

**AFA Air Warfare Symposium
With General Mark A. Welsh, Iii
Chief Of Staff of the U.S. Air Force
25 February 12 2016**

SPEAKER: [Applause] Thank you very much and good afternoon. It's always a pleasure and honor to introduce our next speaker. He's the perfect leader in very tough times; the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organizing, training, and equipping of more than 664,000 active duty Guard, Reserve, and civilian airmen. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff he and the other service chiefs provide military advice to the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the President. Please welcome the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, General Mark Welsh. [Applause]

GENERAL WELSH: Thanks, Scott.

SPEAKER: Thank you, sir. Thanks very much. Thank you. Please.

GENERAL WELSH: Thanks everybody. Thank you very much. It's good to see you. Thanks for paying to come. [Laughter] It really is good to see you.

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Thanks for being here today. Thanks for having us.

Let me tell you what I'd like to do. I'm going to talk about a couple silly things up front because they're silly but important things, and then I want to talk a little about how the last year's been for our Air Force. It's called the State of the Air Force Briefing and give you a rough overview there, then talk a little bit about some of the basics of this business that I think we can't afford to forget because I think those are the things that are going to sustain us as we move forward just like they sustained us for the last 60-plus years. So, that's kind of the road map.

Oh, and I forgot [laughter] -- I saw Larry yesterday outside the front of the hotel here and everybody was commenting on how relaxed he looked, and I said actually that started before he left the job. [Laughter] It's good to see the grin and he's cleaned up his act. Scott, thank you for reshaping him into military standards again.

I would to just pause for a personal note

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here, but first I want to introduce you to somebody who may reappear during this briefing. This 1:00 slot is a tough time to speak to this crowd. I know how much you enjoyed last night. I know how much you ate for lunch. I see you there, and I know it's -- between 1:00 and 2:00 is a tough time, and so I just want you to know that through the course of this briefing there's actually a couple Chuck Norris appearances. A couple Chuck Norris jokes will be mixed in here. You don't want to miss those so stay awake, and if I see you dozing I'm going right through a whole string of them, and I'm going to get Gork up here to help. I love this cell phone. Answer or answer. Chuck Norris never dials a wrong number. You just answered the wrong phone. [Laughter]

Today is Betty and I's 38th wedding anniversary [long applause].

MS. WELSH: Oh, my gosh.

GENERAL WELSH: Thanks for doing that.

She's magic. She's made my whole life. That's why I brought Ora up here with me. [Laughter] Betty knows

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how much I love her, but she has -- she knows I love her. She doesn't know how much. There's no way she could know how much. Honey, it wouldn't have been worth it without you. I can't wait for the next 38. I want to be a great old guy [laughter] harassing you.

It's also Ora's birthday, so for those of you who haven't met Larry Spencer's wife, Ora, she is a beautiful woman. She's talented. She's intelligent. She's the strength of their family, I'll tell you that, and she and Larry made this whole journey in the Air Force together, and they're continuing on now with AFA, and just because we can, would you mind joining me in singing happy birthday to Aura?

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Ora, happy birthday to you.
[Applause] Yes, ma'am, happy birthday.

MS. SPENSER: Thank you.

GENERAL WELSH: As you can see from the slide, Aura hangs out with DeSean Jackson. This is the highlight of her birthday because you know Larry.

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Larry's much worse than every dollar counts when he's at home. He's every penny he counts there, so I'm guessing it won't be a huge celebration [laughter].

A hundred years ago this spring Lafayette Escadrille became America's first combat aviators. Celebrations start in April with the rededication of the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial now being run by the American Battle Monuments Commission led by former Chief of Staff Tony McPeak. He, General Buzz Moseley, a number of other retired senior Air Force members, Chief of Staff of the French Air Force, previous Chief of Staff of the French Air Force have all been really instrumental in getting this done. It's just an amazing series of celebrations of events of the 100-year anniversary of World War I and it starts here soon.

So while we're thinking about that coming up I thought it would be a good time to take a look back at the last year and see what today's airmen have done 99 years later. Great folks at Boeing supported by the U.S. Air Force have begun fuel testing on the KC-

46 tanker and they're going to bring us into the next century in terms of true global mobility. Pretty exciting stuff, guys.

We continue to deploy airmen all over the globe. This is an Aviano F-16 heading to Bagram, and we did it around the globe. We have 22,000 or so airmen deployed every day, all the time. It's been the same since about -- since we came home from the first Gulf War. It just stays the same. It never changes.

We have a whole lot of airmen deployed to Europe in the past year as part of the European Reassurance Initiative with the intent to reassure allies, stabilize, provide assurance to people that we will be there as a leading partner in NATO if the Russian aggression continues or even gets worse.

