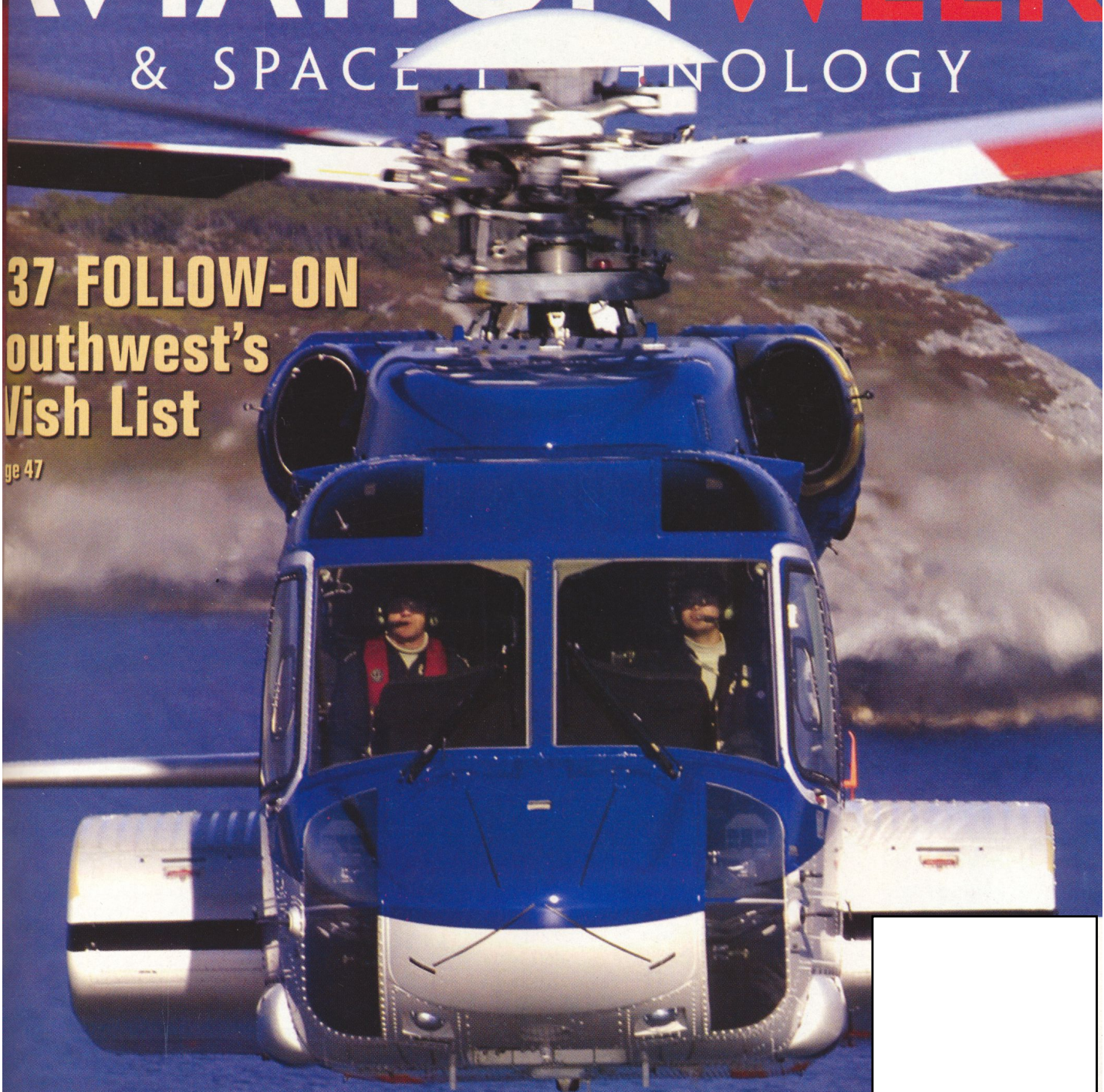# AVIATION WEEK

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Intelligence Transformation

New DNI chief information officer espouses emphasis on information rather than networks

RICHARD TUTTLE/COLORADO SPRINGS

The intelligence community will begin to shift toward network-centricity and start making more efficient use of information technology under a plan outlined by the newly confirmed chief information officer for the director of national intelligence (DNI).

