground every weekend and train if you're between the ages of sixteen and sixty, and they would do that, and they would be ready. So they did kind of function like that unregulated militia really all the way up into the beginning of the 20th century. 1900 basically they started to change it. And then it became, hey, we're gonna give you federal training dollars, and we're gonna require you to train to federal standards, but you're really gonna be this call, break glass in time of emergency force. We're not gonna call you unless we need you. And we were a huge part of WWI. A lot of people don't know that 400,000 guardsmen deployed to France in WWI, and 100,000 casualties. We're a big part of the force in WWI. And we're celebrating that hundredth anniversary of WWI, just passed.

Havers: Indeed, yes.

Lengyel: And I went to France and still just recently, and there was a huge gratitude still in French for the American presence that came over in WWI. And then all the way through WWII and the like really up until the Gulf War when we became this operational force that we are now. So, those are the kind of three eras that we're in, and we're gonna stay in this operational force mode I think for quite some time.

Havers: You mentioned, General, backstage briefly how each individual state's National Guard is partnered with a country. Perhaps you can tell the audience a little more about that endeavor, which sounds very interesting indeed.

Lengyel: It is. So, I've talked to you about the war fight mission that we do. That's our primary thing. The second thing is the homeland mission that we do for domestic operations and emergencies. And the third thing that we do is, we make partnerships around the world, and we make partnerships in many ways. Here at home we make partnerships with the interagency. We make partnerships with the communities. We make partnerships with the first responders so that when bad things happen we can respond. We can do the other two things that we do. But the state partnership program, which you mentioned, it's been in existence since 1993. And when the former Soviet Union disintegrated, fell apart, they were looking for nonthreatening ways--nonthreatening to the Russians--where we could engage these former Soviet countries and begin to make ties between our militaries. And some of these countries wanted to be part of Europe, they wanted to be part of NATO. We were looking for ways that we

could create this interoperability between what were formerly supplied in Soviet forces to what were now gonna become western, perhaps NATO forces. And how do we do that? How do we show them the civilians control our military? How do we show them rule of law? How do we show them utilization of the military? How do we develop our officers and our noncommissioned officers and those kind of things? So, it was a very successful program, and many of the countries--all of the Baltics, Romania, Poland, Macedonia--all of these countries were the initial members of the state partnership program, and that has grown over time to now we have eighty-three countries around the world. About a third of the total countries on the planet have state partnership programs. And what we do every year with these programs is we do in some cases fifteen events, training events where we bring our militaries together, not in large numbers but in small numbers. Ten to fifteen US Military guardsmen will go work with a similar size, and they'll train together. They'll work on some activity, and they grow--the real product here is the trust, and they get to know each other. And it's a program where people will work together for decades and do military activities. And they'll go from majors to major generals inside their military institutions, and they will have worked together for a very long time. And I don't know that anybody ever expected it to go to this level, but we've had eighty deployments, co-deployments of a host nation, a partner nation, that was partnered with the National Guard said, "I'll deploy to Afghanistan or to Iraq or to Africa provided I can go with my National Guard state partner state." So they train together and deploy together and in some cases have died together on the battlefield. So it's a very, very successful program in terms of bringing together the military part--and it has expanded from not just military to military activities, but it becomes now the societies, the communities from the states and from the countries will have reciprocal programs where they can attend each other's universities. They have reciprocal programs where the Kosovo and Iowa program. Kosovo set up a consulate in Des Moines, Iowa. The only one outside--yeah, they have a consulate. And other times there's particular nuances about the relationships. For instance, here in Illinois a big, large diaspora of Polish Americans that is paired with Poland, and the Polish National Guard and the Illinois National Guard are state partners. And so goes on today, they have had twenty-three deployments together to Afghanistan and Iraq. So it's a very, very successful program. Havers: How very interesting. One of my questions was going to be what's something about the guard that perhaps our audience is not aware of, and that's a great answer to that. Beyond that, what is something that the general public perhaps is not aware that the guard is involved in or does?

Lengyel: Well, I think sometimes there is not a widely known understanding of how much of the Department of Defense is the National Guard. I mentioned earlier that we're about twenty percent of the Department of Defense. And we're in every mission set from everything the air force does or anything the army does, the National Guard is a part of it. To include space. I just got back from a tour in the Middle East, and there was a deployed expeditionary space squadron that was a National Guard squadron from California that was deployed in place in Jordan doing some very good things. And I've been other places where other National Guard--there's just not a mission set that we're not in. And I think that's kind of the misunderstood piece is, people think that--they don't appreciate not just the homeland piece that we do. Most people think of the National Guard many times as a domestic response force, but the enormity of our contribution to the war fight in a federal sense is huge.

