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## General: Cyber, arctic threats await president

By John T. Bennett - Staff writer  
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The next U.S. president will inherit ever-growing threats in cyberspace and the Arctic region, meaning the new commander-in-chief likely will be forced to craft an unprecedented collection of new security policies, a top military official said.

As the federal government continues efforts to piece together how to implement President Bush's super-secret, multibillion-dollar cyber security program, Air Force Gen. Victor Renuart, U.S. Northern Command chief, says success in the electronic domain will require "a multi-nation approach."

It is difficult to determine whether an attack on a nation's cyber infrastructure is an act of war because "we have not yet defined what that is," Renuart said. "That's a policy decision that has to be made."

"I don't think any nation is ready to make that kind of declaration," he said Aug. 20 during an Atlantic Council-sponsored forum in Washington.

U.S. government and industry officials "have some work do in the cyber area."

That work will include convincing owners of government and private networks "that they're going to have to give up a little sovereignty for this to be effective."

In a report released earlier this summer, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence wrote that it "believes a cyber security initiative worthwhile in principle, but the details of the [president's program] remain vague and, thus, open to question."

In recent years, the panel's report said, the cyber threat "has continued to grow in scale and sophistication."

The lawmakers also reveal their worries about the ability of the federal government and private sector to work together to shore up key U.S. public and private networks.

"For the [cyber program] to work as described in the presidential directive, it will require a partnership with industry unlike any model that currently exists," the report said. "The excessive classification of the CNCI, however, militates against the collaboration necessary to achieve that partnership."

The panel notes many of the components that will be a part of the national cyber security system "do not seem very well-connected, nor is it clear there are adequate governance mechanisms to achieve the necessary coordination."

### Arctic concerns

Meantime, Renuart also raised concerns about the Arctic region, saying it is emerging as yet another area on which Washington must keep an eye in coming years.

He sidestepped the issue of what is causing more and more ice in the Arctic region to melt each year, saying his job was to focus on the implications of that deteriorating.

"More water means more transit routes," he explained. And that means more hulls in Arctic waters, meaning NorthCom and U.S. allies will have to work harder to determine why those vessels are there.

Moreover, the region "portends to become an economically important area," he said, because a list of scientists have concluded "the area has untapped resources."

And that means two things in his view: There will soon be a "competition for resources in the Arctic; and "a number of nations are going to begin establishing claims there."

He then rattled off a number of nations, including the United States, Russia and

several European nations, already exploring the region.

As that race heats up, Washington already is mulling potential policy changes.

The National Security Council “in the last few weeks,” he said, has been debating whether the time has come to update the national Arctic strategy document.

He said his command is working on a number of efforts to ensure a smooth transition in January.

Once the new commander-in-chief takes over for the departing President Bush, the new president will face a long list of security related challenges.

In addition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the struggle against global extremists, Renuart listed a few top items he would place on the next chief executive’s security agenda, including:

- \* Is it time for a “Goldwater-Nichols Act for the interagency”?
- \* The proper funding level for the federal government’s non-military security tools, sometimes called “smart power” devices.
- \* Are ample resources being devoted to agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services and the State Department?

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