CG Column
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January is the start of the New Year and typically represents a renewal of sorts, a time of change. This year also ushers in a new era with the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States. The challenges that our President and our Nation will face in the coming months are daunting. No doubt, each of us will have our own personal challenges to meet in the coming year as well.

With a new administration, changes are inevitable. How those changes may affect the Department of Defense, the Army and specifically the Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command will unfold in due time. Our priorities will remain the same: Supporting the Warfighter; People; Safety; Accelerating the development and fielding of space and missile defense capabilities/forces that enable victory; Building partnerships across the space and missile defense community; and Operating on a foundation of Values and Teamwork.

This year I would like us to renew our emphasis on sharing information and reducing stove-piped architectures that inhibit communications. Architectures are not the only culprit, sometimes culture interferes with a mindset of open sharing of information. We should promote a culture of "need to share."

The depth of the stovepipe culture was recently brought to the fore during a question and answer session at an academic institution. During the presentation, the topic of sharing information in support of a Global CONOPS was discussed. A person questioned the ability to break the stovepipes in a military culture that is reluctant to share. Consider for a moment that these were senior leaders in an academic environment and the idea of sharing information appears to them against the norm.

We need to elevate the idea of sharing information from bumper-sticker status to a real intent to break "rice bowls." We have within U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) a method to share information that helps flatten the hierarchical nature of information: Strategic Knowledge Integration Web (SKIWeb) found on the SIPRNET.

STRATCOM's development of SKIWeb combines aspects of instant messaging services, chat rooms, and blogs to enable Warfighters of all ranks and responsibilities to share ideas and enhance collaboration. SMDC/ARSTRAT worked with STRATCOM to develop a SKIWeb portal for this command on the SIPRNET. This initiative allows concurrent vertical and horizontal planning, communication, and access to near real-time mission-related information. I believe we can do much more with this capability, but it means thinking outside the box and trusting others with your information.

The need for sharing information goes beyond just a good idea. As a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks, several laws were enacted that facilitated sharing information in the war against terrorism. The PATRIOT Act of 2001 made it easier to share information between law enforcement and intelligence communities; the Homeland Security Act of 2002 made it easier to share information among federal, state and local governments; and the Information Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 directed the establishment of the Information Sharing Enterprise.

The Information Sharing Enterprise was established to help fight the war on terrorism, but sharing information at all levels, within security restrictions, is extremely important. The synergy we can gain by establishing our own "Information Sharing Enterprise" is worth looking into.

So this year, let's work on improving our ability to share information with each other and let's work on utilizing SKIWeb's potential. If we can improve our ability to share information, I believe we will correspondingly improve our ability to support the Warfighter.

SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!