Havers: Wow. Yes, very impressive indeed. So, General, after thirty-eight years in uniform, what keeps getting you out of bed in the morning to serve? What motivates you still?

Lengyel: Well, I just, I think I have the best job in the world, actually. I get to run around and advocate for and talk about the National Guard. And I've lived the transformation of this force. You know, and I am proud of the fact that we have become such a professional force. It's a different military than the one I joined. I think, as I think about the force that we are and how professional we are, and my ability to--I look at the people who we convince to join our nation's military, and I tell them all that they are our nation's greatest national resource. Our ability to find them and to train them and to keep them in the military is getting harder and harder to do. People have choices, and they can make choices to go. When the economy's good like it is now, we find it a challenge to convince people to stay in the military. So, I love what the National Guard does. I love the fact that great Americans that have these lives as civilians, and they make their lives day in and day out in a civilian sense, but yet when the nation needs them they leave that behind, and they will deploy, and they will go to war. And it's the unique stories about our national guardsmen that are fun to talk about. This last trip, this commander of this space squadron was a medical doctor. In his civilian life at home he was a medical doctor. But in this deployed war-fighting environment he was the commander of an expeditionary space squadron. There was no medical nexus to that at all. And I was riding on an airplane the other day with a guardsman who was flying, and I assumed that in his civilian life he was an airline pilot, but when I started talking to him he was a professor of economics at Purdue University. And I found out--where do we find these people that are driven to serve not only in their civilian lives but the fact that they can do something totally and completely different? It makes sense in some cases. There's lots of cases where you're a doctor in the civilian world and a doctor in the military or a pilot in the civilian world and a pilot--but it's the odd ones where you're a command sergeant major in a brigade but you're a professor at a local community college. That's just the kind of thing that's special.

Havers: That is very special indeed. Part of the mission of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library is to illuminate the story of the citizen soldier, and you've encapsulated that very well in that little vignette. What might you say, General, to anyone who's watching considering joining the guard, considering taking that step?

Lengyel: Well, I would encourage them to seriously consider doing it. I mean, if you want to serve your nation, you know, I advocate any branch of service in any component is worthy of consideration. I certainly did it. I mention my whole family's connection to the military, and my son by the way is in the active duty air force. He's not in the National Guard. But the satisfaction that you get from service is immense. It's fantastic. And the ability for a guardsman to stay at your home where your family is. I mean, to grow up and serve your communities is a unique attribute of the National Guard. You can really do anything you want to do in the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard that you can do in the active duty army or the air force. There's very few things that--there are some things that you can't do, but broadly speaking there's very little you can't do, whether it's be a doctor, be a dentist, be a lawyer--whatever you want to do, we have those kind of skillsets and requirements to be part of the National Guard. And the ability to come and make friends and train with other motivated people and other great Americans who want to serve their nation, it's a great opportunity, and a great way of life, and the benefits are good. And broadly speaking, people join the military at some point down the road. You may want a military retirement, health benefits for you and your family. All of those things, you join the National Guard you get college benefits and get your tuition paid for. A very highly educated force in the National Guard, because people join, and they get to attend their local and state universities at no cost. And it's a great opportunity to serve your nation.

Havers: That's a tremendous recruiting pitch, General. Hopefully you'll get some recruits on the back of that. Going back to your own personal career, proudest achievements across those years of service?

Lengyel: You know, my proudest achievements are my three kids who have grown up to be great Americans, and that's--across my life I've been able to have three kids who are great, productive citizens in the United States of America and leading productive lives. And should they want to choose to serve--one has. The other two haven't, they're all the same. You know, just being part of the United States Air Force and part of the greatest--in my view the greatest nation on the face of the planet, the greatest force for good we've ever seen, has been a great honor for me to be part of it.

Havers: Any leadership lessons that you've learned during that time that you could encapsulate and perhaps pass on to our audience?