We've got great space airmen working around the clock 24/7/365 providing GPS as just one service to the globe, free of charge. They've been doing all that last year. They've been running a bunch of other constellations. They've been tracking 23,000

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different items in space and providing commercial and military advisories so people can avoid collisions with it -- with their satellite systems. They do magical stuff. They do it quietly behind the curtain, but it never ends.

We launched the X-37 orbital test vehicle this last year. We actually put new troops, expanded aircraft operations out of Incirlik Turkey, so we've got airmen now operating 115 miles or so from Syria supporting operations there against ISIL.

We moved 350,000 tons of cargo last year roughly in Air Mobility Command, excuse me, supported by the great folks of Air Force Material Command who put together a lot of the stuff that we ended up moving. We also moved about a million passengers. Our mobility pros along with our great air medical team moved about 4,300 wounded warriors and other patients around the globe last year, the care that they needed, and we have airmen of all shapes, sizes, types, and missionaries who are following that trail of terror that ISIS leaves, and every time they

identify footprints they make sure the person that left them doesn't have the opportunity to walk that trail again. It's a slow, steady drumbeat of professional performers that will make a difference over time.

We continue to deploy fighter squadrons, A-10s, F-16s, F-15Es, bomber squadrons, B-1s now, B-52s soon, to be part of this effort, and we also deploy them to do shows of force strategically in South Korea and other places; B-52s, B-2s, F-22s most recently. The B-52 celebrated its 61st birthday this last year. Incredible. I mean incredible, and a little sad.

And we flew about 1.7 million hours in our Air Force last year. That's 195 years of flying if you want of kind of put it in a timeframe. If you flew continuously for 195 years, that's how many hours the Air Force flew last year.

About 300,000 hours of those were combat hours. About 30,000 of those were ISR sorties, and on those sorties we produced about 1.6 million hours of streaming full-motion video. About 400,000 hours of

that actually processed by intelligence analysts in the Air Force. We also produced about 2.6 million photographs from those sorties for use by decision-makers and analysts to figure out what the next steps should be. It's an incredible enterprise, folks, and it just never stops operating, all the time. It's really a thrill to be part of this, and the airmen who make it happen are sitting amongst you out there, so when we're done pat them on the back or kick 'em on the butt and tell them to get back to work. [Laughter] They've got a lot to do this year as well.

The great part about looking back at what just happened is that every year this time AFA does a phenomenal job of bringing together the team, the whole team to talk about our Air Force and about the way forward. Everybody in this room is a piece of this puzzle, everybody in here, and without your piece of the puzzle the picture's never complete. That's the beauty of the Air Warfare Symposium. This is the Air Force team. Thanks for being on it.

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You know one of the great things about taking looks in mirrors -- I stood on an AFA stage in 2012 right after coming to this job, and said we really need to take an honest look in the mirror and figure out where we are, where we need to go, and we've been kind of reacting to the things we saw from that initial assessment for the last couple of years. One of the interesting things about mirror checks is that -- especially if you're a fighter pilot -- as you walk by and kind of look sideways in that mirror you usually look pretty good, just like this beautiful beast here. And every now and then you've got to realize and listen to the people around you as they look in that mirror and they see this. [Laughter] I love this dog. If you look deeply into his eyes, he is thinking "I am awesome." Maybe not. And so there's a couple things that we've been focused on in the last couple of years that we are still focused on and have to continue paying serious attention to.

One of them is investing in our nuclear business in lots of different ways. Infrastructure;

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it's old. It's been taken pretty good care of for the age and the use it's gotten, but it's old, and there's lots of things that we need to do to invest, to change, to modify, to think about different ways of doing the job, and Robin Rand and the great folks at Air Force Global Strike Command are doing that every single day. We also have to recapitalize the weapons systems in that command.

New bombers moving along. LRSB is now moving forward. As a program we're really excited about that. Thank you for everything that many of you in here had to do with that. We also have other systems that have to be recapitalized. It's going to cost a lot of money. There's got to be some tough decisions made in this country about where the priorities are going to go for money. Does it go to nuclear recapitalization? Does it to go pieces of nuclear recapitalization? What are the policy changes that are going to affect this? That's going to be probably a five- to ten-year discussion before we actually start going into production on some of these

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things, but in the meantime there's real money being spent, and so the sooner we have these debates the better as far as we're concerned.

Our job is to make sure the planning is credible. We're looking at a threat that's reliable in terms of projections in the future, and that we provide the most efficient and effective solutions that are available, and the U.S. Air Force can't do that without the rest of the puzzle pieces sitting in this room. So thanks for the help you're already providing and the help I know you will provide.