Dale W. Meyerrose sees a reduction in the number of networks used by the community and increasing emphasis on information itself.

"You will find us collapsing our networks," Meyerrose said in his first public comments since being confirmed for the job on Dec. 17. "Are we going to get to one? The answer is, when we get to net-centricity we won't need a network at all. It's the net [concept], not the network, that is important. It's the information, not the network, that has real intrinsic value."

He joked that this wouldn't be easy. "I'm not appointed for life like a Supreme Court justice," he said at a conference here. "I've got a few years to work this problem." He added that Congress could "change my job description, even without asking me."

Others say Meyerrose does indeed have a steep hill to climb. Achieving the network-centricity goal alone is "far more easily said than done," says John Pike of GlobalSecurity.org, a defense and security analysis web site based in Alexandria, Va. He says the National Security Agency (NSA), for example, one of a number of intelligence agencies now under Meyrrose's boss, John D. Negroponte, is "compartmented seven ways to Sunday," which flies in the face of network-centricity.

Before assuming his new post, Meyerrose was director of command control systems for North American Aerospace Defense Command, director of architectures and integration for U.S. Northern Command and CIO of both commands. He said many of the lessons he learned at Norad and Northcom can be applied to the intelligence community. The White House tapped him for the new job in July, and he retired from the Air Force as a major general in November.

He said the intelligence community's reliance on commercial standards will increase, and its tendency to tailor systems for specific uses will wane. Tailoring has been done "with good reason and it has served us well in the past," he said. "But you will see us working to simplify that more and more—less complex, not more complex."

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. (ret.) William E. Odom, director of the NSA from 1985-88, says many in government aspire to greater use of commercial standards but in most cases, "they don't get very far."

"We're not going to throw anything out tomorrow, because that would be foolish," Meyerrose said. "Most every-

USAF Maj. Gen. (ret.) Dale W. Meyerrose

thing was created for a specific reason or problem."

Still, he said, "We're going to work very hard in collapsing applications and infrastructure into simpler and less convoluted, less point-to-point orientation."

To do this, information at various levels of classification, or "networks of the same classification that we have never provided the access to," will be made available to analysts, watch-standers and organizations to make them "more and more interoperable, more and more digital," and "less and less network-burdened, more and more net-enabled."

This, he noted, is because information must be gathered from many sources to come to a conclusion. But the conclusion may have little or no relevance to the classification of some of the information.

Pike says Meyerrose would "bump into problems with counter-intelligence people who are going to say that all you're doing is making it easier for a Chinese spy to walk out with everything, and they're going to get an enormous amount of push-back from people who own compartmented programs."

Speaking last month at SpaceComm 2006, sponsored by the Rocky Mountain chapter of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Assn. (AFCEA), Meyerrose said he is charged with transforming "an already well-functioning intelligence community into something better."

He said he has four broad responsibilities: managing all activities related to information technology architecture; approving all IT programs; managing all IT procurement activities, and directing all IT research and development efforts.

"That can be very daunting," Meyerrose said, "almost as daunting as going through the confirmation process." He grouped the 115 written and oral questions he was posed into six categories according to the emphasis they received: IT procurement failures; balancing risk, security and privacy; enterprise architecture and what this means; information sharing versus information access in terms of synchronizing with the Defense Dept.; IT best practices and IT investment strategies.

He listed several ways he would meet his new responsibilities. First, his office will "establish the IT baseline for the intelligence community." Second, it will expand "the idea of what architecture work is in the intelligence business to be truly enterprise." Third, the office will "completely re-engineer the certification and accreditation processes for networks handling information, specifically, classified information." Fourth, it will create incentives to share information.

Pike says Meyerrose has "an ambitious agenda." But, he adds, "You would also have to say that it's the same for his boss. They've bitten off an awful lot to chew."