Lengyel: One of the reasons you don't live forever, I'm convinced, we don't live forever is because humans by our very nature are resistant to change. We need new blood, new ideas, we need new people to come in. And as proud as I am of who we are, as good as I thought we were thirty year ago when I joined--thirty-seven years ago--we're a different, better military than we were then. And in general, you've got to be open to--the young generation who's coming up from the military, the younger men and women who are serving our nation, they see through a different lens than some of the older generation sees through. So, you have to be open to change. You have to be open to new ideas. You have to be--military is gonna look different twenty years from now than it did-- even, it looks very different today. Who would have thought we'd be flying airplanes around without pilots in them. I certainly never envisioned it when I became a fighter pilot. Maybe some people did. The thoughts of technology and automation inside military, it's gonna change everything we do. So I think that you have to nurture it. You have to understand and allow people to take risks, and you have to allow people to foster an environment that allows things to change. Too much sometimes propensity to hang on to the past. I think you need to open up and look for new opportunities to change.

Havers: And just piggybacking on what you said, pilotless aircraft, is that where we're going in total? Can we ever replace in the input of a man or a woman in the cockpit?

Lengyel: You know, we have lots of them up there now. We have lots of aircraft that doesn't have anybody actually sitting at the controls in there, and I think over time it's gonna become more and more normal. We're gonna have--think about what's gonna change when you don't have-- required to have somebody driving an automobile or a truck or a car. It's all happening in front of our very eyes right now. And so, yeah, I certainly believe that over time, a hundred years from now putting a human inside of an airplane will just slow it down, make it the possibility that it's gonna crash or make some mistake even more likely. So I think it's moving that way.

Havers: Wow. Okay, back to while we still have pilots in planes, your favorite aircraft you've ever flown, General?

Lengyel: The F-16, no doubt about it. I mean, you know, it's really the only serious military airplane that I've flown. And I've flown some civilian airplanes, some airliners and the like, but the F-16 was the plane I wanted to fly. And when I started flying it was brand new. It's very old now, so it's--I have to say I look with envy at the F-35 and the F-22 and the newer aircraft that are out there, but you know, that's my personal favorite airplane was the F-16. I thought it was very versatile. It was relatively inexpensive. We had lots of them that could do anything; it could do lots of missions. Lots of other nations had it and bought it and still do, and it was a great airplane. I enjoyed it very much.

Havers: Well, good. That's good to hear. Sort of as a wrap-up question before we go to the audience. We're obviously a museum and library. Here we often like to ask our guests what you're reading currently, what would you like to be reading, and what

perhaps has been an inspirational book you've read over the years that you would recommend to our audience in the room here and watching from home?

Lengyel: Yeah, so I generally have about three different books going at the same time. So, a few months ago I started, and I'm currently reading--I just started volume two--of *The Last Lion* by William Manchester. It's a three-volume set on Winston Churchill. Great book, lots of information, lots of very--he's a very dynamic, tenacious man that got a lot of things done, And I just like the way he approached the world and did things. So I've started volume two on him, which hasn't quite gotten me to WWII yet, but it's up there. I'm also reading a book called *The Fifth Risk*, Michael Lewis, and his writing. *The Fifth Risk*, an interesting book about setting up a government and how that works. And I just finished a book, which I kind of wish I read along time ago, called *The Great Game*, who is about Central Asia and the competition between really Russia and Great Britain for Afghanistan and the Caucasus, and all about kind of India in the great days of the British Empire and who were they. The sun never set on it, as you recall. And as far as favorite book, that is such a hard question. There are so many great books. I like biographies. I've read most of the presidential biographies that are out there. Lincoln, I just finished one on Ulysses S. Grant, was a great autobiography. My favorite book is the one I just read that I can tell everybody about. So until I read another one, and that's it. But I do--it's imperative that I read things all the time. I look forward maybe to the day when I can do a little more recreational reading, choose the books that specifically I want to read instead of having to read books on topics, whether it's artificial intelligence or whether it's the middle east or whatever it is. I look forward to being able to just pick a book and go, I think I'll spend some time reading about *A Gentleman in Moscow* or something along those lines.

Havers: Well, that Manchester trilogy on Churchill is a great sort of preparative for all times, and Churchill is a great inspiration, as you know.

Lengyel: Amazing, an amazing leader. Lived an amazing life, had amazing family.

Havers: Did indeed, did indeed. Well, we're gonna go to some Q and A from our audience. General Lengyel, thank you so much.

Lengyel: I appreciate it.