Command and control of the nuclear systems also needs some serious investment. Doesn't look a lot different than it did 50 years ago. We've got to think about how we're going to do that as well. Is the old model the way we're going to do it? Do we need to change it? What are the viable solutions? How will you provide security? How can you provide surety? How do you make it easier on your crews if you can make it easier on your crews? A lot of work to do on this one. There's a big effort undergoing

right now under the lead of Robin Rand, but this is something we've got to continue to pay a lot of attention to.

One of the things Robin's thinking about is to improve pride and performance is bringing back a few of the old tricks like the ascot. Robin particularly likes ascots. He's been wearing one himself to the office. He hasn't got a real good response from his team yet, so he thought maybe if he goes a little bit deeper into heritage it would help, so he actually was a test wearing this one recently; the old fatigues with the full leather cap. This is a particularly attractive uniform item. This wasn't working real well so Robin actually jumped a little deeper, went back to the whites with the blue turtlenecks underneath them. Very stylish.

The good news is the best thing we can do for our nuclear missile team members is probably not to worry about the uniform they're wearing to work; what color it is, how old school we want to get. It's really to make sure that these great, great, young

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Americans believe that what they do is important, that we do everything we can to improve the environment they work in day to day. We make them feel like they're valued contributors, like their decisions make a difference. Let them have a hand in how we do things in the future, and that's exactly what the two great leaders of Global Strike Command over last year have done. General Sammy Wilson who I think did a spectacular job in this role started the ball rolling, and then we put a four-star in this command to make sure that we had a serious voice of the United States Air Force who could operate at every level of our government in the nuclear debate leading the effort, They're great leaders. They've been great for the command. We've got a long way to go. Robin will keep leading them. The rest of us need to still be side by side with him as he drags the command forward in some cases. He gets carried forward by it in other cases. It's going to be exciting to watch, but please don't ever doubt our purpose in supporting this nuclear mission.

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Chuck Norris knows Victoria's secret.

[Laughter] The RPA Enterprise is still a problem for us. [Larry] was dozing. [Laughter] The RPA Enterprise is something everybody from the Secretary down through Hawk Carlisle, down through the commanders at every level have been focused on for the Air Force for a while now. There is a very concerted effort over the last year to put together some solutions to the problems that have been long-standing, and we're actually moving pretty well forward into that solution set, but there's a lot left to go, and it's a lot more than just getting the pipeline fixed which is the immediate goal so that we quit training 180 and losing 240 a year.

We expect to get to 330-some through the pipeline this year, and then to 390-plus next year, and that's where we have to sustain it. We've done that because the Secretary of Defense has helped us out by slowing down the requirement for about 18 months so we could start to catch up. If we can get ahead of that training curve we have a chance to turn

this around, but there's lots of other pieces that Hawk's working on.

We have to standardize when an RPA enterprise looks like. We have to organize them in a way that looks the same wherever you go in the RPA world. We need different bases of assignment options for RPA forces. They can't be all be either remote location or a location that feels remote, and so we've got to figure out how to do this differently and we have to figure out how to do it fast, so a lot of work being done there.

Hawk has had a chance to talk to the Secretary at length about this recently, and I think there will be more on this in the near future, but we're moving forward as quickly as we can, and everything from training pipelines to duty locations, future bed-down organizations. There's a lot happening in the RPA world.

The biggest thing we have to do is make sure those young people in this business believe they have a future in the business. They have a career track.

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They have promotion opportunities. They will command and lead because they will, but we've got to prove it to them because up till now, they haven't. They're all from the state of Missouri right now and I think that's fair. It's up to us to prove it to them.

That little cookie is manpower. To Hawk Carlisle that's 3,000 RPA airmen. To John Cooper it's about 4,000 maintenance guys. To John Hyten it's a whole bunch of new space operators to kind of get into a different battle rhythm in the space operations world. To Ellen Pawlikowski it's civilian airmen to run all the different program offices as they expand which is happening routinely.

We have a manpower issue in our Air Force, and the Secretary had made it her number one focus this year during the budget cycle. We are trying to grow slightly, but the numbers don't matter as much as the fact that we cannot get any smaller. We have got to grow a little bit, and if we ever want to meet the requirement that's being levied on us around the world we're going to have to grow more than a little bit

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eventually, but right now let's fix where we know we're broken, stabilize, and figure out how to start filling in the holes in our Air Force that have been created by standing up new enterprises while we drew down the force as a whole. We have got to get after this.

Manpower will remain a problem for us.

Total force size matters. Readiness matters. Our job is to fight and win the nation's wars. We can't take money out of our equipment to do that. Our units must be able to respond. The less ready they are, the more risky it will be for them to respond, meaning the conflict will last longer, and we will count risk in terms of lives lost. That's not acceptable.

So, everything we can do to improve readiness we need to be doing. Readiness is a funny thing though. We all try and define it very specifically, and it's really not specific. The simple answer if somebody asks you "Is the Air Force ready?" The question is to do what? If it's to do low-threat CAS in the Middle East, yep, we're 100

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percent ready. Send us out the door. If the answer is no, we're going to go fight a major war in Eastern Europe or in the Pacific against a well-equipped, well-trained enemy, the answer is we're not very ready for that. It's going to be ugly.

We tend to get locked into the details too much in this discussion. It's really a very simple discussion, but it's a key factor for us every single day, so manpower, readiness; two focus areas in this budget cycle, and modernization's the third.

After you've done those two things we have to continue modernizing as much as we can. You can see we've come a long way since 1966. [Laughter] With the T-38, the KC-135, the B-52, the Minuteman, and those great memory drums back in the early 1960s. Now we've got the five-by-eight floppy, so we went modern in 1976. They came out when I came out, and we're still using them. We've got to modernize our Air Force. There's no ands, ifs, or buts about this. We cannot be ready, capable, and modern today and not ready, capable, and modern 15 years from now. That is

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not a choice for a military force unless you want to lose. Oops, sorry, just want to see my dog again.

[Laughter]

We're also -- while all that's going on and we're trying to focus on it, we've been busy in other ways. Force of the future is a pretty comprehensive look at how we do manpower policy, personnel policy, in the Department of Defense. We're looking at the Women in Service Review and the final implementation plans for all the services, something whose time has come. We'll get it right. We've been working hard on this, but we're doing this right now as well.

Transgender policy review; how do we get to a point where we understand the implications of transgenders being admitted into the military, being cared properly for in the military, being integral and feeling like part of the fabric of the military force. That's going on right now. We're reforming Goldwater-Nichols led by the United States Congress. We're doing acquisition reform led by the Congress; all great stuff to be doing, by the way.

We're retiring -- or overhauling our retirement system. This is the year where we get all the details right so it takes effect in '18. We're starting health care reform this year and we'll throw that on the top of the fire. We're working the Third Offset Strategy, and the goal is to get all of this stuff or as much of this stuff as we can get done this year, and we're revising every operational plan in the United States military right now.

Oh, yeah, and we're fighting a war, a difficult war, a grinding war with an enemy that is adaptive and clever and street smart almost beyond belief sometimes and brutal way beyond belief. There's a lot going on, and in my mind if you have a chance once a year to come to this forum and to think about what's been going on, where we are trying to go, and what's affecting us as we try and get there, it's a great chance just to remind yourself of the basics. Before we get to that, let me remind you that Chuck Norris leaves his message before the beep. [Laughter]

The basics for us are pretty simple. When I

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stop and think about the basics of our United States Air Force I go back to Wilbur and Orville and just kind of look at them. They look confident, a little bit cocky, look a little excited, a little scared. It's the Doolittle raiders, Tuskegee airmen. It's a great young airman returning home from a deployment and meeting her husband as she gets off the airplane. It's a very, very proud dad-daughter date at an Air Force ball at Hickam, and it's a young Air Force dependent helping to celebrate Flag Day at Offutt Air Force base. These are the basics, and there's some rules that kind of go behind these things in my mind, and let me talk through those for just a minute.

Number one, people matter. They always matter. They matter in everything we do. They matter all day long. They affect everything. And we've got some fantastic people here today that I'll introduce you to as I go through this.

First one: Senior Master Sergeant Jeremy Swistak. Jeremy, would you stand up just for a second and wave at the crowd -- and by the way, Tiffany,

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there with you. Tiffany, would you stand up and wave with him? [Applause] Thank you, guys.

Jeremy is the Superintendent and the First Sergeant of the 55th Contracting Squadron at Offutt. You can sit down, [Bud], if you'd like to. Thank you. So, if you're the Superintendent and you're the First Sergeant, I think what means is that about the time you hit REM sleep your phone rings, which has got to be difficult.

This picture was taken in 2011 when Jeremy was in Afghanistan. In fact, he was at Herat, Afghanistan for those of you who've been there. This was taken as they did a ribbon cutting on the first improved road ever in Herat, Afghanistan, which Jeremy had contracted with local workers and companies to build. Swiss has reached out and touched the world, and he made it a better place.