(Applause)

1: I'm interested in your thoughts on federalism. Governors and presidents don't always have the same perspectives. In the news in the past couple weeks we've seen California and New Mexico pull guard troops off the border. California has said they're not gonna implement any transgender ban. As a member of the joint chiefs, how do you carry those messages forward inside the tank, inside the building, and how do you carry the messages from the building back to the governors?

Lengyel: Well, that's a great question. And so in my time as the chief of the National Guard Bureau, we've had a couple of issues where whether states agree with whatever a federal policy of federal law might be beginning to implement. So I don't try to adjudicate which way's right and which way's wrong, who's right, the governor--my role as a chief of the National Guard Bureau is to make sure that federal dollars are spent in accordance with law. They are given to the states through me to the adjutant generals to train their forces to federal standards, and comply with federal law. It is completely within the governor's prerogative as the governor of the state of California and the governor of the state of New Mexico to determine whether they want to put their forces on the southwest border or not. I don't make a judgment as to whether that's right or whether that's wrong. I do convey inside the tank, inside the Department of Defense, and I give my best military advice as to whether or not non-federalized National Guard forces are an option to achieve a military effect in some sense. And so I would tell the secretary of defense, if you want military forces on the border in California, the use of the California

National Guard in a non-federal status is not an option. You know, so there are other options. They can mobilize the National Guard and make them Title X without asking the permission from any governor if they have the authorities from Congress to do it, and if they mobilize them and put them on the border, then they can do it as part of the United States Army and part of the United States Air Force. You lose some things. Obviously as a National Guard force you can't do law enforcement activities. There's things and authorities you can't do as a Title X military member, but it's not the first time that we've had this. These systems have to coexist, and I think, you know, we always work through it. We had similar issues back when we were going through the machinations of providing same sex marriages identification cards, and some states didn't want to comply with that. But we found an accommodation that we would put facilities in federal facilities where the states didn't really have no choice. They had to allow that to happen inside federal--if it's a state facility they could have a choice, but if we put it inside a federal facility that was funded with federal dollars, then we're able to get to it. And ultimately it kind of came our way. So it is definitely a unique piece of our country, really, the fabric of how the militaries work. The National Guard is there. It's kind of rare frankly when there's a clash like this, but sometimes they're there, and there's interesting incidences in history where that's happened before. People point to the issues of getting people to go to college in Alabama, and one day the guard was keeping people out of the school, the next day they were mobilized, and they were forcing people to go into the school, and that's a great example of the flexibility really that the nation has with the National Guard. Good question.

2: I was interested when you guys talked about the two different sources of personnel for the guard, of people coming from the active services and also joining directly from civilian life. Could you tell us a little bit about how important each of those two streams are relatively and how you see that evolving and changing going forward?

Lengyel: So, obviously we want people from our communities to be able to join our force. And we also like to hire and bring into the force people that the United States has already paid to train. And there are some skillsets--cyber lawyer is one--where it takes a lot of time to train somebody to be a cyber warrior. It takes someone a long time to train to be a pilot, and to be able to bring those folks who are already trained and become part of the National Guard is a huge benefit to both. And plus it does--people being serving in the military with all intentions to have a twenty-year career or longer in the military, but people's circumstances and lives change. And for any number of reasons, whatever reasons, some serving member needs to go back to their community where they grew up, whether it's parents who need someone to take care of their business, or whatever the personal reasons are. There's a million different stories for as many guardsmen that are out there of why people get into the National Guard, so it's a great opportunity for both. And you can be grown, as what we call a guard baby, someone who comes straight up through the National Guard and has never spent time serving in the active components unless they were deployed, and as well much of our force we bring in through people that are leaving the active components. And we bring other people into the army guard and the air guard who serve in places that don't have national guards. We bring marines into the army guard. We bring members of the navy and folks into our service, so it's a great opportunity. And we want anybody that wants to serve. We say, hey, if you're willing to swear an oath to the United States of America, and you are physically and mentally able to do your job, we want you in the National Guard. We have no other discriminators. None. And we don't care where you go to church. We don't care the color of your skin. We don't care who you marry. We want you to come in and be part of our service. And that's something that's better about us now than when I joined thirty-five years ago. It's good.

3: Sir, there are more and more incidents where Russian planes challenge NATO planes, American planes, or the Baltic Sea, the Caspian Sea. Could this lead to a conflict?