He came into our Air Force because he wanted to serve. He has a history of service in his family. His father, his grandfather, both served. He just knew he wanted to do this. He came in as a cable guy

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really on the communication side of the house, initially as a cable dog. He really didn't like digging things in the dirt. He really didn't liked climbing and hanging wires on things, but he kind of liked the computer that went with it, in his words, and so eventually he cross-trained to contracting, and now he makes a difference everywhere he goes. He's a remarkable, remarkable guy. There are people who follow him in this career field just because they've heard of how much he's accomplished and now they want to be him.

Lots of things have happened in his life since he came into our Air Force besides the opportunity -- he's had -- formed this beautiful partnership with Tiffany. He's thought about how his kids are going to grow up, and he wants them to do everything better than he did it. I got to tell you this, Swiss, I bet they do, but I'm glad my dad didn't set that bar for me because I don't think I do anything as well as you do it.

Last year he went back to Afghanistan. Did

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a pretty good job while he was there. He was supporting people who were on forward bases inside the wires. The threat level increase would quit delivering things at some of those places. The deliveries couldn't get through, so Swiss found himself again outside the wire on the local economy with checks and cash. No risk in that. Buying supplies people inside the wire needed to survive. He did a pretty good job of it. He was given the Department of Defense's Contracting award of the year for 2015. He's the best we've got in the department. [Applause] Thank you for being here. Thank you for inspiring, airman.

People always matter for us but there are some other things about our business we've got to keep in mind. Folks, the high ground is still the high ground, and we do own it, which gives us a unique perspective on everything. It allows us to present three-dimensional solutions to two-dimensional problems. It allows us to see every problem from a different perspective. It allows us to become a

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dominant force and has allowed us to remain a dominant force, and that can't change. It simply can't change.

The third basic is that airpower is still the greatest asymmetric advantage this country enjoys in military power, and interestingly enough, of the three domains we operate in; air, space, and cyber, the greatest asymmetric advantage exists in the air domain for us. It's not always the most popular one to talk about as space and cyber become more and more critically important. Other people have just advanced in those areas quicker than they have in the air domain to compete with us, and so as we move forward to enhanced capabilities in space and cyber, we can't forget that the meat and potatoes of operations in the air domain, which is what's going on around the world all day every day, can't go away, and they tend to be the last thing in the conversation. Great thing is we've got Rodney Waugh here with us today. Rodney, would you stand up?

Rodney understands meat and potatoes. He's a depot maintenance guy at Tinker Air Force base.

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[Applause] I met Rodney when I was going through the B-52 depot line, and he was showing me a thing he and his team came up with. He works as part of a four-man team. He's been in the depot, working with the government for about 19 years. He's been doing this depot job for a while, but about 7 years ago they came up with a solution to a problem that was created because they didn't have spare parts for the B-52. Imagine that. It was only, what, 54 years old then. They had trouble getting spare parts for landing gear trunnions which were being damaged and becoming damaged quickly, so Rodney and his team put together a solution for this, and basically they performed surgery on the landing gear of a B-52.

They would just find the damaged pieces and just cut it out, and then they'd splice other pieces of metal that they cut a design into it to rebuild the landing gear trunnion, and of course that's going to hold the weight of the B-52, and Rodney knew this because he wanted to be a lawyer growing up. I don't know how he knew it. I don't know how he figured out

how to do this. Just because he's a remarkable airman is how he figured this out.

For seven years they've been providing this fix to every B-52 that came into that depot over and over and over again. They saved hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars and man-hours with this fix, and the only thing Rodney asks is when that B-52 comes off the depot line and taxis out to launch, that his boss let him go outside to watch the takeoff. That's it. That's the reward. That and being able to say he's part of our Air Force. Rodney, thanks for being an airman. It's an honor to have you here.

[Applause]

Another basic rule for us: airpower's a game changer, folks. It is indispensable in modern warfare. You can't win without it. We've got airmen who are incredibly skilled at this, who have operated at every level from the lowest tactical level now to the most senior theater levels. It is time for airmen to lead joint force operations. When you've got the horses, put us in the race.

Here's another basic rule of this business. Quantity has a quality all its own. The best airplane in the world, the best satellite system in the world, the best whatever in the world can't be 10 places at once. It can't be tasked at all corners of the globe. Steve Wells understands that. Steve is a lifetime engineer. One of his private goals, one of his bucket-list things, wants to climb Mt. Everest. I don't have that one on my list, but I don't have a Masters in aeronautical engineering either.

Steve started working for Boeing back when McDonnell Douglass kind of merged back in '92 to '94. He was working on a program, a 767 program, and they came together, worked that program and he became part of Boeing. He's been with them ever since, and couple years ago he was pulled off the 787 program and put into the 767 program to work on the tanker. And a little less than two years ago the chief engineer moved on and Steve was promoted into the job. Now, a couple things to think about if you haven't been a chief engineer before, which I haven't.

I mentioned the KC-46 started refueling airplanes here a month or a month and a half ago. Before that first time it hooked up to an F-16 and pumped gas to it, think about who's responsible for ensuring that all the interfaces work, and there's lots of them. There's an aerodynamic interface with airflow off the big airplane hitting the little airplane. There's a mechanical interface when the boom connects. There's an electrical interface. There's an electromagnetic interface. There's a human interface. There's fuel moving between systems. This is pretty complicated stuff, and it's happening at 300 miles an hour so -- at 20-, 25,000 feet.

Who's going to say all that's going to work? Steve does. The buck's really clearly landing on his desk. Steve, I'm awfully glad you're an American airman. Thanks for doing this. Without this refueling fleet we can't do what we do around the world, and two of them won't get it done. One hundred of them won't get it done. One hundred seventy-nine of them won't get it done. We need 400-plus of them,

and you're the one who's making sure we're going to have them. Thank you, sir, for everything you've done for our airmen and our entire joint force to make global mobility a reality for the United States military. It is such an honor to have you here.

[Applause]

My whole life I wanted to fit MC Hammer into a presentation. [Laughter] With Hammer pants. MC Hammer learned the hard way that Chuck Norris can touch this.

The Air Force, not any system in the Air Force, not any particular mission in the Air Force, the United States Air Force is low density, high demand. That's where we are. Everybody wants more airpower. They want ISR. They want mobility. They want command and control. They want strike. They want everything: contracting, intelligence, DCGS, you name it, they want it, understandably. We're not the only service that's short in various guys, but the United States Air Force is low density, high demand, and we just need to understand that. And if you don't

have that force to provide to the next contingency you will lose. This should be an important discussion as we get into planning for future contingency operations, and our Air Force needs to keep that discussion on the front end of the table.

Another basic: some things in this business are timeless. Things like the attributes of air power, speed, range, precision, flexibility, and the willingness of men and women to ride the thunder.

Alan Norman's here. Alan's a chief pilot at Lockheed Martin. He's also the F-35 lead test pilot. Alan, would you stand up, and Cindy, would you stand up with him. Cindy's been in our business a long time right beside him. This is an amazing couple, and this is a fantastic American airman. Alan was in the Air Force for 23 years before -- active and reserve -- and since he went to Lockheed Martin he has actually flown the F-4, the F-16, the F-22, now the F-35 as the lead test pilot. He's on the cutting edge of developing combat capability for the United States Air Force. He was on the cutting edge of employing it before.

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He's an interesting guy because he didn't want to be in the Air Force growing up. Never thought about it. His high school football coaches wanted to talk to him about going to the Air Force academy, so he applied and didn't get in, which was motivating I'm sure. So Alan headed off the UCLA for a year, reapplied and got accepted, and he graduated with the class of 1982. And since then he's gone on to earn a Ph.D. in electrical engineering, served 23 years in the United States Air Force, become the chief pilot at Lockheed Martin, and here's what Alan will tell you because he may be the most humble guy you'll ever meet. I'm pretty confident he's the most humble fighter pilot you'll ever meet. [Laughter] Alan will say "Look, there's nothing special about me. I'm just like a whole bunch of other people who just want to take care of the American warfighter."

I firmly believe that he wants to take care of the American war fighter, but Alan, I do not believe that there are a whole bunch of people like you. His job is to jump into an airplane that his

engineers and production crews have given him to trust that they did their job well enough that the airplane's going to work when he flies it for the first time, and then to turn that airplane over to a whole bunch of young lieutenants, captains, majors, or lieutenant JGs and lieutenant commanders in the Navy who are going to fly it completely confident that the airplane's safe and will perform the way it's supposed to perform. And the person who is responsible for taking it from that starting point to the ending point is sitting in the second row.

Alan gets excited about seeing things like the first F-22 sortie over Syria. He gets excited watching an F-35 launch from a production facility and go to an operational unit. He gets excited about hearing pilots who are flying his airplane telling you got the airplane right. Alan Norman's a great American, and he is an unbelievable American airman. Alan, thank you for being a part of this. [Applause]

This concept of one Air Force is a basic for us now. It has to continue. We can't succeed without

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an integrated total force. It's impossible for us at this point. Everybody's part of the operational mission. Everybody's on call. Everybody's ready to go. Everything we can do to keep this moving forward and solve the silly things that stand between us and doing things that make common sense we've got to keep working on. Our team is committed to this, and anything you've got that could help, we're willing to listen.