Lengyel: So, all around the world we fly, sail, do operations, in and amongst competitor nations, if they are there. And that is a fear, as is for the most part broadly speaking our engagements with Russian airplanes or Chinese airplanes or some other competitors, boats in the Red Sea, in the Straits of Hormuz from Iran, you name the incidents where other military members operate equipment in and about or near us. In many cases they have a right to be there; we have a right to be there. And most cases people act professionally. But there is the chance that somebody will make a mistake. It's happened before where people get overly aggressive or they just flat-out make a mistake, and then something dangerous happens. And that's something--we rely on the skill and the maturity of our men and women in uniform every day, every night in all kinds of scenarios. Right now we have, in Syria we have US pilots flying in close proximity with Russian pilots, and all kind of not cooperating but coordinating. And the fear that something could make a mistake and inadvertently consider someone a threat is something that's concerning to both--all the players in the region. So I think it's important that leadership makes sure that their forces are well briefed, they think through all the potential eventualities, that leaders advocate that everyone be professional, everyone be careful what they do such that there's not a mistake or a miscalculation. But your fear on the potential of a mistake is a valid one for sure.

Sturch: I have an online question from Chris. Could you discuss the role the guard plays, if any, in strategic nuclear defense?

Lengyel: So, strategic nuclear offense. I would say that's one role where we have probably a limited presence inside our air force. We do have--there's a B-2 squadron, B-2 wing, that has capability to be part of the triad, the nuclear triad, and we have members of the National Guard who are pilots and maintainers of those kinds of platforms. So, from the offensive side of that triad we have a small but limited presence in the nuclear defense role. Where I think we play another role is a lot of people don't realize this, but the United States has some missile fields--it's called the ground-based midcourse defenders, that shoot down intercontinental ballistic missiles. That's their role is to identify when somebody has fired a ballistic missile at the United States. And so in the silos, in the control stations of some of those ground-based midcourse defense sites in Alaska and California, you've got national guardsmen, army national guardsmen actually sitting there manning those control systems that could launch an interceptor to intercept an incoming ballistic missile. And so we play a part of that, should someone decide to--Kim Jong Un or somebody shoots a missile at us, we have the ability to actually defend ourselves to some degree with that kind of force. A lot of people don't know that. But in the nuclear enterprise, with the hands-on piece, we provide some security for missile fields, we do some other things, but with the hands-on operation of defending against nuclear systems or actually operating, those would be the two principle reasons I would give you. Well, I just want to say, first of all, thanks to the Museum and Library and to you, Rob, for having me here. I'm obviously very proud of the National Guard and what we do. And when people ask me sometimes about, hey, why does the National Guard--why does the governor need F-22s, or why does the governor need tanks, I always go back and tell them--I remind them about the three things we do as members of the National Guard. We fight our nation's war, we protect our homeland, and we build partnerships. Those are the three things we do in the National Guard. And people who come and work for me, and they're gonna go back to their units and be commanders, I tell them those things, and I say, "Your entire job consists of these things. When you and your unit are experts at doing your wartime

mission, and everybody in you can be deployed and use your military skillsets to do what the nation needs you, that's step one, and then when you as a guardsman know how to take all those skillsets and use them to do in the homeland, whether it's use the equipment that you have, the men and women that you have, to defend the homeland in times of emergency, whatever that emergency might be, whether it's defend against a cyber attack or whether it's work against some chemical, biological, or radiological attack that much of that capacity lies inside the National Guard, that's the second thing you need. Use that military skillset to do the homeland mission. And then when you built partnerships with all the people you need to do these two other things--United States Army, United States Air Force, or the first responders who work for you back in your communities, then you as a guardsmen will have maximized your contribution both abroad for the war fight mission and here at home. And you know, for a 382 years we've been a longstanding part of this nation, and I think it gives every American no matter where you live--there are some, many states in our country that don't have any active duty military installations in their state, but they have the National Guard. And they have armories that can be called and people that can come and come to the aid of their communities when they need them. So, I'm very proud of what the National Guard is, I'm very proud of what the National Guard's become, and I'm very proud of the contribution that we make as part of the United States Army and the United States Air Force. Thank you.

(Applause)

Havers: Thank you to General Joseph Lengyel for a great discussion. This program was presented in partnership with the National Guard. To learn more about the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, visit us in person or online at PritzkerMilitary.org. Thank you, and please join us next time on *Pritzker Military Presents*.

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(Theme music)

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(Theme music)

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