Can you tell who the active Guard and Reserve officers are in this photo? Neither can the enemy. That's the whole point. It's an interesting thought, isn't it? You can't build an Air Force overnight. It takes time, and it's not just the equipment. It's the idea of the Air Force. It's the foundation, it's the profession, it's the core values.

Gareth Davis sitting over here. Gareth, would you stand up for a second. He won't be hard to spot, guys. He's six-foot-eight and-a-half or so. [Applause] Master Sergeant Davis is -- works the financial services chief, flight chief at Offutt Air

Force base.

He's got a fascinating life story. Gareth and his brother grew up with their single mom in the U.K. about 90 miles northeast of London, just off the A12. Tough upbringing, tough times in their family at that time; they were homeless for a good part of his early life. Didn't do too well in school because the disruption around the family life made it pretty hard to concentrate. He'll tell you that he wasn't the best, most focused young man, but he loved sports, especially basketball.

When he was eight, his mom met a U.S. Air Force enlisted member who was stationed in the U.K. They started dating, eventually got married, and in Gareth's words, his core values became mine. When he was 16 the family finally moved to the U.S. They came to the States. Gareth felt uncomfortable trying to fit in. It was different, but there was basketball, and he was pretty good and he was pretty tall, so senior year of high school he was recruited by Mount Zion Christian Academy which is one of the best known

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basketball schools in this country, if not the best known basketball school in this country. He went there, he played, he was sponsored by Nike, he got to practice with the Philadelphia 76ers as a senior in high school. Pretty heady stuff.

Got a full ride to college to play basketball. He went to Tennessee State -- university in Tennessee, and played basketball for four years, and then he was recruited to play for the London Leopards, a professional basketball league in the U.K, so he headed overseas to play professional basketball and kind of follow his life's dream.

He enjoyed the basketball but lifestyle's a little different. As he describes it, "fast and hard." And he finally made a very tough choice in early 2001 to come back home to his family and reconnect with those values that he felt so comfortable, and then 9/11 happened and Gareth enlisted in the Air Force, and everything since then has been an unbelievable success story.

He now has two community college of the Air
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Force degrees, a bachelor's degree and master's degree. He's been number one in everything. He's won the distinguished everything from everything. He's an incredibly talented guy. He was asked to speak at one point at an event, and after he spoke everybody who was at the event came and asked him to speak at other events, and now in his community he is pretty famous for his speaking ability. The word is he leaves you laughing. He leaves you crying, but he leaves you focused on the future. It's a gift, Gareth. Keep sharing it. He's an amazing guy. When you think about it all starting with a young Air Force NCO, the core values of this young British kid connected to, and he's now sharing them with our entire Air Force. What an incredible story. What an incredible airman. Gareth, thanks for everything you do. Thanks for being an American airman. [Applause]

And you also can't teach airpower in a generation. It takes a couple to build the legacy. Chief Master Sergeant Carl Buchanan works on the air staff. He was an EOD guy for almost his entire

career. He got injured while he was going through security forces training as a young man and had to switch career fields. Actually, he got kicked out of the Air Force. Took him three years to get back in. He got kicked out because they didn't have another training slot, but he kept fighting and finally came back in as an EOD guy. He spent a lifetime as an EOD guy, then became a first sergeant -- five different first sergeant tours. Just a remarkable, remarkable guy; known for his teaching skills, known for his speaking skills, known for his care and energy and passion about taking care of his people.

As a young NCO he was stationed in the U.K. He met that beautiful lady on the right in this picture. And X number of years later he let his son Gareth use his back as a desk to sign his enlisted papers. Chief, would you stand up and come join your son over here because he doesn't know you're here. [Applause] Thank you, guys. We're almost there.

One more basic rule in this business. In the profession of arms we talk about lots of

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asymmetric advantages but leadership better be one if you're going to succeed. In our Air Force it is. Chad, where are you? My aid-de-camp is named Chad Senior, and he's in terror right now because he has no idea what I'm doing. Chad's a combat rescue officer. This, by the way, is not really a picture of Chad. It's a picture of Flat Chadley who we carry around just in case we need to impress people. The full-size Flat Chadley is in my office. He's there with a full-size cutout of John Wayne, and it's a copy of one that his old rescue squadron -- he was the commander in his last job -- put in the squadron there and has been kind of harassing him for a number of years now, so we decided to bring that tradition to the Pentagon. It's been very fun so far.

Chad's an Air Force Reservist. Chad started life as an Army infantry NCO. Soon as he got into the Army he actually started in a world-class athlete program because he a pretty good athlete. Chad competed in two Olympics as a member of that program. He's also a three-time world champion in the years

between those Olympics in the Pentathlon. He's a serious athlete.

He's also a serious soldier, and so as he started to go think about a commissioning program in the United States Army to get the special operations somebody told him about the rescue career field in the Air Force, and he said, yep, but they don't have officers. I want to be an officer, and somebody replied, "Actually, they just started the combat rescue officer program," and so Chad jumped in. He's pretty good at this job.

One of the cool things about Chad is everybody I meet who knows him talks about him a little bit different way than they talk about other people. Last night I was down on the floor here talking to the special tactics guys in PJs and the JTACS who were down here in the booth. I don't know if you guys had a chance to talk to them. One of them was a PJ, and so I'm kind of joking about him and Chad, and say "Hey, you guys know Chad?" and they say, "Oh, yes Sir, we know him." I say, "Hey, give me a

little dirt on him, you know, so I can give him a hard time about stuff," and this guy went dead serious and he said "No, sir, but I can tell you what a great rescue squadron commander he was." Yeah, I bet, and I'm not surprised.

Leadership must be an asymmetric advantage if we're going to succeed. We cannot take the focus on this ever, and our people learn from all of you. Thanks for leading them. Thanks for teaching them. Thanks for shaping them. Thanks for making it tough when you need to make it tough and supporting them when they need it. Don't slow down now or we will fail. Times aren't getting any easier. These folks will carry us through it.

And then finally, one of the focus areas of this [applause] -- yeah, thank you, sir. One of the focus areas of this event is technology and innovation. For our Air Force we sprang from technology and innovation. It has to be at the heart of success. If it's not there, there will be no success, and everybody in here plays a role in this

one and some of you play just a major, major role. I do believe that air forces that fall behind the technology curve will fail, and if the Air Force fails the joint force will fail, and there's lots of examples of this, so thank you for ensuring that that doesn't happen. The service can't do that on its own. We've got great technologists, but they can't turn great ideas, even great experimentation or great concepts into production tools that we can then use in battlefield around the world.

I believe that when Hap Arnold used these words, almost immediately after World War II, which is kind of remarkable, he was talking to us and every generation of airmen who lives. It's a timeless challenge and I think we've got to get after it.

Now, in a minute I'm going to ask these guys to come up here and join me on the steps. You guys can start walking up if you wouldn't mind, because they're going to hang out here for just a minute. Scott's got a couple of words to say when I'm done, and then I'm going to ask you guys if you'd come up

and if you've got a minute just say hi to them. We'll line them up down here in front of the stage, but if you haven't had a chance to hug a great American airman today or a great member of this national defense team, I've got six of them right here. Come on Chad, you can't hide over there. Nice try though. I'll let you hold Flat Chadley if you come up here.

I ask one more favor of all of you. Anybody in here who has served in the United States military - - I don't care what branch -- or has a family member who's served, would you mind standing up? Now wait just a minute before you clap there, Jason, everybody just look around for a minute. Anybody who has built a product that's been used by the United States military in any way, shape, or form, please stand up. Anybody who's been part of telling the story of the United States military, please stand up. Anybody who's done the same things for a foreign military service, please stand up because we've got some great partners here in the room. I don't know if anybody's sitting any more, and that's kind of the point. This

is the team. This is the puzzle. Thanks for who you are. Thanks for what you stand for, and thanks for standing with us.

We're going out with a little audience participation. This is a simple one. I'm going to yell "airpower," and you're going to yell, "get you some." You ready? Airpower.

AUDIENCE: Get you some.

GENERAL WELSH: We will. Thanks for being here, guys. [Applause] Can you stay here for a minute? [Band plays]

SPEAKER: General Welsh, thanks for one additional great presentation; highlight always of our events, and we're so pleased to have you here again, and Betty as well. This is going to be wrapping up 40 years or so in the Air Force for you and we want to thank you for your great service.

GENERAL WELSH: Thanks [Applause]

SPEAKER: I have a small presentation for you. You were just mentioning Hap Arnold, so if you ever have an opportunity to have some reading time,

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here's *Global Mission 1949* shortly after World War II, so we hope you'll enjoy that.

GENERAL WELSH: Thank you, Scott. Thank you so much.

SPEAKER: I have a slide here that we were going to show if they can put that up.

GENERAL WELSH: Oh, yeah, thank you for reminding me of that one.

SPEAKER: So, we always knew he was our hero, and he always knew that Betty was an angel, so this just goes to prove it. Thanks so much for your great service to our country.

GENERAL WELSH: Thanks for that too. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER: You guys step down here. Nice to meet you guys. Thanks for being here. Congratulations.

GENERAL WELSH: If you have a minute, if you come up and say hi to the guys, come on up. They're going to be right down here in front.

SPEAKER: We'll reconvene at 2:15, and it's
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a split session, so please check your schedule.

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